

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Approved at the March 2, 2015 Meeting

Monday, January 5, 2015, 6:00 PM, McCusker Center, 2nd Fl., 344 Broadway, Cambridge

Commission Members present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Charles Redmon and Lestra Litchfield, *Members*; Sue-Ellen Myers and Margaret McMahon, *Alternates*

Commission Members absent: Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Monika Pauli, *Alternate*

Staff present: Samantha Paull

Members of the Public: See attached list.

Ms. Nancy Goodwin, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01pm. She gave an overview of the meeting, procedures, and reviewed the agenda.

MC- 4635: 78-80 Amory Street, by Scott Zink. Exterior renovation and window replacement.

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff, gave a brief overview of the structure's history, presented a historical photograph of the structure from the 1930s and summarized the applicant's proposal.

Mr. Edrick van Beuzekom, the architect, discussed the proposed plans for the side-by-side townhouse style units. He noted that the owner, Mr. Scott Zink, was unable to attend, but was in the process of renovating the interior of the units. Mr. van Beuzekom pointed out the siding was previously replaced without Tyvek so they're looking to add new Tyvek and siding in addition to window trim and restoring the historic hoods on the front elevation.

Ms. Goodwin asked if he was proposing to use simulated divided light windows.

Mr. van Beuzekom replied that the proposal was to utilize the narrowest profile, closest to the original profile as possible. He stated the house at the northeast corner of St. Mary Road and Amory Street seemed to closely reflect the caps shown in the historic photo provided by staff. He stated that they were proposing to replicate the caps on the front façade. Mr. van Beuzekom added that the developer was proposing to use trim and band molding on the other elevations.

Ms. Litchfield asked if he was proposing to use wood.

Mr. van Beuzekom replied yes. He added that on rear of house there was a porch where the railings were going to be replaced, returning to a traditional pattern versus horizontal boards. Ms. Paull noted that alterations on the rear elevation were reflected on the plans but were not visible from a public way. Mr. van Beuzekom added that they planned to work with the staff on the paint colors. He added that they were proposing to remove the AC units that were protruding from the right elevation by the sliding windows. Mr. van Beuzekom pointed out that the plans reflected siding to enclose the AC openings and replacing the sliding windows with double-hung sash windows. The plans included replacing the roof as well he said. Mr. van Beuzekom stated that they were hoping to keep the historic front doors, but they were not sure if they were going back with storm doors or not. He stated that if they did, the doors would

be black to match the black windows. Mr. van Beuzekom added that the owner was requesting the Commission to consider the use of Hardi plank versus wood for the project.

Ms. Goodwin and Ms. Lestra Litchfield, Commissioner, replied no, that the use of Hardi was not appropriate on this structure as it was not a historic material.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the owner had considered cutting back the existing overhang to the stoop size closer to the historic photo. She added that this would better relate to the extant historic brackets.

Mr. van Beuzekom noted that if the overhang matched the historic photo, it would not cover the whole porch and it appeared as though the entries were recessed in historic photo too, which they no longer are.

Ms. Goodwin asked why the downspout did not go straight down.

Mr. van Beuzekom added that it will be updated during the renovation and updated drawings will reflect that.

Ms. Goodwin added that as existing, the porch looks odd and when going to such an extent to restore the character of the structure, making the porch look right will be important to the structure.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the height of the doors had changed over time. Ms. Paull showed the Commission additional photos from her site visit of the front door and entry area on her iPad. Ms. Sue Ellen Myers, Commissioner, noted that she did not have an overhang over her door and that maintaining the historic feature can be important to the overall character of the house versus providing shelter. Ms. Goodwin suggested as an alternative, to add a deeper bracket. Ms. Litchfield added that the historic brackets could even be modified. Mr. van Beuzekom responded that he would take the concerns of the Commission back to the owner and discuss the stoop with him. Ms. Goodwin noted that steel supports were another option.

Mr. Charles Redmon, Commissioner, noted that another option would be to build a new roof that would not protrude as far but the trusses would provide the support for the overhang and allow for the historic brackets to be preserved. Continuing, that the posts took away from the simplicity of the structure. Mr. van Beuzekom replied that he will discuss the ideas with the owner and urge him to go in the direction of restoring that feature.

Ms. Litchfield asked Mr. van Beuzekom to also emphasize no Hardi board.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the suggestion to investigate removing the front porch posts over the entry and replacing with a pitch roof to maintain the historic support brackets. The motion was seconded by Ms. Myers. It was approved 5-0.

MC- 4637: 367 Harvard Street, by 367 Harvard St, LLC. Window replacement

Ms. Paull gave a brief history of the structure and an overview of the application. She noted that the applicant and representative of the corporation who owned the property were present and had discussed the overall project with staff. She added that staff had the opportunity to visit the structure a number of times to discuss the project and windows specifically.

Mr. Campbell Ellsworth, the architect, and Ms. Yan Rong, the company representative, were present. Mr. Ellsworth noted that the structure was an 8 unit building, always had been, with a smaller structure, which was possibly moved to its current location, at the rear of the lot. He noted that they were looking to renovate the structure for apartments, not condos. He added that the property has no parking, and thus there would be no additional units added to the structure. He continued that the structure was located close to Harvard Square and that the owners intended to renovate the structure and hold forever.

Ms. Rong added that the owners wanted to keep it for generation. The structure was specifically chosen because the owners liked the architecture and historical aspect of the building, Ms. Rong noted. Mr. Ellsworth said that project planning started months ago and over time they had looked at a variety of different lay outs and renovations.

Ms. Litchfield asked if they were keeping the structure as 8 units. Ms. Rong replied yes. Mr. Ellsworth pointed out that while the Commission was not provided with copies of the interior plan the unit number was staying the same and all units would be accessed off the central stair with emergency egress off the rear elevation.

Anne Dane, a trustee at 361 Harvard Street, asked how many bedrooms each unit would have. Mr. Ellsworth responded currently looking at three or four bedrooms per unit, however it was previously rented out as five or six bedroom units.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the unit layouts were going to change. Mr. Ellsworth responded that yes, as almost all the units had subsequent water damage from the fire, most were stripped of the historic plaster and paneling. He added that much of the historic flooring was damaged as well. Ms. Paull noted that during their site visits she noted that a fair amount of the historic paneling was removed and stored in the kitchens, which were intact in most units. Mr. Ellsworth responded that yes much of the historic paneling was removed prior to plaster removal and was stored in the kitchens. He continued by noted that however, the only area with oak was the first floor lobby.

Mr. Ellsworth stated that the initial idea was to replace windows, but clarifying that it was still just an idea. He continued that he started working on the education and research of window restoration. He added that the holidays made it hard but he had reached out to all companies that the staff had recommended. Mr. Ellsworth said it was hard to get companies on site to give a quote for restoration of the historic windows, but at the time of the meeting he had received one restoration quote, which was included in the Commissioner packets. He stated that they were seriously looking at it.

Mr. Ellsworth responded that initially it appeared that the cost differential between replacement and restoration was wider, but upon further inspection, it appears that it was actually pretty close and it may be better to restore. He noted that Ms. Rong could speak to what the owners want and their goals with numbers.

Mr. Ellsworth continued that because of the fire, most of the 4th floor is gone. He stated that the trim and everything is gone down to the masonry on some units. He said that the other windows (about 100) are in varying condition, due to bad maintenance or bad repair over the years. Mr. Ellsworth pointed out that the bowed windows on the bay were more expensive because of the complexity. He noted that a number of the bowed glass windows had the glass replaced with plexiglass. He said buying those big pieces of curved glass was about \$800 a piece. He continued that on the 2nd or 3rd floor, a muntin was added and

two straight pieces of glass were installed. While at the Marvin showroom, he saw that they make a curved sash with two pieces of glass and a muntin. Mr. Ellsworth stated that he felt he had done a lot of research and had conversations with restoration specialists and the building owners. He noted that another reason why the owners were considering replacement was that the windows on the rear elevation had all been previously replaced with vinyl. He continued that while the windows were not readily visible they would most likely be kept. He concluded with the statement that the intent now, and nature of application, was to replace the windows, but they were still looking into restoration.

Mr. Redmon asked if they were proposing to replace all the windows or if they were going to reuse some of the extant windows.

Mr. Ellsworth responded that if the owners move forward with replacement, the existing vinyl windows would not look so out of place, however if the owners chose to restore the windows, the vinyl windows would look out of place. Mr. Ellsworth noted that the quote from windowrestoration.com estimated it would cost about \$1,100-1,200 to restore the window and then with the addition of a storm, which cost another \$300-450, each window would be approximately in the \$1,600 range. He stated that he spoke with another firm, Clary and Sons, who was more expensive, closer to \$1,700 a window. Mr. Ellsworth said that cost included removing the window, taking to shop, strip, clean, paint, and reinstall. He noted that the owners and he had gotten a lot of good, constructive conversation from Sam, Charlie and Sarah regarding preservation of the windows.

Ms. Goodwin stated that it almost sounded like there was no clear plan on what path would be chosen, replacement or restoration.

Mr. Ellsworth noted that it was not his decision to make, but that he would love for them to be restored. He stated that this had been an education process for him and he now understood the difference. David Liberty came out and, Mr. Ellsworth believed Mr. Liberty told him that the worst window in 1875 was better than best window today. Mr. Ellsworth said that if the numbers come together it would be great. He continued that the building itself was expensive, the renovation would be expensive and concluded that the window package isn't a small piece of this.

Ms. Dane asked for clarification as to why Mr. Ellsworth was quoting one price per window for restoration when the windows were different sizes. Mr. Ellsworth responded that the number he was quoting was an average and that the bowed windows were far more expensive than the sash windows on the side elevations. Ms. Dane asked if the fan light on the front elevation that had begun to buckle was being preserved. Mr. Ellsworth replied that yes that window they were hoping to preserve.

Ms. Litchfield asked if they had thought about restoring the windows in stages, starting with the front and working around to the side elevations. Mr. Ellsworth responded that all the windows needed work and Ms. Paull could attest to that. Ms. Paull replied that the windows are actually in great shape overall for the building, and the windows survived a fire. She continued that some of the windows we tried to open were easily opened, however she added that she did not open every window on the structure.

Ms. Litchfield asked for clarification on the restoration quote, what the 26 windows referred to. Ms. Ellsworth replied that those were the missing windows on the fourth floor. Ms. Litchfield asked if the 76 windows were those remaining on the structure. Ms. Paull clarified that the quote did not include anything on the rear elevation.

Mr. Redmon stated that the quote was unclear. Mr. Ellsworth said that the mechanical restoration was just about making the windows work not painting them. Ms. Litchfield asked if the full restoration was the \$43,000 number. Ms. Goodwin asked what the plexiglass option was for. Ms. Litchfield noted the bowed windows and the use of plexiglass did not provide a substantial savings. Ms. Goodwin responded that plexiglass was not the first choice of the Commission.

A member of the public stated that as neighbors they would love to see the structure as beautiful as possible and that the curved glass would be ideal. She continued that she understood economics would play into a final decision.

Ms. Goodwin stated that even though the number seems high, it doesn't seem high in comparison to cost of building. Ms. Litchfield noted that the proposal was hard to read. She asked for clarification if it was the storm window cost plus the \$43,000 for the restoration of the 76 windows plus the lower \$35,000 for the 26 new windows or if it applied to the entire building.

Mr. Ellsworth clarified that after going over the quote it boiled down to about \$1,200 a window and that included primer and paint but not a storm window, which would add about \$375-400 per window.

Ms. Paull added that there were other storm window options, including interior storms for the bowed bay windows, which were discussed during site visits with Mr. Ellsworth and Ms. Rong.

Ms. Goodwin suggested that the applicant do more research and that the hearing be continued.

Ms. McMahon stated there was so much discussion of window minutia that it seemed as though the Commission was putting aside the fact that the structure was a beautiful old building that the owners said they loved and wanted to restore. She continued that the extra money should be spent to restore the structure and make it look beautiful. She said she did not understand why one would purchase a building that they believe was beautiful then decide that everything had to be changed.

Mr. Redmon asked what they were planning to do about the masonry, copper cornice, and other details. Mr. Ellsworth responded that they were looking to restore those features, noting that overall they were in pretty good shape. Mr. Ellsworth said that there was a portion that needed to be replicated but understood that was easily possible. Ms. Goodwin added that when working on 5 Western Avenue, some of the copper pieces were replicated. Mr. Ellsworth stated that he would love to know who did the work. He added that he knew the structure needed some repointing but otherwise the exterior work would be minimal.

Ms. Litchfield asked if he had considered applying to the National Register and utilizing the historic tax credit. Mr. Ellsworth noted that he had not had the chance to look into it. Ms. Litchfield responded that it was a 20% credit. Ms. Goodwin added that if you can qualify it can make a world of difference for a project. Ms. Goodwin continued that since the proposed use would be income-producing it would be eligible, but only as income apartments.

Ms. Dane asked if the structure to the rear would have any work done to it. Ms. Paull noted that any work require review by staff or the Commission.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to deny the application as submitted. She suggested that the applicant restore the windows and look into the National Register nomination for the 20% income tax credit and

that the applicant get back to the Commission staff when plans were clearer. Mr. Redmon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Minutes

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the December 1, 2014 minutes as submitted. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:11pm.

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

Edrick vanBeuzekom	Architect for 78-80 Amory St	33 ½ Union Square, Somerville, MA
Campbell Ellsworth	Architect for 367 Harvard St	267 Norfolk Street
Yan Rong	Representative for 367 Harvard St	31 Danforth Lane, Bolton, MA
Anne Dane	Trustee for 361 Harvard St	361 Harvard Street, Unit #12

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