

## Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

March 7, 2011 - 6:00 P.M. – 344 Broadway, City Hall Annex/McCusker Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Commission Members Present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Lestra Litchfield, Carole Perrault, Charles Redmon, *Members*

Commission Members Absent: Siobhan McMahon, Sue-Ellen Myers, Monika Pauli, *Alternates*

Staff: Eiliesh Tuffy

Members of the Public: See attached sign-in sheet

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With a quorum present, Ms. Goodwin called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

### Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

#### **MC-3817: 107-1/2—109 Inman St., by Travis Powell. Full exterior restoration of two structures on the lot.**

Staff presented images of the property, which includes an 1871 Mansard toward the front of the lot and a 1912 3-flat at the rear of the lot. Both structures have been clad in aluminum siding since at least the time of the citywide survey in the 1960s. The Mansard had a 2-over-1 muntin pattern. The 3-flat had a 6-over-2 muntin pattern.

An interior permit has already been signed off on for a full gut rehabilitation of both structures. The exterior rehabilitation proposal calls for removal of the aluminum siding and original clapboards as well as all of the existing windows. Replacement materials selected by the developer are HardiPlank siding and JeldWen double-hung windows with grille-between-glass muntins. The front door of the Mansard is proposed to be altered from a single door entrance to a paired door entrance. The non-original vestibule would be removed and a more historically accurate covered open porch would be constructed.

Ms. Goodwin asked the developer to clarify what were the replacement windows for the Mansard building. Mr. Powell said the windows in the Mansard were wood, but had been spot replaced throughout the building. The windows in the 3-flat are 15 year old vinyl. Mr. Powell was proposing JeldWen aluminum-clad wood windows with a black exterior finish. He said that he had taken a cue from the surrounding buildings to select the muntin divisions.

Ms. Perrault asked if there was any paneling under the windows on the 3-sided bay of the Mansard, and what the porch roof would look like. The developer said they were considering bringing back paneled bay details, based on the surrounding Mansards along the street. The porch roof is to be a shallow hip roof with asphalt shingles. The Commissioners pointed out that the proposed round, fluted wood porch columns didn't quite match the neighboring porch styles, and that straight, square posts would be a better selection.

Ms. Litchfield asked if they had considered simulated divided lites instead of grille-between-glass muntins, since their potential buyers would very likely be sophisticated in noticing those details, and it could make a big difference, especially since the owners would not be able to paint the muntins to match their interior if they are between the glass. The owner said it was a price consideration.

Mr. Hsiao commented that the developer was faced with two very different houses and that working out the details would be very important. He agreed that the posts should be square, and encouraged the owner to pay attention to items such as the corner boards and trim elements that would be most appropriate for each of the separate buildings. He pointed out the grey house next door as a good example for proportions such as the cornice brackets and wide corner boards.

Mr. Powell said he planned to unify the two structures through complementary exterior colors, not necessarily by matching architectural details.

Ms. Litchfield asked if they had considered anything other than HardiPlank for exterior siding. The owner said he hadn't totally ruled out wood, but that he felt the condo buyers would prefer low-maintenance materials and that the original clapboards that had been unveiled so far did not appear to be in good condition. Ms. Perrault agreed that the bigger the house is, the more obvious HardiPlank appeared as an inadequate substitute material.

There were no questions from the public.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to disapprove the application as submitted, because HardiPlank siding is incongruous with the district. She urged the developer to consider restoring the wood siding, to install windows with simulated divided lites rather than grille-between-glass muntins, and to take cues for the front porch design from other Mansards along the street.

Mr. Redmon seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

**MC-3821: 53 Antrim St., by Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Installation of side ramp and new basement entrance.**

Staff showed images of the property, which is an 1896 Carpenter Gothic style church, designed by architect William F. Ross and constructed by Patterson & Fox. The church is located mid-block on a single lot, and is placed tight against the north lot line, leaving the south elevation as the viable location for an accessibility ramp.

The existing rear doors would be reconfigured, shifting the break between the 2 doors off center. This would allow for one door that is ADA compliant in width while retaining the original historic fabric. The ramp is to be wood decking with 1-1/4" or 1-1/2" metal tube rails. The only point of attachment between the ramp and the church structure would be at the rear doorway.

The existing bulkhead to the basement would be removed and a new, full-height doorway inserted through the stone foundation directly under the existing rear doorway.

The Commissioners asked about the congregation's population and whether there were many elderly members. Mr. Timothy Montgomery, the church representative, said there were not very many elderly members at this time but they were concerned about those who were temporarily inhibited from injuries or needing to walk with crutches. This project would improve access to both the sanctuary and the basement levels.

Ms. Perrault asked about the impact of the ramp on the building. Mr. Montgomery said the existing rear stairs would be removed to accommodate the new ramp, but that the ramp would be pulled away from the south elevation and only attached at the rear doorway. The existing roof hood would remain. The Commissioners suggested they verify the head clearance at the rear entrance, since the support brackets for the existing roof could be an obstruction when entering the doorway from the side ramp.

Mr. Hsiao liked the use of thin metal cables along the railing, as it did not obstruct the view of the original building behind the ramp. He encouraged looking into continuing that design element along the entire length of the ramp, rather than restricting it to the higher end only.

There were no questions from the public.

Mr. Hsiao made a motion to approve the application with the following clarifications:

- To clarify with the architect if the railing was to be of metal cabling or wood, noting that the Commission's preference was for the metal cable and to extend it along the full length of the ramp.
- To check the rear roof bracket to ensure for ample head room at the ramp's approach to the landing.

Mr. Redmon seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

### Minutes

Ms. Perrault moved to approve the February, 2010 minutes.

Mr. Hsiao seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Eiliesh Tuffy  
Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public  
Who Signed Attendance Sheet 3/7/11

Thomas Fisher  
Timothy Montgomery  
Travis Powell

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