

**MINUTES OF THE HALF CROWN-MARSH NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
***Approved at the \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting***

February 11, 2019 - 6:00 PM at Lombardi Building, Basement Conference Room, 831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

Members present: James Van Sickle, *Chair*; Peter Schur, Jo Solet, *Members*; Rory O'Connor, *Alternate*.

Commissioners absent: Adrian Catalano, Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Maximillian Frank.

Staff present: Eric Hill, Survey Director.

Members of the Public: N/A

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James Van Sickle, Chair, called the hearing to order at 6:00pm. He began by explaining the rules and procedures for the Commission and laid out the order for how the hearing would be held.

**HCM-440: 32-34 Sparks Street, by Creative Properties on Centre, LLC. Enclose porches on rear elevation.**

Staff showed slides and gave a quick history of the property and the determinations by the Commission at the 01-14-19 public hearing. It was noted that the applicant was previously approved for replacement of windows and the installation of window wells on the property at 32-34 Sparks Street. Staff mentioned that at the January hearing, the Commission had concerns over the drawings not being accurate as well as the proposed design feeling too bulky and that not enough openings were in the design which should emulate more of a sleeping porch in concept.

The applicant, Leon Navickas mentioned that after the last hearing, he contacted his architect to update the proposal according to what he believed would be appropriate based on comments by the Commission. He went on to state that he wanted the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor porches enclosed with the first-floor deck being reduced in size to allow for off-street parking off Foster Street. The enclosed porches would offer more living space for his family. Mr. Navickas mentioned that he is open to the design in terms of windows but felt that a continuous row of windows would offer additional light and be an ode to the original rear porches. He stated that he preferred windows to match others on the house rather than the multi-lite window option in the drawings.

Mr. Van Sickle opened the meeting for fact-finding and questions to staff or the applicant and asked the applicant to clarify that they indeed prefer the 6/1 option for the windows on the proposal.

Mr. Navickas agreed that he preferred the 6/1 option for consistency.

Commissioner Solet asked the applicant if the proposed windows would be operable.

Mr. Navickas stated that they are open to the windows being fixed, but he would like them to be operable.

Ms. Solet recommended that the windows be operable for energy savings and air flow in the home. She went on to state that she liked this proposal much more than the previous iteration.

Mr. Van Sickle asked the applicant to submit hardline drawings of updated 6-1 proposal and stated that the project was moving in the right direction. Commissioner O'Connor agreed.

A motion to vote was called for and **Dr. Schur made a motion to approve the proposal with the condition the applicant submit updated drawings showing the 6/1 window option to staff. Commissioner Solet seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0 to approve the application.**

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**HCM-446: 11 Willard Street, by Christopher Grover, Accurate Environmental. Replace 34 windows on main structure.**

Staff showed slides and gave a quick history of the property stating that the house was constructed around 1852 and was added onto in 1928 with a three-story hipped-roof addition in the front yard which is why the house may look so unique on the street. Staff explained that the applicant, a contractor as well as the owners and their child were at the hearing. Mr. Hill went on to explain that the owners were asking to replace all windows on the structure due to concerns with lead paint on the windows as well as energy loss due to the deterioration of the windows. In the presentation, staff mentioned that the windows on the home are a mixture of five different lite configurations: 4/4, 6/6, 8/8, 3/6 and 3/3. Staff stated that he recommended if the Commission deemed replacement is warranted, the windows should be replaced with the lite configurations to match existing.

Mr. Van Sickle began the discussion by referencing the "Guidelines for Preservation and Replacement of Historic Wood Windows in Cambridge" report drafted by the Cambridge Historical Commission in 2009. He went on to state that the Commission's policy is to save historic windows if possible and referenced that the report, along with many others note that historic windows, when repaired, save money and energy compared to lesser replacement windows due to quality of construction and density of wood.

Ms. Solet seconded Mr. Van Sickle's comments adding that she has original 1860s windows in her home and the first growth wood used at the time is of a much higher quality compared to wood today.

Applicant Mike Howard of Accurate Environmental introduced himself and mentioned that he was a reputable contractor with years of experience in both restoration of windows and replacement of windows in historic homes.

Ms. Tang, the owner of the home stated that her and her husband (also in attendance) contacted a historic window expert several years ago who replaced some pulleys on the windows, added insulation and installed new storm windows to help with energy loss which was occurring at the property.

Mr. Van Sickle stated that a majority of energy loss in old homes tends to be caused by cracks in framing, poorly installed or settled windows or from the roof.

The owner agreed but felt that it is possible that replacement windows would make the home more livable as she explained different rooms vary in temperatures upwards of 10+ degrees on the same floor with the upper floors being very hot.

Mr. Howard, the contractor stated that he has a level 1 license to remove lead from windows and explained how it would be done on site on areas required by state and federal regulations. He went on to explain that the replacement windows, if approved would be installed over the lead paint windows

and would not be invasive at all, which is why the owner preferred that option. He stated that the dip tank technique for removing lead from windows can be very labor intensive and if not done perfectly, the windows can warp or expand and no longer fit the openings.

Commissioner Van Sickle asked the applicant what the warranty on the proposed replacement windows are.

Mr. Howard stated that there was a 15-year warranty on the windows, as long as a storm window is not installed. He mentioned that if a storm window was also installed, the manufacturers warranty would be revoked.

Mr. Van Sickle stated that he believed those windows had a 10-year warranty and the proposed windows had issues with seals breaking and that the finger-joint wood used in and the clad windows was of poor quality. He asked the applicant if counter balances would be used. He also stated that he replaced some historic windows in his home with double-glazed windows, out of the six replaced, two of them sprung leaks within a few years.

Mr. Howards stated that the windows would be stuffed with insulation and explained that the windows proposed are a whole system would fit on top of the existing framing, essentially encasing the lead paint and original detail.

Commissioner O'Connor shared that he renovated a Greek Revival home in Worcester, MA in the 1970s and the windows had 100 years of paint layered on the windows. The windows were put into dip tanks to remove the lead paint and they came out "furry" and after scraping the paint off and sanded to fit into the openings, it was determined that his son got lead poisoning as they were currently living in the house at the time of the renovation. He went on to state that if he had to do it again, he would take out the windows and replace them and keep the glass panes.

The owner stated that the main reasoning for wanting to replace the windows is due to concerns over their small child and health impacts that restoring the windows could possibly have on her child.

Commissioner Van Sickle asked the contractor what the cost difference would be between the two options.

Mr. Howard said that restoring the windows would cost the homeowners more as it is a more labor-intensive job.

Mrs. Tang stated that she is more concerned with her family's health over the cost difference.

The applicant stated that he is very good at what he does and could scrape the windows on site and there would not be concerns on dust or particles getting in the air. He could do either option and wanted the homeowners to decide what they were most comfortable with.

**Dr. Schur made a motion to continue the application to a subsequent hearing to allow the owners to do further research and decide how they would like to move forward.**

Commissioner Solet stated that she understands both sides but felt that the windows would be better in the long run if restored.

Mrs. Tang stated that her preference was to replace the windows as there would be no doubt in her mind that the house is safe, which is her number one priority.

**Dr. Schur rescinded his prior motion.**

**Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Dr. Schur seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0 to approve the application.**

Dr. Solet stated to the applicant that the Commission suggested the windows be restored, and if they were, no approval would be required by the Commission. Commissioner Solet also stated that if they installed new storm windows, approval would not be required.

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**Minutes of January 14, 2019 hearing:**

**Dr. Schur made a motion to approve the minutes pending the mentioned edits. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, 4-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Hill  
Survey Director  
Cambridge Historical Commission