

Approved 5/1/14

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

April 3, 2014 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Senior Center - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William King, *Chair*; Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; William Barry, Robert Crocker, Jo M. Solet, *Members*; Shary Page Berg, Joseph Ferrara, Susannah Tobin, *Alternates*

Members absent: M. Wyllis Bibbins, Chandra Hanington, *Members*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*; Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*; Samantha Paull, *Preservation Administrator*

Public present: See attached list.

Chair King convened the meeting at 6:06, made introductions, and explained hearing procedures.

Consent Agenda

Mr. King explained the consent agenda procedure. He reviewed the agenda and recommended Case 3211 be considered for approval per the procedure. He asked if any members of the Commission, staff, or public wanted to have a hearing on the case. Hearing no objections to dispensing with a full hearing, Dr. Solet moved to approve the following case per the consent agenda procedures and subject to approval of construction details by the Executive Director,

Case 3211: 13-15 Dunster St., by Porter Dunster Inc., owner, o/b/o Finbar Griffin. Install flag pole and new sign.

Ms. Berg seconded the motion. Mr. King designated the alternates to vote on matters in the order of their arrival at the meeting: Ms. Berg, Mr. Ferrara, and Ms. Tobin. The motion passed 7-0, with Ms. Berg and Mr. Ferrara voting as the alternate members.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 3181 (continued): 96 Winthrop St./57 JFK St., by Crimson Galleria LP. Construct residential addition over existing 2-story commercial building.

Mr. King noted that this was the third hearing on the case and that he had been absent at the second one. He would not chair the hearing, but would not recuse himself. He noted that Charles Teague had notified him that he planned to videotape the hearing.

Mr. Irving assumed the chair. Due to the large number in attendance he invoked the three-minute rule for public testimony, although he said individuals could cede their time to another speaker.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the premises. He compared the heights of the existing building and the neighboring garage. He reviewed the goals of the Harvard Square Conservation District.

Raj Dhanda, the property owner, thanked everyone for their input thus far. His architect had incorporated many of the suggestions. The addition had been pushed back away from the park, reducing the shadows it would cast. The colors, while not finalized, would not be black and white. He noted that many of the commercial tenants had opened up entries to the stores from Winthrop Street since the *woonerf* design improvements had been carried out in 2007. He hoped to convince Staples to use its existing street level door on Winthrop Street. He then responded to some of the public's comments at the last hearing. He described the automatic shades he would install in the new residential units, noting that

many of his tenants at 1175 Massachusetts Avenue kept their shades down. With regard to light pollution, he said that lighting would be recessed. The bulbs would not be visible. Very little light would be cast out onto the park. He would maintain control of the furnishings on the roof patios as landlord. The materials used would be of the highest quality.

Peter Quinn, the architect, presented the amended design. The upper and lower parts of the building were more integrated. The sign panel would be dark in color. The top floor was pushed back at the corner. He described the green roof, planters, and mechanical screen wall. He described the residential glazing at the upper floors. The commercial entry on JFK Street would remain, while the new residential entry would be set back behind the northwest corner of the building at Winthrop Street. He described the proposed materials including limestone cladding in two colors, aluminum windows and spandrel panels, metal planters, interior power window shades, and metal mechanical screen. He displayed shadow studies for the amended proposal, noting the decreased shadow from the front corner of the building.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the Commission, then the public.

Dr. Solet asked if the limestone would stay clean. Mr. Quinn replied that it was no different from any other stone in that way. Occasional cleaning of the building would be necessary.

Mr. Ferrara asked how many units were proposed. Mr. Quinn replied that there were 40 units.

Mr. Barry asked about the interior layout and the relationship between the upper and lower levels. Mr. Quinn described the plan and said that he had limited the number of materials on the exterior. He told Mr. Sullivan that the 3rd floor units would have balconies.

James Williamson of 1000 Jackson Place asked about the setbacks, whether the elevator penthouse was included in the shadow study, minimum unit size allowed by zoning, and the color palette. Mr. Quinn noted the setbacks (17' 10" at the 3rd floor, 12' at the 5th, 18' at the roof). He confirmed that the elevator penthouse was included in the shadow calculations. Cambridge zoning did not have a minimum unit size. Material samples and colors would be provided later but were rendered in general terms.

Ken Taylor of 23 Berkeley Street asked about the height from the southeast corner of the building (far left of JFK Street elevation) to the top of the parapet. Mr. Quinn replied that it would be about 63-65' high at that spot, but 60' high as measured from the average grade.

Carole Perrault of 9 Dana Street asked for a description of the entries. Mr. Quinn described the residential entry, storefront entries including Staples' recessed entry on Winthrop that was not currently used except for deliveries, and the main commercial entry on JFK Street for three of the restaurants.

Doug Sears of 44 JFK Street asked for a comparison to the height of the Crimson Travel (AmEx) building on the other side of the park. Mr. Quinn did not know the height of that building, but said the new 57 JFK building height would be lower than the DuBois Institute [Winthrop Square Condos].

Adrian Lamson asked about plumbing. Mr. Quinn described the interior shaftways for the drains.

Pebble Gifford of 15 Hilliard Street submitted a photograph showing the shadow cast by the existing building at 3:00 P.M. on April 2. Mr. Quinn said he would check to see that daylight savings time had been accounted for in his software program.

Mr. Teague asked about the stairs on the JFK Street side and the structural glass. Mr. Quinn answered that in the latest design, the stairs would remain and the structural glass had been eliminated.

Ms. Lamson asked about common spaces for bikes, recycling, and laundry. Mr. Quinn noted on the floor plans where those features would be located.

Ms. Perrault asked if the proponent had spoken to his abutters. Mr. Dhanda said that he had met with John DiGiovanni, the owner of the garage, and had had casual conversations with other abutters.

Jane Thompson of 93 Winthrop Street asked if each unit would have individual heating and cooling equipment. Mr. Dhanda said the plans had not yet been developed to that level.

Kari Kuelzer of 19 Copley Street and Grendel's Den said she thought the existing height of the brick base at the southeast corner of the building was inaccurately drawn.

Ms. Lamson asked about trash and recycling pick up. Mr. Dhanda described the current process for the commercial tenants.

Mr. Irving noted that matters of noise, odor, and recycling would not be addressed.

Jim Covenò asked if brick had been considered for the building since it was a more traditional material for the location. Mr. Quinn noted that limestone was also present in the area. A full brick cladding would be too heavy for the structure.

Ms. Thompson asked where the condensers would be located. Mr. Quinn replied that he intended for them to be within the screened mechanical area on the roof.

Mr. Irving opened the floor to public comment.

Mary Platt of 77 Bishop Allen Drive compared the project to air rights over the orchestra seats in Symphony Hall.

Sean Moore, an artist from Newton, displayed a copy of his painting of Winthrop Square, the original of which was hanging in the Gutman Library. His paintings of the Read Block had been used during the landmark proceedings to influence the design of the project. He noted that copies of his pictures were in the survey files at the Historical Commission office.

Ms. Perrault made a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of herself and several other members of the public who ceded their time to her. She explained that it was important to design the project with materials, mass, scale, and design qualities compatible to the building's surroundings within a National Register district. She described the National Register aspects of integrity--design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association--for the area surrounding Winthrop Park and near the Galleria building. She concluded that the proposed addition and project design for the Galleria did not have similar qualities and ~~was-were~~ incongruous with the district and would have a negative impact on the character of

the district. She indicated that any addition of more than one story would cast too much shadow on the park and diminish light and air to all. She urged the Commission to deny the application. She noted that the Commission could be more restrictive than zoning in its decisions and asked to hear more about that.

Jonathan King of 40 Essex Street said that Winthrop Square was a working public space and a nice place to meet people. The three-story addition had no merit and would provide no public benefit.

Ms. Lamson said she did not support the project. It would turn a small box into a big box and cast shadows. It would be detrimental to other businesses on the street.

Mr. Williamson distributed an article from 2003 titled, "The little park that could, and still does." He said Winthrop Square was a very important historic site and the Commission should play its role to protect Harvard Square. He asked the Commission to deny the application.

Kitty Dukakis of Brookline noted that she had been born in Cambridge and had run a program at the Kennedy School of Government promoting public-private partnerships to renew parks in decline. Winthrop Park was one of their test sites. Funding was raised from the businesses and Harvard and the park was successfully redesigned. Denser development around the park would be the wrong way to go. The park was worthy of protection because it was a rare urban environment valued by all who visit it.

Mr. Taylor addressed the factors to be considered by the Commission in making its decisions. The proposed addition was too tall. Its program was too large. The addition should cast no new shadows. The park was no less important than the Public Garden. The proposal was not appropriate.

David Chilinski of 221 Hampshire Street said the design needed breaks in the façade to articulate the mass. A mix of unit sizes would force such articulation. The site could accommodate an addition, but it needed to be adjusted in its size and setbacks. It would be interesting to see what mass could be achieved that would cast no new shadow on the park.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the Harvard Square Conservation District's goals and guidelines.

Mr. King said he was concerned by the shadows and by the bulk and mass of the addition. He urged the proponents to rethink the design. He noted the beneficial change that had been made to the design concept of the Hathaway Lofts project.

Mr. Irving agreed. The design for the Galleria addition had been improved, but not as dramatically as at the Hathaway building. He was moved by the public's defense of the park. The addition was too high, possibly by one floor. A setback along JFK Street was worth considering and shadows should be minimized.

Mr. Ferrara said something could be done to improve the structure. The commission should set the parameters. He suggested zero shadow on the park, a height matching that of the cornice of the adjacent parking garage, and a reduction of the impact of residential tenants looking down on the park.

Ms. Tobin agreed that there should be no new shadows on the park. The developer was doing a good job, but the Commission needed to provide clear guidelines.

Ms. Berg said the addition was also too close to 96 Winthrop Street. The project did not give back to the public in any way. It did not enhance the area.

Dr. Solet said she was reminded of the trust put in the Historical Commission to protect the historic character of the Square.

Mr. Crocker said the proposal did not add anything to the Winthrop Park area.

Mr. Barry agreed. He noted that the owner and the architect had both listened and acted responsively. He agreed that zero shadows was a good starting point. It was a challenging and complex corner site. More work was needed on the massing and relationships between solid and void. The tower should be eliminated.

The Commission discussed its procedural options, including another continuance and a motion for denial. Mr. Sullivan provided some language as to how specific guidelines were violated by the proposal. The Commission could vote in principle, subject to the staff drafting specific findings and language for the decision.

Mr. Dhanda asked the Commission to be as specific as possible in its guidelines so that he could return with a revised proposal with a high probability of approval.

Ms. Tobin moved to deny the application, subject to the staff's assistance in detailing the findings and reasons for the denial and the commission's specific objections and possible remedies, as summarized from the record of the Commission's deliberations. Mr. King seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with alternates Ms. Berg and Ms. Tobin voting.

[The staff subsequently prepared the following language for the Certificate of Disapproval of Application based on the record of the Commission's deliberations:
 "The proposed addition was found to be inappropriate in the context of Winthrop Park and its surroundings by reason of its height, massing, and exterior appearance. The design should minimize shadows cast on the park and better harmonize with its neighbors in its fenestration and exterior materials. Conservation District goals encouraging contemporary design and residential uses must be balanced with goals encouraging designs that are compatible with the character of the district and preserving its distinctive features."]

Case 2345 (update): 15 Berkeley St., by Jo and Mike Solet. Review installation of King of Thailand Birthplace Foundation plaque granted a temporary certificate in May 2009.

Mr. King resumed the chair. Dr. Solet left the table and recused herself, she being a co-owner of the property and co-applicant.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the historic marker, which was approved with a temporary certificate of appropriateness due to expire in May 2014.

Dr. Solet commented that since the plaque was installed in 2009 she and her husband had been visited by interested persons from all over the world. They did not object to having the marker remain in

place, with the proviso that when they were no longer the owners, the installation would need to be reconsidered if the new owners wished to have it removed.

Cholthanee Koerojna of the King of Thailand Birthplace Foundation said the house at 15 Berkeley was the most beautiful place associated with the royal family's residence in Massachusetts. Visitors were moved by the experience of being able to visit the site and it made many people happy.

John Sanzone asked if the 15 sites were all associated with the same King. Ms. Koerojna explained that the King's father came to Cambridge to attend Harvard. The sites included Mount Auburn Hospital, where the King was born, and residences of both his parents before their marriage.

Mr. Ferrara moved to renew the Certificate of Appropriateness until such time as the property is transferred to new owners, noting that the new owners would be asked to re-apply for the marker, but it would not have to be removed before the sale. Ms. Berg seconded, and the motion passed 7-0 with all alternates voting.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Case D-1331: 69 Clarendon St., by Fred & Evelyn Kantor. Demolish house (1866 or 1876).

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the staff memo about the house. She recommended that the building be found significant for its unusual style and for its associations with the Teel family of North Cambridge and with the early development of that remote area of the city.

Sean Hope, attorney for the owners, introduced his clients, Fred (Rick) and Evelyn Kantor, who were both Cambridge police officers. He explained that both of the Kantors' children were autistic and needed an open play and therapy area in the home. The owners had attempted to renovate the existing house for their needs, but the estimates came in at twice what they could afford. Demolition and new construction had been the fallback plan. He described the proposed new two-family house, which would be organized with side-by-side units rather than flats. However, the top floor of the building would be part of the owners' unit and would provide a large open play and therapy space for the children. The children would also have first floor access to the back yard. The family needed to create a healthy and happy home for their children.

Tyrone Yang, of Somerville, said he was an architect consulting on the project. He described the alterations that had been made to the building as being of lesser quality than the original construction. He explained the design priorities of the family and the proposed layout of the family's unit.

Mr. King explained the demolition delay ordinance and review procedures. He asked for public comment on the significance of the house, but there was none.

Dr. Solet agreed that the house lacked integrity of its original design due to unsympathetic alterations. She recommended that the soil, likely contaminated with lead, be replaced after demolition. She also recommended that the materials for the new construction omit volatile chemicals.

Mr. Irving moved to find the building significant, as defined in the ordinance, and for the reasons provided in the staff report. Mr. Barry seconded the motion, which passed 6-1 with Mr. Ferrara and Ms. Berg voting as alternates and Dr. Solet voting opposed.

Mr. King said he understood the proponents' reasons why a renovation of the existing building was not feasible and why the new design would be more beneficial to their needs.

Saki Pitriangas of Lincoln, Rhode Island, said he was the builder. He explained that the mansard design was proposed back when the project was a renovation of the existing house and was approved by the BZA. It would allow more space on the third floor. He described the decorative features he could add such as dentils at the eaves and drip molds over the doors and windows. He noted that many houses on the street had gable roofs and very large shed dormers. The house would be covered with vinyl siding, though fiber cement board could be used if the budget allows.

Mr. King asked for public comment.

Vice Mayor Dennis Benzan said he was a longtime friend of Mr. Kantor. He supported the application and noted that Cambridge was losing many middle-income families who could no longer afford housing for their families. He asked the Commission to vote favorably.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Dr. Solet moved to find the building not preferably preserved in light of the proposed replacement and the other information presented to the Commission. Ms. Berg seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with Ms. Berg and Mr. Ferrara voting as alternates.

Case D-1332: 26 Reservoir St., by Charlotte & Samuel Berk. Demolish house (1955).

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the history of the mid-century modern A. Sprague Coolidge House of 1955.

Mr. Sanzone remarked on the significance of the house.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Barry moved to find the building significant, as defined in the ordinance and for the reasons presented by Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Irving seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 with Mr. Ferrara and Ms. Tobin voting.

Charles Myer introduced his colleagues, Edward Pitts, architect, Matthew Cunningham, landscape architect, and Justin Corbett, landscape architect. Mr. Myer said the house was tired and needed many modifications. The new owners Carly and Samuel Berk, were longtime Cambridge residents. He said the new house would be on the northeast corner of the property, which would leave the corner open for a garden and provide a deep setback consistent with others on Highland Street. He displayed the proposed site plan and elevations and described the architectural design.

Mr. Cunningham described the landscape design, which consisted of a series of outdoor rooms that related to interior spaces. He described the proposed front walkway, retaining wall, kitchen garden, southern lawn, and bluestone terrace. New trees would be largely understory trees.

Mr. Berk said he had delivered design packets to his abutters and had so far received favorable responses from three of them.

Mr. Irving asked if the design direction had taken a cue from any other houses in the vicinity. Mr. Myer answered that the design had evolved as a garden house.

Mr. King asked if the retaining walls would try to replicate the reservoir wall. Mr. Cunningham said that they would be made of reclaimed granite.

Ms. Burks asked how tall the wall and fence would be along Highland Street. Mr. Myer answered that it would be a 4' wall with the fence on top of that.

Dr. Solet asked about the condition of the existing house. Mr. Berk answered that the radiant heating system had failed and was leaking all over. Mr. Myer said the house could be fixed, but it would need extensive work. Mr. Cunningham said the same was true of the Halperin landscape design. The plants were overgrown and bamboo had been introduced.

Dr. Solet said she admired the architecture of the existing house. If restored, it could get national attention. It would be a serious loss to demolish it.

Ms. Berg said the wall with vegetation above it would be uncomfortably high from a pedestrian's experience. Could the wall be lowered?

Mr. King said the proposed house looked wonderful, but the existing house was a relatively rare commodity in Cambridge. Why would the new house be so much better than the existing? He noted that the house had been on the market for a long time. If found preferably preserved, the Commission had the option of cutting short a demolition delay if it was convinced that no one else would preserve it. Mr. Crocker also noted that 25 Fayerweather Street had been on the market a long time.

Mr. Irving said the house was important and no evidence had been presented that convinced him that it needed to be torn down and thrown away.

Mr. Barry noted that four modern houses out of nine in the vicinity had already been demolished before they turned 50 years old.

Ms. Tobin moved to find the existing house preferably preserved because it represented part of a collection of modern buildings in this neighborhood, half of which had already been lost, and for the purpose of giving time to investigate its potential for renovation and possible landmark designation. Mr. Irving seconded the motion.

Dr. Solet asked if consideration had been given to renovating the house. Mr. Myer answered that 75% of it needed to be replaced because it was in really rough shape. The costs for renovation were almost as high as for new construction. He did not think it rose to the level of a landmark.

The Commission adopted the motion 7-0, with Ms. Tobin and Mr. Ferrara voting as alternates.

Preservation Award Nominations

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reviewed the projects and individuals nominated for awards. The Commission selected the slate of awardees, to be announced at the May program.

Mr. Irving moved to adjourn. Dr. Solet seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:01 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
Who Signed the Attendance List on April 3, 2014**

Charles Teague	23 Edmunds St
Saki Pitkiangas	294 Albion Rd, Lincoln, RI 02865
Daniel Drugge	Wagamama, 57 JFK St
John Sanzone	540 Memorial Dr.
Ciaran Dunne	156 Putnam Ave
Jim Covenò	1188 Centre St, Newton, MA 02459
Cholthanee Koerojna	15 Given Dr., Burlington, MA 01803
Mana Sanguansook	15 Given Dr., Burlington, MA 01803
David Chilinski	221 Hampshire St
Robert Banker	14 Eliot St
Susan Juretsunhe	10 Gilmore St #2
Tyrone Yang	19 Pearson Ave., Somerville, MA 02144
Sean Hope	675 Massachusetts Ave.
Charles Myer	875 Main St
Doug Hanna	26 New St
Samuel Berk	10 Channing Pl
Carly Berk	10 Channing Pl
Bob Cummins	4 Brattle St, Ste 307
Kari Kuelzer	19 Copley St
Jona & L. King	40 Essex St
Carole Perrault	9 Dana St
Jane Thompson	93 Winthrop St, #6
Steffen Pierce	02478
James Williamson	1000 Jackson Pl #45
Kitty Dukakis	85 Perry St, Brookline, MA 02246
Pebble Gifford	15 Hilliard St
Kenneth Taylor	23 Berkeley St
Douglas W. Sears	Foxclub Holdings LLC, Manager, 44 JFK St

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.

The above names represent only about half of the actual members of the public that were in attendance.
Not everyone signed the attendance sheet.