

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

May 4, 2017 - 806 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge Senior Center, - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: William King, *Chair*; Bruce Irving, *Vice Chair*; William Barry, Chandra Harrington, Jo Solet, *Members*; Joseph Ferrara, Susannah Tobin *Alternate*
Members absent: Robert Crocker, *Member*; Kyle Sheffield, *Alternate*
Staff present: Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*; Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*
Public present: See attached list.

With a quorum present, Chair King called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M. He designated alternates Ferrara and Tobin to vote on all matters. He described the consent agenda procedure and proposed the following cases for approval:

Case 3774: 11 Garden St., by First Church Cambridge. Move path, gate and fence; alter landscape.

Case 3776: Hastings Hall, 1533-1541 Mass. Ave., by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Alter window and install window A/C unit.

Case 3777: Radcliffe Gates, by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Alter signs at gates.

Mr. Barry moved to approve Cases 3774, 3776, and 3777 per the consent agenda procedure. Ms. Tobin seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Mr. King announced that the advertised hearing in the matter of Case 3779: 40 Cottage Street would be postponed at the request of the applicants.

Mr. King described the Commission's hearing procedures and stated the three-minute rule for public comment.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 3772: 5 Longfellow Park, by Friends Meeting at Cambridge. Replace two windows.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the application.

Joe Tierney, a member of the Meeting, said they wished to replace two casement windows on the south end of the second floor of the meeting house with double-hung windows with simulated 4+4 divided lights. The windows opened onto the balcony, and they were worried that a child might fall out. He told Ms. Harrington that they were 28" x 50". [Mr. Irving arrived.]

Mr. King asked for public comment.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked if the Meeting had considered installing a guard. Mr. Tierney said they had, but the windows needed replacement anyway and guards would be unattractive.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan observed that the Commission did not lightly approve window replacements, but given the relative lack of visibility he didn't think the pattern was inappropriate.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness on the basis that the new windows were not incongruous and not prominently visible to the public. Mr. Barry seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Case 3775: Grays Hall, 7 Harvard Yard, by President & Fellows of Harvard College. Construct sloped walkway to basement entry; remove mechanical lift; relocate bike racks.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the application. He noted that the current lift had been granted a Certificate of Appropriateness some years before [in 1988].

Naz Cooper of Harvard University said that the basement would be renovated for the University's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) program. The lift was outdated and kept breaking down. It would be replaced by a 5% sloped walkway with landscaped margins and a built-in bench. She told Mr. Irving that the path would be 6' wide.

Mr. Ferrara asked if the finish on the foundation wall would match the existing granite. Ms. Cooper said the battered granite foundation wall would be exposed, cleaned, and pointed, and would not be covered with smooth dressed granite; it would be as shown on the rendering, not as on the elevation. The ramp would be concrete.

Mr. King asked for public comment.

Marilee Meyer asked if there were other external entries to the basement. Ms. Cooper said there were not.

Patrick Casey, a member of the public, supported the project.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Irving moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed, delegating approval of masonry details to the staff. Mr. Barry seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Case 3778: 4 Craigie St., by Berkeley-Craigie Condominium Trust. Paving alterations; install water feature and stone wall with BBQ grill.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the proposal by one owner of the condominium to pave part of the yard and install a grill next to the front walk, to be shielded by the existing hornbeam and privet hedges. The photos, taken in February and in April, after the hedges had leafed out, demonstrated the high visibility of the project during the winter months.

Matthew Cunningham, the landscape architect, said his clients lived on the second floor and this yard and the adjacent parking spot constituted their only exclusive-use open space. The goal was to create a small usable terrace with Goshen Stone pavers, a pad for two chairs, a barbeque grill set in a masonry surround, and a small water feature. New 4" x 8" pavers would be installed in the parking area. More hornbeam and inkberry bushes would be planted for privacy.

Mr. Cunningham told various commissioners that the new pavers would be flush with the existing, that the grill had to be at least 10' from the house, that the gas line would be underground, and that the finish would be stainless steel. It could be painted black, but that would not be desirable from a maintenance point of view.

Mr. King asked for public comment.

Marilee Meyer said the chair pad shouldn't float on the lawn. Mr. Cunningham replied that he had placed it partly in the planting bed for that reason.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Barry asked about the grill. Mr. Cunningham replied that grill manufacturer Weber had a black option, but it was larger. Mr. Barry said the finish should be as dull as possible.

Mr. King asked about lighting. Mr. Cunningham replied that apart from two new lights by the door the lighting scheme had not been determined. Mr. King said the hornbeam would screen the lights in the summer, but not in the winter. ~~Mr. Doug Russell, the owner,~~ said it would be used only rarely in the off-season.

Mr. Sullivan asked if there was any other possible location for a grill; this was a front-yard condition, and there was no precedent for such a thing in the historic district. Mr. Cunningham described the exclusive use area, and ~~Doug Mr. Russell, the owner,~~ clarified the boundaries.

Mr. Ferrara asked about screening the grill with more evergreens. Mr. Cunningham said they had included several inkberries 4'-5' tall.

Mr. Cunningham told Mr. King that the height of the countertop would be 36", and the grill would add another 18".

Mr. Sullivan asked if the owners had considered a portable grill. Mr. Cunningham replied that a built-in had greater cooking efficiency, and that they were concerned about security.

Mr. King said he would be inclined to approve a temporary certificate, perhaps for five years.

Mr. Cunningham told Mr. Sullivan the furniture would be stored in the winter.

Mr. Ferrara compared the grill and its enclosure to a front-yard HVAC condenser. Mr. Sullivan noted that the property had two front yards because it was on a corner.

Mr. Irving agreed with Mr. Ferrara. The desire for a more efficient grill didn't convince him that a permanent structure would be appropriate. A pad for a moveable grill would be acceptable.

Mr. Cunningham asked if it would make a difference if evergreens were substituted for the hornbeams and privet. Mr. Sullivan said that the Commission usually considered vegetation to be ephemeral. Mr. Cunningham said they had considered a wood enclosure, but that would be combustible.

Ms. Harrington asked how the commissioners would feel about a stone wall. Mr. Irving said that would delineate a yard.

Mr. Russell said that a five-year permit would allow the plantings to mature. Mr. Irving said he would be willing to approve it on that basis.

Mr. Ferrara said the proposal was a permanent solution for an intermittent need. He moved to approve the paving and water feature but to reject the grill and its enclosure as incongruous to the Historic District. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Case D-1432 (continued): 50 York St., by Just A Start Corp. Construct replacement residential building to replace St. Patrick's building.

Mr. King said the Commission had already approved demolition of the fire-damaged former St. Patrick's Church, but the owner had returned to discuss the design of the replacement building.

Robert MacArthur of Just A Start introduced John Winslow, the architect. Mr. Winslow reported that the Board of Zoning Appeal had approved a replacement structure on the same footprint and with the same number of units. His design echoed the three-decker scale of the neighborhood and commemorated the church by including the quatrefoil stained glass window from the front of the church in the stair tower facing the park. The exterior would be a mixture of cementitious planks and panels.

Mr. Ferrara asked about the windows. Mr. Winslow said casements would be much more energy efficient than double-hungs.

Mr. Sullivan asked about the other stained glass windows. Mr. MacArthur said some might be used inside or on the third floor deck, but that had not been determined.

Mr. King asked for public comment.

Marilee Meyer asked where the stained glass would be placed and how it would be lit. Mr. Winslow said it would be in a stairwell and lit by natural light. She commended the design.

Mr. King closed the public comment period and said no vote was required. He said it was a pleasing design. Mr. Ferrara complimented the massing and the incorporation of the quatrefoil window. Mr. Irving concurred.

Case D-1446: 247 Lake View Ave., by Duncan MacArthur. Relocate house (1899) on lot.

Mr. King explained the demolition delay ordinance procedures and noted that applications to relocate a house on its lot were a rare occurrence.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and said the house was built by the city as a residence for the chief engineer of the nearby waterworks.

Duncan MacArthur, the owner and builder, said he wanted to move the house 10' to one side and build an addition. His client wanted an unobstructed driveway.

Robert Linn, the architect, said he had designed two options for discussion with the neighbors: retaining the house and building a garage, or demolishing the house and building two detached single-family condominiums. People felt more comfortable keeping the existing house. Then the design changed for the new buyer, and the present version included moving the house to the right and building a connected new unit and garage in back. There would be new windows, a new dormer, and a new chimney on the right side. Drainage problems in the rear will be addressed in a plan that would be submitted to DPW.

Ms. Tobin moved to find the house at 247 Lake View Avenue significant for the reasons stated in the staff memorandum. Mr. Barry seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Mr. King asked for public comment.

George Sallum, owner of the property at 249 Lake View Avenue, said there was a stream at the back of the lot. He would like to be assured that the grading would not shed water onto the adjoining lots.

Patrick Micozzi of 82 Standish Street asked how cars would access the garage. Mr. Linn said the slot sloped to the rear, so there would have to be a retaining wall near the back property line to level out the grade. Mr. Micozzi questioned whether the design was really preserving the historic look of the house.

City Councillor Jan Devereux of 255 Lake View Avenue complimented the developer for having met with neighbors and assuring them that surface water conditions will be improved. She noted that there was an important mature street tree in front that should be protected and a younger one that might need to be repositioned.

Marilee Meyer ~~said~~ asked if the architects had considered putting the breezeway behind the house. Mr. Linn replied that it also functioned as a mudroom and for storage. The height of the house would not change. He described the window changes.

Tim Medari of 112 Fayerweather Street said he was glad the house would be preserved and that it was a nice design.

George Sallum said the rear of the lot was 6' lower than the front. He asked the developer to promise that there would not be a drastic change in elevation. Mr. Linn promised that it would be sensitively treated. Mr. King observed that the issue was not relevant to the Commission's jurisdiction.

Mr. Micozzi complained about his view of the garage doors that would be facing him.

Mr. King said he was not troubled by the window changes, the breezeway, or the rear elevation. Mr. Irving commented that the exterior chimney and dormer were wrong for the period of the house.

Mr. Linn told Ms. Harrington that moving the house would eliminate the shared driveway and allow them to construct a new foundation,

Ms. Meyer agreed with Mr. Irving about the inappropriateness of the new chimney. She disliked the length of the breezeway.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan suggested that the house be found preferably preserved pending preparation of a survey, landscape plan, and rear elevation. Mr. Linn said they might consider that if there was a delay. The DPW process wasn't easy; it would be a hardship to go through that before approval. Mr. MacArthur said they would make sure that the drainage situation would not be made worse. They would build a masonry retaining wall with appropriate screening.

Mr. Barry agreed with the comments about the chimney and the dormer, but observed that review of a demolition permit application should not rise to that level of detail. He felt the same way about the drainage. There was public interest in the matter but there was a lot the neighbors were interested in that the Commission wouldn't normally get into. He moved to find the building not preferably preserved in the context of the current proposal.

Mr. Ferrara said he was fine with moving the building but felt there was not enough information presented about the topography.

Mr. King asked Mr. MacArthur if he would be willing to continue for one month. Mr. MacArthur agreed, but said there was a good chance that he would pursue a different plan that would not come under CHC jurisdiction. He would rather start the delay than continue the hearing

Mr. King observed that there had been no second to Mr. Barry's motion.

Mr. Sullivan suggested the Commission find the building preferably-preserved. The owner could return anytime during the delay and present new information.

Ms. Tobin moved to ~~fine-find~~ 247 Lake View Avenue preferably preserved. Ms. Harrington seconded, and the motion passed 5-0-1 with Mr. Barry opposed.

Public Hearing: Demolition Review

Case D-1431 (amendment): 227/229 Concord Ave., by 227 Concord Nominee Trust c/o Lauren Harder. Amend new location of house on lot.

Case D-1447: 221-223 Concord Ave., by 227 Concord Nominee Trust c/o Lauren Harder. Demolish retail buildings (1925).

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and reminded the Commission that it had approved a different application for the property in January. In that case he had found the ell of 227/229 Concord Avenue and one retail storefront of 221-223 Concord to be not significant, and the Commission had approved a relocation of 227 Concord away from the property line. The current application envisioned complete removal of 221-223 Concord Avenue and relocation of 227 to a slightly different location. He recommended that both the store and the house be found significant.

Mr. Irving moved to find 221-223 and 227/229 Concord Avenue significant for the reasons stated in the staff memo. Mr. Ferrara seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Mark Boyes-Watson, the architect, said that the previous scheme involved keeping two stores and constructing expensive underground parking. There was little pedestrian traffic on Concord Avenue and the stores had limited value. The new site plan built two new single-family houses and four attached townhouses with on-grade parking. The actual design for 227 would not have an internal garage.

[Dr. Solet arrived]

Lauren Harder, the co-owner, said she had already pulled permits for the original scheme. About 15% of the buildings on this stretch of Concord Avenue were commercial, but the use was very challenging. Parking was difficult and the sidewalks were narrow and congested. It was hard to find a good retail tenant. If they kept the stores they would probably have to be rented as professional offices.

Mr. King asked for public comment.

Marilee Meyer asked if they had thought about reducing the depth of the stores. Mr. Boyes-Watson answered in the affirmative He said removing the commercial building would add green space to the street and alleviate congestion.

Tim Medari said that the street was actually heavily used by pedestrians. Mr. Boyes-Watson said that for retail, either pedestrian counts or parking were important. Stores hadn't lasted long in that location. The building would have to be brought up to code.

Mary Ellen Wynn of 6 Bond Street said there were plenty of thriving small businesses. Katherine Malone of Saville Street said there were lots of pedestrians and small shops.

Randi Goodman of Walden Street asked if the only reason for razing the retail building was cost. Ms. Harder said it was not just economics. The only viable use was professional offices.

Susan Sachs of 11 Appleton Road opposed the demolition and read a letter from Nan and Bill Stone asking for a delay until the zoning petition could be heard.

Mr. King announced that the Commission had received about 200 communications, all with similar sentiments. He asked Mr. Sullivan about the origin of the names "Huron Village" and "Observatory Hill Village," which several members of the public had used. Mr. Sullivan said the first newspaper mentions of Huron Village appeared about 1990; the latter term was new to him. Mr. King mentioned former commissioner Charles Eliot's rhetorical question, "When is history?"

Marilee Meyer said there were diverse offerings on the street, and mentioned a furniture store and the branch library. The commercial corridor had a human scale.

Tim Medari said it was a handsome building.

Wesley Taylor of 337 Walden Street said it was a walking neighborhood that didn't need parking and didn't need more residential construction.

Kristen Mann of 367 Concord Avenue said they were trying to keep the balance of residential and business on the street.

Wani Yang of 280-282 Concord Avenue said her family hadn't had trouble finding commercial tenants.

Carol Weinhaus of Concord Avenue said there was enormous support in the community for preserving the local stores. Removing these three would hurt the remaining ones.

Mr. King closed the public comment period.

Dr. Solet said that she had attended the holiday walk on the street. The cohesion of the community was stunning. She supported preserving the stores.

Mr. King said that use was the purview of zoning. It was clearly in the interest of the public to find the existing buildings preferably preserved until the Council decided about the zoning.

Ms. Harrington said she was not convinced that the owners had considered all the options for the commercial building.

Mr. Barry said that although the Commission had no jurisdiction over use, uses contribute to the visual qualities of buildings. The retail building contributed to the streetscape and the character of the neighborhood, and while the residential project would be nice it would not be a good replacement.

Mr. Barry moved to find 227/229 Concord Avenue preferably preserved in the context of the present proposal. Dr. Solet seconded, but Mr. King noted that she had not been present at the beginning of the hearing.

[Dr. Solet left the meeting.]

Ms. Tobin seconded Mr. Irving's motion, which passed 6-0.

Mr. Barry moved to find 221-223 Concord Avenue preferably preserved in the context of the present proposal. Ms. Tobin seconded, and the motion passed 6-0.

Other Business

Mr. Sullivan announced that the Harvard Collection application would be reviewed at a special meeting on May 25 in the Henrietta Attles Conference Room at the Cambridge Rindge & Latin School.

Ms. Tobin moved to adjourn. Mr. Barry seconded, and the motion passed 6-0 at 9:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks, Preservation Planner
Charles Sullivan, Executive Director

**Members of the Public
Who Signed the Attendance List on May 4, 2017**

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| Joseph Tierney | 35 Hawthorne Street, Somerville |
| Marilee Meyer | 10 Dana Street |
| Oliver Radford | 2067 Massachusetts Avenue |
| Diane Gray | 1350 Massachusetts Avenue |
| Nazneen Cooper | 60 JFK Street |
| Kate Loosian | 79 Brattle Street |
| Mark Verkennis | 1350 Massachusetts Avenue |
| Doug and Janet Russell | 4 Craigie Street |
| Matthew Cunningham | 411 Main Street, Stoneham |
| George Sallum | 127 Larch Road |
| Patrick Micozzi | 82 Standish Street |
| Susan Sachs | 11 Appleton Road |
| Mary Ellen Wynn | 6 Bond Street |
| Donald Johnson | 46 Kingally Road, Waltham |
| Karin Case | 60 Ossipee Street, Somerville |
| Laurie Friedman | 33 Essex Street |
| Robert MacArthur | 1035 Cambridge Street |
| John Winslow | 89 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington |
| Jan Devereux | 255 Lake View Avenue |

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.