

Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

Monday, September 8, 2014, 6:00 PM, McCusker Center, 2nd Fl., 344 Broadway, Cambridge

Commission Members present: Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Charles Redmon and Lestra Litchfield, *Members*; Sue-Ellen Myers, *Alternate*

Commission Members absent: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Monika Pauli, Margaret McMahon, *Alternates*

Staff present: Samantha Paull

Members of the Public: See attached list.

Mr. Tony Hsiao, Vice Chair, in the absence of Ms. Nancy Goodwin, called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. He gave a brief overview of the procedures and process for the meeting. He reviewed the agenda.

MC-4561: 30-32 Bigelow St, by 30-32 Bigelow St Condo Trust. Window and trim replacement.

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff, gave a brief overview of the property and the proposed scope of work. She noted that the subject property currently has a number of previously replaced windows of varying materials. She continued that the applicant was proposing to replace the fourth floor windows and trim with composite products. Ms. Paull also mentioned that the subject property is part of a group of row houses on Bigelow Street that were built between 1871 and 1872. The row houses have seen various alterations over the last 100 years. 30-32 Bigelow Street had the front porch rebuilt, windows replaced, the original two entry doors are altered into one entry door and one window.

A condo trustee and unit owner, Mr. Martin Kemp, was present and discussed the project. He noted that the idea is to reduce maintenance issues on the building over time and address the failing windows. The contractor, Joe of Cypress Construction, 81 Quincy Ave, Dedham, MA 02026, mentioned that he proposed a vinyl product as it is not safe to access the fourth floor as you need a 48 foot ladder and a street permit. Joe continued that accessing the space for repairs will be precarious in the future. Mr. Kemp stated that the window design was chosen to match the other windows on their two units, which are a mixture of one over one windows both vinyl and aluminum.

The Commission emphasized the importance of retaining the character of the structure, both in materials and design. They continued on to emphasize the importance of utilizing a historic window pattern when replacing windows rather than installing a one over one which has little character as Ms. Lestra Litchfield, Commission member, pointed out. Mr. Hsiao noted that whatever this property went forward with, they were setting the precedent for the entire row house block, not just the units in question.

Motion by Mr. Charles Redmon, Commission member, to approve with the conditions that the applicant use a two over two exterior profiled muntin window and wood trim to retain the historic character of the structure. Mr. Redmon suggested they look into using a wood window or aluminum clad window rather than a vinyl product. Ms. Sue-Ellen Myers, Alternate Commissioner, seconded, the motion was approved 4-0.

MC-4563: 13-15 St. Mary Rd, by Jeffrey Bruson & Rebecca Westlake. Alter window openings and replace non-original windows.

Ms. Paull introduced the application and gave a brief overview of the house's history. Ms. Paull made note that the structure was one of three built by the original owner on this street. She referenced a 1960s survey photo from the two similar structures, located at 8-10 and 12-14 St. Mary Road, that showed more architectural detail than 13-15 St. Mary Road, as at the time of the survey the house had already been clad in asbestos shingles. She continued that in the 1990s the house was clad in vinyl siding, which is present on the structure at the time of the application.

The father of the owner, Mr. Richard Bruson, explained the project is primarily interior at this time. The next phase will be an exterior renovation. As the interior renovations are requiring some exterior alterations, he wanted to match the historic design rather than replicate what was there. He proposed to match the historic two over two muntin pattern with the new windows on the porches and side elevations, so as to restore some character to the house, much of which had been removed in the past. He proposed to utilize a vinyl two over two windows versus matching the current one over ones.

Ms. Litchfield asked if he had looked into using aluminum clad or wood windows. Mr. Bruson responded that wood windows were not in the budget at this time, due to the extensive interior renovation, and did not provide the same efficiency as vinyl. Ms. Litchfield suggested he look into using an aluminum clad or wood window product instead. Mr. Bruson said he would look into both.

Mr. Redmon asked if the sill heights could be lined up on the rear porches, after he noticed that the sill heights on the proposed front elevation were lined up with the existing window sill heights on the structure. Mr. Bruson responded that the windows could be altered if the Commission wanted. He continued that he appreciated the Commission's guidance as these projects and this neighborhood is their specialty and he valued their opinions and suggestions to help with the project.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the owner knew what was under the vinyl siding yet. Mr. Bruson responded that there is at least asbestos siding and then possibly another layer before getting to the original siding.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the application with the suggestion that the applicant follow up with staff prior to making final window product purchase and doing research on aluminum clad windows, and to line up the sill heights on the rear porch windows with the historic windows on the side elevations of the structure. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion, the motion was approved 4-0.

MC-4565: 21 Trowbridge St, by Mark Zeidel & Susan Freedman. Construct deck and privacy wall.

Ms. Paull gave a brief overview of the structure's history and discussed the basic scope of the application. She pointed out that there is an existing fence and privacy wall that could be seen from the street, but was partially screened by the existing fence.

Susan Freedman, an owner, was present with two contractors, Dan McQuillan and Lou Scaramuzzo. They noted that they proposed to use a composite product, replace top portion of deck and add a lower deck. The lower portion would be located over an area that was currently paved over with bricks. Ms.

Freedman noted that the current brick patio was pulling up from the tree roots, which the proposed deck would wrap around as reflected on the drawings. The proposed deck was designed to allow the tree to continue to grow undisturbed. She continued that the current deck and patio were hard to navigate due to the unevenness of the brick patio and the small, narrow angled stairs of the deck. The proposed plan would allow these items to be addressed.

Contractors noted there was a lot of rot and wear on the existing wood deck because the back yard is shaded by the tree and does not dry during the day. The use of composite materials would minimize the rot issue the owner had been having, according to the contractors.

Mr. Redmon asked what material the house was clad with. The contractor responded wood clapboards. Mr. Redmon suggested they consider using a wood product painted to match the house.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the deck was mostly hidden behind the fence. Ms. Freedman responded yes and continued that the fence was installed in the last few years and is also composite but is painted the same color as the trim of the house rather than a bright white.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the suggestion that they use a wood product painted to match the structure. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

MC-4566: 256 Hampshire St, Unit #2, by Cate Clinton & Lucy Budman. Window replacement.

Ms. Paull gave a brief history of the structure and overview of the application. She noted that the windows appeared to be wood from the exterior. However, the windows had either been altered with a track added or might be a later addition. Ms. Paull stated she could see some wavy glass on the building, but could not give a definitive response on the age of the windows proposed for replacement in this unit. There are a combination of replacement and original or historic wood windows on the structure.

Contractor present noted the back four windows were being proposed for replacement at this time. He continued that the product, Renewal by Anderson, had minimal glass loss and allowed for a more historically accurate look.

Mr. Hsiao mentioned the wood for new replacement windows is not as good of a quality as it was historically. Ms. Litchfield asked if they had looked at using wood or restoring the existing windows and installing a quality storm window. Contractor responded that the owner wanted to replace the windows with new windows and preferred not to utilize a storm window. Ms. Litchfield noted that as the existing windows are wood and historic fabric was intact, the Commission was focusing on the preservation of the historic fabric as a priority over replacement with a contemporary product.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to disapprove the application, stating that it did not maintain the historic character of the structure and that the applicant should look at repairing the windows and using a storm window. Mr. Redmon seconded the motion and the motion was approved 4-0.

Minutes

The Commission did not have any edits to the August minutes. Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Mr. Redmon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:14pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Myers and approved 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Paull
Preservation Administrator

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

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| Martin Kemp | 30B Bigelow Street |
| Richard Bruson | 15 St. Mary Road |
| Rebecca Westlake | 13 St. Mary Road |
| Jonathan Koch | 104 Otis Street, Northboro, MA |
| Susan Freedman | 21 Trowbridge Street |
| Dan McQuillan | PO Box 66, Walpole, MA 02081 |
| Lou Scaramuzzo | PO Box 66, Walpole, MA 02081 |
| Joe with Cypress Construction | 81 Quincy Avenue, Dedham, MA |

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