

Approved 8/26/13

Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District

Monday, June 24, 2013 - 5:30 PM - 831 Massachusetts Ave., Basement Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Constantin von Wentzel, *Chair*; Art Bardige, Catherine Henn, *Members*, and Heli Meltsner, *Alternate*

Commissioners Absent: Mark Golberg, *Vice Chair*; Robert Crocker, Theresa Hamacher, and Maryann Thompson, *Members*

Staff Present: Sarah Burks

Members of the Public: see attached sign-in sheet

With a quorum present, Chair von Wentzel called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M. He made introductions and reviewed the hearing procedures. He designated alternate member Heli Meltsner to vote on all matters.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

AH-441 (Amendment): 6 Hillside Pl., by Cambridge Nursery School. Consider amending plans for renovations and additions of school to eliminate the condition to replicate the exterior portion of the chimney due to cost.

Mr. von Wentzel stated that he was an abutter to an abutter of 6 Hillside Place, but he was not visually affected and could be impartial in the matter, so he would not recuse himself. He stated that he had no conflict of interest in the matter.

Sarah Burks, Preservation Planner for the Historical Commission, reviewed the commission's jurisdiction in the case. The Commission's review was binding because of the large scope of work involved. The two conditions were placed on the original certificate of appropriateness, one of them being that the chimney, if removed inside, needed to be replicated from the roof up. [Ms. Meltsner arrived].

Mark Hammer, architect, explained that the cost of the chimney replication had been itemized in the bidding documents, so that the school could compare costs for that element. The bids had come in at about \$6,000 for the faux chimney (2" brick veneer).

Ms. Burks showed slides of the school, noting the areas that were visible from public ways, including the chimney. She compared slides from the spring and summer, with more of the building being visible before the trees leafed out. She read an e-mail communication that had been received from Andrea Koschwanez, of the school, requesting a certificate of hardship for the removal of the chimney replication from the scope of work.

Ms. Meltsner asked if the chimney had ever been functional. Mr. Hammer replied that it had been used to vent the boiler, but he did not think it was original. It was utilitarian. The new gas-powered furnace would be vented out the roof, but in a smaller vent.

Janet Kovner, of the school, noted that the gas line would be brought up Hillside Place for the new boiler.

There were no members of the public present to ask questions or comment on the application.

Mr. von Wentzel noted that the commissioners had received several letters of support from neighbors of the school. He said he could argue for financial hardship.

Ms. Meltsner agreed. She said she supported the request. It appeared to not be original.

Mr. Bardige explained that chimneys were protected by the Commission because they were often important architectural features.

Mr. von Wentzel noted that in this case, the visual impact of the chimney was small from the public way. He moved to approve the application for a certificate of hardship for the non-original chimney on the basis that it was a minor feature, and inconspicuous from the public way. He further moved to find that the removal of the chimney would not cause substantial detriment to the public welfare or substantial derogation from the purposes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District.

Ms. Henn seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

Minutes

Mr. Bardige moved to approve the March 2013 minutes, as submitted. Ms. Henn seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

Staff Report

Ms. Burks reported on cases heard since the March meeting of the Commission. She noted complaints received about changes to the fence at 1 Hillside Place. She reported that the stone wall at 87 Raymond Street had been approved as part of the original application and was being completed now that the construction equipment had been removed from the neighboring property at 79 Raymond Street.

She reported on the new online permitting system and the mailing of newsletters to the property owners in the district.

Ms. Henn moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Meltsner seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
that Signed Attendance Sheet
June 24, 2013**

Andrea Koschwanez	119 Oxford St
Janet Kovner	6 Hillside Pl
Mark Hamner	19 Bishop Allen Dr

Addresses are in Cambridge, unless otherwise specified.