

MINUTES OF THE HALF CROWN-MARSH NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Approved at the April 13, 2015 Meeting

March 9, 2015 - 6:00 PM at Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge

Members present: Judith Dortz, *Vice Chair*; Deborah Masterson, *member*; Peter Schur, *alternate*

Members absent: James Van Sickle, *Chair*; William King, *member*; Marie-Pierre Dillenseger and Charles Smith, *alternates*

Staff present: Samantha Paull

Members of the Public: see attached list

Ms. Judith Dortz, acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02pm and gave an overview of the agenda. Ms. Dortz discussed meeting procedures.

HCM-274: 35 Willard Street, by Scott Zink. Exterior renovation, addition, deck and move structure.

Ms. Paull gave an overview of the history of the property, structure, and applicant's proposal before the Commission.

Mr. Scott Zink, an owner, stated that he had been renovating properties with his dad for about 11 years. They bought this property in the fall. He stated that Peter Quinn was hired and the parties had been working on a renovation plan for the structure. Mr. Zink noted that he hoped to make this structure more of a single family style structure as currently it was a three family.

Mr. Peter Quinn, the architect, added that the final siding details would replicate the historic siding dimensions, which had yet to be uncovered. He said that almost the entire structure had been covered with aluminum siding, including the mansard roof portion. He added that the renderings proposed simpler mansard features rather than replicating ornate features like those on the decked out mansard structures in the Avon Hill area. He stated that because the structure currently had non-conforming setbacks, the proposal included moving the structure outside of the setbacks, which allowed for the applicant to construct an addition without limitations on size or requiring a special permit. Mr. Quinn noted that as the foundation needed repair and would be rebuilt regardless, it was determined that moving the structure would be the best approach.

Ms. Dortz asked how far the house was being moved from Dinsmore Court. Mr. Quinn responded that it was approximately two (2) feet on Dinsmore Court. Ms. Deborah Masterson, Commissioner, stated it looks like there would be more room on Willard Street and on Dinsmore Street but less between the subject property and the structure that faces Mount Auburn Street. Mr. Quinn responded yes, that was correct. Dr. Peter Schur, Commissioner, asked if the building on Mt. Auburn Street was close to the property line. Mr. Quinn responded that it was reflected on the site plan.

Dr. Schur asked how the new basement would be built. Mr. Quinn replied that the house would be jacked up, placed on supports, the old foundation would be removed, the new foundation dug, and then once

the new foundation was built the house would be moved and placed on that. Ms. Masterson asked if the foundation was of the same height as the current foundation. Mr. Quinn responded yes. Ms. Masterson replied that it appeared that the structure was getting taller. Mr. Quinn responded that the roof was increasing from a 1/12 to a 2/12 pitch to address drainage issues and the interior floor height was being altered; however, that would not impact the exterior of the structure. Ms. Masterson asked about the ceiling height of the basement. Mr. Quinn replied he was proposing eight (8) foot ceilings. Dr. Schur asked if the basement would have a pump. Mr. Quinn responded yes, it would have a sump pump connected to the sewer.

Ms. Paull asked if the applicants had reached out to the neighbors about digging down as the area is known to have water issues. Mr. Zink replied no, but they did speak with the neighbors about the overall renovation.

Mr. Quinn stated that the project included two additions, one on the rear elevation and one on the left elevation.

Dr. Schur about the surrounding context. Mr. Quinn replied that there is a mixture of styles and heights but the density increases as you move toward Mt. Auburn Street with a mixed use structure on the corner of Willard Street and Mt. Auburn Street. Mr. Quinn noted that there were both single and multi-family structures along Willard Street, as well as three story structures and a number of mansards.

Ms. Masterson expressed concern about the amount of open space being lost by the substantial addition. Mr. Quinn replied that open space was calculated as pervious area, and the driveway did not count toward the open space. He added that the property would have an outdoor patio space behind the garage and lower plantings mixed with street trees along Dinsmore Court. Dr. Schur asked if Mr. Quinn knew the current amount of open space on the lot. Mr. Quinn responded that he had not calculated that.

Ms. Masterson asked where the six (6) foot fence section was proposed. Ms. Paull responded that the six (6) foot fence section was added on a later landscape plan and was not properly noticed and would need to be addressed separately after it was properly noticed.

Ms. Dortz expressed her concern of the impact of the proposed addition on the area, as most of the neighborhood was historically developed as workers cottages. She stated that the District Order emphasizes the conservation of views through the property. Ms. Dortz said that the proposal almost doubled the square footage on the lot and felt that it was excessive for the site and neighborhood, which in turn would impact the character of the neighborhood of the street and the smaller homes on Dinsmore Court. She added that it felt overpowering compared to the very modest two story structures along Dinsmore Court and more ornate with the two story bays on both street elevations.

Ms. Masterson agreed with Ms. Dortz and noted that she felt that the proposed additions would alter the character of the street and neighborhood. Ms. Masterson emphasized that the concern was along the Dinsmore Court elevation and that the proposed addition abutting the property facing Mt. Auburn Street was in keeping with the scale. She was concerned with the loss of visually open space along Dinsmore Court and lack of transition. She noted that it did not correspond with the modest character of the neighborhood and did not conserve views through the yards and houses. She commended the renovation aspect of the project; however, as proposed, the addition was too big.

Ms. Dortz concurred and stressed concern that the open space would be lost with the proposed project as the outdoor patio area Mr. Quinn referred to was a private space interior to the lot. She hoped Mr. Quinn would look more to the “twin house” on the opposite side of Dinsmore Court for design and scale cues. Mr. Quinn responded that there were larger structures on Mt. Auburn Street and that he did not feel it was fair for the subject property to be compared to houses on Dinsmore Court, which was a grouping of small, two-story cottages. Ms. Dortz replied that was true; however, an addition to the subject property would need to fit in with the scale and massing of both Willard Street and Dinsmore Court. Dr. Schur stated that the Commission’s concern was with the Dinsmore Court elevation; that Willard Street was fine. Mr. Quinn asked if the Commission wanted the entire project to be reduced in size as he did not want to reduce the height of the entire structure. Dr. Schur offered that it was an option to continue the hearing and return with revised drawings.

Ms. Paull reiterated the option of returning to the Commission in April, taking the comments and concerns of the Commission into consideration and incorporating them into revised drawings. She summarized the concerns of the Commission – to reduce the scale of the addition on Dinsmore Court to provide a better transition and look into reducing the bays from two-story to single story bays to better reflect the simple, workers cottage character of the area. Ms. Paull noted that there are primarily one story bays along Willard Street but there were some two story bays in the greater area, with one on Sparks Street.

Mr. Quinn requested that he have time to review the Commissions requests and that the application be continued to the April hearing.

Dr. Schur made a motion to continue the application until the April meeting. Ms. Masterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0.

Minutes

Ms. Masterson requested that the minutes be reviewed and voted on at the April hearing.

Ms. Masterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Schur seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0 at 6:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha M. Paull
Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public
(who signed the Attendance list)**

Scott Zink	Applicant	7 Morrison Rd W, Wakefield, MA
Peter Quinn	Architect for 35 Willard Street	259 Elm St, # 301, Somerville, MA

Note: All addresses are located in Cambridge unless otherwise noted.