

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

APPROVED AT THE MAY 4, 2015 MEETING

Monday, April 6, 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, Margaret McMahon, and Monika Pauli, *Alternates*

Commission Members absent: Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*

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. Ms. Goodwin designated alternates to vote, Ms. Sue-Ellen Myers was designated for 17 Ware Street, 47 Roberts Road, 6-8 Emmons Place and 1673 Cambridge Street. Ms. Margaret McMahon was designated for 47 Roberts Road, 26 Inman Street, and 1673 Cambridge Street. Ms. Monika Pauli was designated for 17 Ware Street, 26 Inman Street, and 6-8 Emmons Place.

MC-4662: 17 Ware Street, by President & Fellows of Harvard College and Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Addition, alterations & rear deck.

Ms. Samantha Paull, staff, gave a brief recap of the previous hearing and Architect's Committee reviews of the project. She noted the plans had been updated and reflected the comments and concerns of the Commission that were outlined at the Committee meeting on March 13, 2015.

Ms. Maryann Thompson, architect, showed the Commission the updated model of the proposed alterations. She noted that the model also included the surrounding buildings for a better understanding of scale in context. She pointed out the amendments to the plans, which included a brick base for the addition, a change in the roof line of the addition to keep it below the main peak, and that the existing gable was kept prominent on the right elevation. Mr. Charles Redmon, Commissioner, commended her on the preservation and incorporation of the main structure's gable end, which aided in making the addition look secondary in nature even with its substantial square footage. Ms. Thompson thanked the Architect's Committee for their helpful advice and noted that the historic chimneys are preserved and the new chimney on the addition is tapered as mentioned at the March 13, 2015 meeting.

Ms. Katie Chu, architect with Maryann Thompson Architects, pointed out that the corner of the addition that intersects with the gable end on the right elevation was amended to be primarily glazing, compared to siding, which kept the space visually open and will allow one to see the historic chimney inside, combining old and new elements of the structure.

Mr. Redmon commended Ms. Thompson for the improvements and for working with the Commission. Ms. Goodwin concurred with Mr. Redmon on the work put in by Ms. Thompson continuing that the plans

were a dramatic improvement and fit in with the structure and area's character. Mr. Redmon stated that the renderings reflected a skillful insertion of additional living space and that the amendment to the corner above the gable was a vast improvement. Mr. Redmon asked for more information about the landscape plan.

Ms. Thompson referred to the plan included in the Commissioner's packet, which included a low wood picket fence in the front of the house and a six (6) foot tall fence with horizontal slats for privacy in the small rear yard. She noted that the plantings were primarily ones that stayed smaller, including lilacs and rhododendrons.

Ms. Monika Pauli, Commissioner, agreed that the plans were much better. She asked if the chimney could be less dramatic. Ms. Thompson asked if she meant a stepped in chimney. Ms. Lestra Litchfield, Commissioner, said the strong taper had an industrial quality to it. Ms. Pauli replied to Ms. Thompson's question and stated yes, a more traditional stepped chimney would be more in keeping with the residential addition. Mr. Redmon asked about a pattern in the chimney. Ms. Thompson responded they were proposing herringbone.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to accept the revised submission dated March 18, 2015. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 with alternates, Ms. Myers and Ms. Pauli voting.

MC-4672: 47 Roberts Road, by Carla & John Roberts. Addition, alterations & rear deck.

Ms. Paull gave a brief overview of the history of the structure and outlined the proposed scope of the application. She noted that per House Book 3, page 19, the property originally had a full width front porch, which was later altered into a wraparound about the same time the rear addition was constructed, as reflected in House Book 59, page 33 and the Sanborn Maps.

The architect, Ms. Beth Worell, was present and gave a detailed presentation of the scope of the project. She noted that the taller portion of the back of the house was originally constructed as a second dwelling. She continued that the home had two separate entrances and was connected on the interior with one door opening but was completely separate upstairs. Ms. Worell stated that the plans included demolishing the old entrance and side porch, which was barely visible behind the main structure, demolishing a half bath that was added to the first floor, and demolishing the enclosed portion of the wrap around porch. She noted that the enclosed porch was unfinished with exposed studs inside and measured five (5) feet by twenty (20) feet, which left a rather unusable space. She directed the Commission to the plans that showed the right elevation, where the enclosed porch portion was proposed to be removed, would be restored with siding to match the existing and would include the construction of a small mudroom. Ms. Worell continued, as there were foundation issues in the extant addition by the kitchen/deck area behind where the proposed mudroom was to be located, the plans included demolishing this addition. She referred the Commission to the plans and stated that the proposal included constructing a new addition to the kitchen, which would be properly supported and integrated with the structure.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the plan was to restore the original front porch to the house. Ms. Worell responded, yes, as much as the features will allow, as the front door has sidelights, which limited the addition of a pilaster on the corner; however, otherwise it will replicate as much as possible. Ms. Goodwin asked if the architect was proposing wood clapboards. Ms. Worell said yes.

Mr. Redmon asked if the windows were proposed for replacement. Ms. Worell replied not at this time. She said that new windows would be installed in the new spaces but the remainder of windows would be maintained. Ms. Worell noted that there were two main styles in the house, wood two over two and newer one over one windows. Ms. Paull said that the survey photo indicated that two over two is the historic window pattern for the house, but noted that due to the shadows on the survey photo and that the enclosed porch had what appeared to be taller skinny casement style windows, she would have to do more research for a definitive answer. Ms. Goodwin asked if the architect had considered using two over twos, restoring some character to the structure. Ms. Worell replied that after meeting with Ms. Paull, Ms. Worell and the owner felt that a one over one window was the safest path.

Ms. Litchfield said she felt the plan looked great. Ms. Goodwin noted that it was wonderfully executed. Mr. Redmon added that the plans cleaned up the nooks and crannies that had been added over time and the move to integrate the roof forms aids in cleaning up the structure. Ms. Carla Roberts, an owner, said she hoped the plans would help the house feel like one house instead of two separate houses tacked together as it did now. She also mentioned that the tacked on bathroom blocked some of the best light in the house and the addition of a window in that area would really help to bring in light and open up the house. She closed stating her excitement with moving forward with the project.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to accept the plans as proposed. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 with alternates, Ms. Myers and Ms. McMahon voting.

MC-4674: 26 Inman Street, by Susan Lee, Condo Trustee. Exterior alterations & window replacement.

Ms. Paull gave a brief overview of the application and history of the structure.

Mr. Derek Bloom, architect, gave a detailed presentation of the proposed project. He noted that the entire scope was being presented before the Commission but that the project would be completed in phases and some of it was maintenance and some were elective changes to unify the building. He said that inconsistent work over the years had resulted in leaks, mismatched features, and exterior conduit. He referred to the proposed elevations in the Commissioner's packets, showing that the left side of the existing structure was concrete block installed as a grid, not running bond, and the right elevation was covered with T-111 siding. He drew their attention to the windows, which had been altered over the years; the proposed plans reflected two options. Mr. Bloom stated that the proposed siding was a concrete based siding, Öko Skin, in a gray color, which would preserve the character of the vertical siding in a more maintenance friendly material. He also noted that the air conditioner sleeves would be replaced as part of the project.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the ac units would stay where they were on the plans. Mr. Bloom replied yes.

Ms. Sia Herr, architect with Derek Bloom's office, said that the proposal was to run the options by the Commission, get approval and return to meet with the unit owners with the Commission's decision. Option 2, she said, was the preference as it would include the most glass and smallest amount of mullions/muntins. She stated that the Commission's packets included option two, which broke up the opening with more slider windows versus the combination of fixed panes and sliders in option one.

Mr. Bloom added that on the front elevation, he proposed to enliven the structure in a purely aesthetic way without doing something permanent to the building by installing a screen wall.

Ms. Goodwin asked if wood was proposed for the rails. Mr. Bloom responded the proposal was cedar which would be finished. Ms. Goodwin asked if he considered letting it gray to match the other siding material. Mr. Bloom said yes, but ultimately decided against that as it would no longer call out the entrance. He continued that they were proposing cedar or Parktex veneer. Ms. Goodwin asked about the pricing difference. Mr. Bloom replied that the focus was on what the Commission preferred rather than pricing. Mr. Redmon stated he was familiar with that product from a project he did with the Children's museum. Mr. Bloom said that it's a durable, commercial-type product and as a larger condo building can be hard to maintain on a regular basis, he hoped to use materials that would minimize maintenance.

Ms. Litchfield asked about the weight of the concrete siding tiles. Mr. Bloom responded that it was proposed to be attached to a framing with a rain screen system. Mr. Redmon added that the proposed material was typically installed with a curtain wall, which does not stress the structure and the proposed concrete product appeared to be thin.

Ms. McMahan asked if the parking lot was going to have work done to it as well. Mr. Bloom responded that the parking lot had come up during the planning process. Ms. Susan Lee, a member of the condo board, replied that in the future there were hopes for a paving system that mimicked stone or brick, however that was not the focus of this project. Ms. Goodwin added that this was a great improvement for the building.

Ms. Pauli asked what the box was near the front entrance to the structure. Mr. Bloom responded that it was a box for covering the laundry vents from the basement.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to approve the plans as submitted. Mr. Redmon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 with alternates, Ms. McMahan and Ms. Pauli voting.

MC-4675: 6-8 Emmons Place, by Lou Ferraro, 21 Troy Road, LP. Construct new detached dwelling in rear, alter front structure, replace siding, and alter window and door openings.

Ms. Paull gave a brief overview of the application, noting that the Commission had heard at least two proposals by this owner in the past but no additional work to the exterior of the home had been undertaken in the last year. She continued that the proposal in front of the Commission was to remove one (1) foot from first floor of the left elevation to allow for a ten (10) foot wide driveway access to the rear of the property and to construct an additional dwelling unit in the rear of the property.

Ms. Myers asked if the proposal would give the applicant the legal minimum driveway access of ten (10) feet. Mr. Campbell Ellsworth, architect, replied yes according to Ranjit Singanayagam, Building Superintendent for the City of Cambridge. Ms. Myers asked about fire truck access. Mr. Ellsworth responded that he was not aware of any issues regarding access beyond the ten (10) foot requirement.

Ms. McMahan asked for clarification that the proposal did include a request to shave off a portion of the side of the house to make a wider driveway. Mr. Ellsworth replied yes.

A neighbor, Joyce Boden at 112 Trowbridge Street, stated she did not understand why taking half an inch of the ceiling height of the basement allowed them to evade the condition in the Mid Cambridge

Neighborhood Conservation District Order that made reviews with over 750 square feet being added binding. Ms. Goodwin noted that it was not considered FAR in the overall calculation. Neighbors, Ms. Joyce Bowden of 112 Trowbridge Street and Keira Bromberg of 108 Trowbridge Street, asked who to follow up with regarding the space in question. Ms. Paull noted that the calculation for adding floor area is based off of what zoning considers floor area. Ms. Paull directed the neighbor to discuss the issue with Inspection Services and/or Community Development Department.

Ms. Leslie Brunetta asked for clarification on the proposal. Mr. Ellsworth offered copies of the plans to the neighbors.

A neighbor asked if safety questions could be discussed at the hearing. Ms. Goodwin replied that no this meeting was specific to impact of the proposed alterations to the criteria in the District Order.

Mr. Ken McLaughlin, a neighbor at 23 Roberts Road, asked if a demolition permit was needed to dig up the foundation and build a new one. Ms. Paull replied that at the time of the submission the application is being reviewed as non-binding application as alterations not a demolition. She continued that if a demolition permit was deemed to be required by Inspectional Services that the application would require a separate review with the application being noticed as a demolition.

Ms. Daphne Holt of 4 Emmons Place asked how the proposed alteration would allow for proper access and provide frontage. Ms. Goodwin directed her to follow up with Inspectional Services. Ms. Holt continued that the neighbor's concerns with safety and density sounds like it's outside of the purview of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission and that the application hadn't changed much since the previous application.

Ms. Bowden asked if the proposal to chop off part of a 160 year old house was in the purview of the Commission. Ms. Litchfield responded yes but noted that there were limitations to what the Commission could do. Ms. Bowden asked if this can be done without the neighbors even agreeing to a widened, shared driveway. Ms. Litchfield replied that the Commissioners all understood the issues the neighbors had but noted that the architect and developer had proposed a project that was within the non-binding numbers of the District Order. Ms. Bowden responded that she felt the developer had been disingenuous and that he was not concerned with the public safety issue the proposed project presents to all six or seven houses that it will abut.

Ms. Litchfield said that the Commission shared the concerns of neighbors. Ms. Goodwin noted that this application has been frustrating for the Commission.

Mr. Jim Tanner, neighbor at 1A Emmons Place, asked who to follow up with regarding concerns about the basement. Ms. Paull directed him to follow up with Inspectional Services. Mr. McLaughlin asked if the Commission was going to read the letters that were received from abutters into the record.

Ms. Litchfield noted that the Commission was just as frustrated as the owners and have been on record as rejecting the proposed projects in the past.

Ms. Bromberg noted that the owner had told the neighbors that the tree in the back yard would be saved but was removed. Mr. McLaughlin added that to their knowledge no one is in favor of the proposed project, every abutter is opposed.

Mr. Scott Walker, neighbor at 2A Emmons Place, stated that as someone who regularly navigated the driveway in question with a Scion that it was very tight to get in and out of. He added that a foot would not make it any easier.

Ms. Bowden asked if the project would require a variance or special permit as the plans reflected a more substantial roof pitch than was present on the structure. Ms. Litchfield asked the architect if the roof was being demolished. Mr. Ellsworth responded no, the roofline would be the same as existing. Ms. Litchfield asked for clarification that the hip roof was as shown. Mr. Ellsworth replied yes, the roof was not being raised or lowered but the rafters would be repaired as needed.

Mr. McLaughlin asked if the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission reviewed parking. Ms. Goodwin replied no.

Ms. Bromberg asked if there was a way to fill in the loopholes. Ms. Litchfield responded that it would require changing the District Order.

Ms. Paull read emailed letters from Ms. Daphne Holt of 2-4 Emmons Place and Bill Zamparelli of 7 Emmons Place.

Mr. McLaughlin asked now that the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission had washed their hands of the project, was there something else the neighbors could do to stop the proposed project. Ms. Goodwin responded that she was sorry that it seemed as though the Commission had washed their hands of it. Mr. McLaughlin apologized for the poor word choice. Ms. Goodwin added that the Commission felt frustration about the project in addition to the neighbors. Ms. Litchfield added it seemed as though the architect and owner have disregarded the Commission's concerns as well as the neighbors, which had led to feelings of disappointment for both groups. Mr. McLaughlin asked what the next step was. Ms. Goodwin suggested that concerned neighbors follow up with Inspectional Services as the Commission's review was non-binding and would not require the proposal to be changed. Ms. McMahon added, unless the builder and architect had a change of heart.

Ms. Myers made a motion to disapprove the application as proposed as it was incongruous with neighborhood and did not maintain the character of the original, historic structure. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 with Ms. Pauli and Ms. Myers voting.

MC-4676: 1673 Cambridge Street, by Hong Liu. New shed.

Ms. Paull gave a brief overview of the history of the property and the proposed scope included in the application. She noted that while the shed had already been constructed on the property, the site was subject to a binding review of the application because it was a non-conforming use in its district. She also noted that the application required a variance for the location of the shed in the required yard as the shed was constructed very close to the property line fronting Irving Street.

Ms. Hong Liu, an owner, stated that there was a previous shed on the site in a similar location, which was purchased in 1990. The previous shed measured six (6) foot by six (6) foot by six (6) foot and was wood but rotting. She found a vinyl shed and believed that the shed, constructed without a permit, was waterproof and fireproof. She went on to mention the area having a bad rat problem. The side yard area

where the shed is located, she said, is landscaped but the hedges were cut back recently in hopes that they would grow in thicker and the previous fence was removed. She noted that she also constructed a fence with a trellis to surround the trash cans. Ms. Liu noted that the location of the shed was important for easy access to the snowblower in winter. She said that she was told she did not need a permit if she was replacing an old shed. Ms. Liu added that she was planning on adding landscaping around the shed in the spring.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the previous shed was installed on the same foundation. Ms. Paull added that the owner provided photos of the previous shed.

Ms. McMahon noted that she did not object to a shed but felt that this shed did not match and stuck out like a sore thumb.

Ms. Litchfield added that she did not object to a shed but objected to the use of vinyl. Ms. Liu said that it was fireproof. Ms. Litchfield disagreed, vinyl is not fireproof; it melts. Ms. Paull added if vinyl is in close proximity to a grill it can melt.

Ms. Liu stated that the shed blocked the parking lot. Ms. Litchfield said that the massing and dimension of the vinyl shed were different from the previous shed. Ms. Litchfield asked if it could be relocated to any other place on the parking area. Ms. Liu replied no, the parking spaces are required for the lodging house use. Ms. Litchfield continued that the vinyl shed was a lot different from the previous shed, not just because the materials were different but also the vinyl shed was more imposing than the previous shed. Ms. Liu replied that she understood but she had overwhelming support from her neighbors.

Ms. Litchfield asked for clarification of the size of the previous shed. Ms. Liu responded it was six (6) foot by six (6) foot by six (6) foot.

Ms. Paull asked why there wasn't follow up when the permit was originally applied for months ago. Ms. Liu responded she thought that a permit was not needed.

Ms. Myers asked if it could be put at a neighbor's house if they were all in support. Ms. Liu replied that no one had the space.

Ms. Goodwin asked why there was a post and chain in front of the shed. Ms. Liu replied that in a 1930s photograph, the post and chain fence was existing. Ms. Goodwin looked to Ms. Paull for confirmation. Ms. Paull replied that the Commission had an early photograph or postcard on file but she did not remember if there was a fence there or not.

Ms. Myers asked if there was a permit. Ms. Paull replied no, there was not an approved building permit but there was a pending variance application.

Ms. Paull read a letter from a neighbor, Rachel Solem, at 24 Irving Street. The letter expressed her concern about the shed's location, size and materials.

Ms. McMahon said she did not object to a shed but did object to the shed that was constructed. She hoped that the owner could find a shed that would work better for the location and related to the materials of the primary structure. Ms. Goodwin agreed. Ms. Litchfield expressed her agreement. Ms. Goodwin asked what was wrong with the previous shed. Ms. Liu responded that it needed to be replaced.

Mr. Francis Donovan, 42 Irving Street, asked if the shed could be moved elsewhere. Ms. Liu replied that she is required to have a certain number of parking spaces for her lodging house use and that the shed could not take up one of the needed spaces. She continued that the shed was in a very convenient location currently and she added that she would even paint the shed if asked. Ms. Litchfield expressed concern with painting vinyl, as it would most likely quickly start peeling. Ms. Liu asked if the Commission would support growing vines on the shed and why the Commission did not have a problem with the trash area fencing. Ms. Litchfield replied that it was constructed of wood, a natural material that related to the primary structure; she said the shed would always be plastic. Ms. Liu added that being Chinese, she believed in timing, location and efforts, as this past winter proved the shed was important. She said she believed she could make it look good. Ms. McMahon suggested Ms. Liu look into finding something made from wood, possibly even having a shed made. Ms. Goodwin noted that as the main use was for storing a snowblower, it would not need to be as tall. Ms. Litchfield agreed that it did not need to be head height for the proposed use.

Ms. Litchfield asked Ms. Liu if the shed was denied and she was given time to comply with the requirements for an approval, could she come back to staff with a plan. Ms. Liu replied yes. Ms. Paull clarified that the existing shed would need to be removed and a new shed approved by staff that was smaller and built from traditional materials. Ms. Liu responded that she did not want to have a smaller shed. Ms. Myers stated that the shed was just too tall. Ms. Liu asked if something lower was ok. Ms. Litchfield replied yes, something that was similar in size and height to the previous shed.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to deny the application, as submitted, due to the size, location and materials. She stated that staff could approve the installation/construction of a wood shed that was no larger than the previous shed that measured six (6) foot by six (6) foot and did not exceed six (6) feet in height. Ms. Litchfield stated that the new shed would be required to mimic the architectural elements of the historic structure as displayed through the use of wood siding and a shingled roof; the shed doors shall not open up on to Irving Street but rather be interior to the property, facing the parking lot, side yard, or left elevation of the historic structure. Ms. Litchfield delegated the approval of a shed that meets these conditions to the staff and that the existing shed be removed within six (6) months of the date of the hearing. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 with alternates Ms. Myers and Ms. McMahon voting.

Minutes

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 2, 2015 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Myers. The motion was approved 5-0 with Ms. Myers and Ms. McMahon voting.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 13, 2015 Architect's Committee for 17 Ware Street as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pauli. The motion was approved 5-0 with Ms. Pauli and Ms. Myers voting.

Ms. Myers made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 with Ms. Myers and Ms. Pauli voting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.

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

Maryann Thompson	Architect for 17 Ware St	741 Mt Auburn Street, Watertown
Katie Chu	Architect for 17 Ware St	741 Mt Auburn Street, Watertown
Erika Johnson	HPPM, Landowner	1350 Mass Ave, Rm 573
Beth Worell	Architect for 47 Roberts Rd	164 Arborway, Boston
Carla Roberts	Owner, 47 Roberts Road	47 Roberts Road
Susan Lee	Owner, Trustee 26 Inman	26 Inman Street, #1D
Derek Bloom	Architect, 26 Inman St	784b Tremont Street, Boston
Leslie Brunetta	Neighbor, 6-8 Emmons Pl	29 Roberts Road
Ellen Mayer	Neighbor, 6-8 Emmons Pl	27 Roberts Road
Ken McLaughlin	Neighbor, 6-8 Emmons Pl	23 Roberts Road
Hong Liu	Owner, 1673 Cambridge St	1673 Cambridge Street
Yue Qi Ma	Brother-in-law, 1673 Cambridge	15 Circuit Street, Newton, MA
Jinjin Xue	Housekeeper, 1673 Cambridge	28 Plymouth Street, Quincy
Keira Bromberg	Neighbor, 6-8 Emmons Pl	108 Trowbridge Street, #2
Louis Ferraro	Owner, 6-8 Emmons Pl	64 Fletcher Road, Belmont
Campbell Ellsworth	Architect for 6-8 Emmons Pl	267 Norfolk Street
Joyce Bowden	Neighbor, 6-8 Emmons Pl	112 Trowbridge Street
Jim Tanner	Neighbor, 6-8 Emmons Pl	1A Emmons Place
Biju Parekkadon	Trustee, 26 Inman St	26 Inman Street, #GA
Scott Walker	Neighbor, 6-8 Emmons Pl	2A Emmons Place
Elizabeth Gombosi	Neighbor, 1673 Cambridge St	42 Irving Street
Francis Donovan	Neighbor, 1673 Cambridge St	42 Irving Street

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