

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, March 7, 2016, 6:00 PM, McCusker Center, 2nd Fl. Meeting Room, 344 Broadway, Cambridge

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

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

Staff present: Samantha Paull

Members of the Public: See attached list.

Ms. Nancy Goodwin, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02pm. She reviewed the agenda as well as meeting procedures. She designated all alternates present would be voting.

MC-4922: 48-50 Dana Street, by John Hsia. Install solar array.

Ms. Paull showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application. She said that the review was non-binding.

Thomas Janowski, company representative, gave a brief overview of the proposal and said he was there to answer any questions.

Ms. Margaret McMahon, Commissioner, asked where the panels would be located. Mr. Janowski replied on the back elevation. Ms. Goodwin asked how far they sat up off the roof plane. Mr. Janowski replied no more than four (4) inches above the roof plane. Ms. Goodwin noted that the application did not include a photograph of the proposed panels and asked Mr. Janowski to elaborate on the type of panels proposed. He clarified what panels were proposed and noted that they were black.

Ms. Sue-Ellen Myers, Commissioner, asked if the installation required the removal of any chimneys. Mr. Janowski replied no.

Ms. Goodwin called for questions from the public. There were none. Ms. Goodwin called for comments from the public; there were none.

Ms. Goodwin noted that the panels were minimally visible. Ms. Lestra Litchfield, Commissioner, added that the proposed location was ideal for solar panels. Mr. Charles Redmon, Commissioner, added that they were not visible from Dana Street.

Mr. Redmond made a motion to accept the project as submitted. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

MC-4923: 251 Hampshire Street, by Naveo Credit Union. Alter exterior.

Ms. Paull showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application. She said that the review was non-binding.

Mr. Craig Fishman, architect for the applicant, presented the proposed project. He noted that the goal was to bring in more light and activity to the credit union building. He pointed out the addition of larger windows on the front elevation that wrapped around the side, flattening out of the cornice detail, the addition of a sun shade, and a new cantilevered canopy at front door.

Ms. Goodwin asked what the proposed material for the cornice band was. Mr. Fishman replied stucco. Ms. Goodwin asked if it would be flat. Mr. Fishman replied yes. Ms. Goodwin asked if the height of the middle section was being raised. Mr. Fishman replied yes by two (2) feet, eight (8) inches. Ms. Goodwin asked why it was being raised. Mr. Fishman responded that the goal was create more of a presence as there were taller buildings on either side of the structure. Ms. Myers asked what was on the left hand side. Ms. Paull noted that there was a street immediately to the left then a mixed use building. Mr. Fishman added that there was also a parking lot.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the columns were aluminum. Mr. Fishman clarified that they were proposing new columns. Ms. Litchfield asked what the material was. Mr. Fishman replied painted fiberglass.

Ms. Goodwin called for questions from the public. There were none. Ms. Goodwin called for comments from the public; there were none.

Ms. McMahan said she preferred the existing cornice versus the flat proposed cornice. She continued that it had more presence and related to the existing context around it. She commended the addition of glass to the front elevation. Ms. Litchfield said it felt flat and lacked character. She agreed with Ms. McMahan about the addition of glass. She recommended the applicant look at the cornice and proposed non-descript columns again. Ms. Litchfield said she was concerned about the flatness of the façade and commented that it mimicked the medical clinic across the street versus contributing to the unique character of Inman Square.

Mr. Redmon asked if they were adding shades on the interior. Mr. Fishman said the goal was to bring light into the lobby and offices. He added that the metal awning should provide enough shade most of the time rather than needing interior shades.

Ms. Goodwin noted that much of the area had historic structures of varying construction dates. She asked when the structure was constructed. Ms. Paull noted it was done in 1970s but was later altered. Mr. Fishman said he was contracted for the addition of the cornice in 2007.

Mr. Redmon asked if the group had looked into color options for the cornice beyond white. Mr. Fishman said yes, but the ultimate decision was to go with white as part of the rebranding of the credit union. Mr. Rui Domingos, President of the Credit Union, said that as part of the 2014 Naveo rebranding they were hoping to update the branch buildings to better reflect their brand and attract new customers.

Ms. Lichfield expressed her concern with the flat façade not matching the character of the area and emphasized that they should be looking at the area for contextual inspiration. Mr. Domingos replied that he felt it did match other structures in the area. Ms. Litchfield recommended they celebrate the unique character of Inman Square with its architecture, funky/artsy neighborhood. She commended them on the

thoughtfulness of trying to update the structure but added it seemed as though the structure could be anywhere in the US versus associating itself with Inman Square. Mr. Paul Ferreira, Naveo board member, added that part of the inspiration was the mix of new and old like that found in Kendall Square. Ms. Litchfield replied that Kendall Square is nice but the structure is not located in Kendall Square, it was located in Inman Square and needed to relate to that area. She added that if they were looking for something modern, they might try looking at the Swiss Consulate at Broadway and Ellery Street which mixed modern and historic elements.

Mr. Redmon asked if windows were being blocked in on the front elevation. Mr. Fishman clarified that the only space blocked in was around the ATM, it had to be reworked for the machine. Mr. Redmon noted that the entrance was asymmetrical and wasn't centered between the columns. Mr. Redmon asked if the applicant had considered making the column larger on the corner so it looked like a wall versus a column. Mr. Domingos said he could look at it.

Mr. Redmon asked if they had a signage plan. Mr. Fishman replied that they were working on the final design.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to deny the application as proposed on the basis that it was incongruous with the surrounding architecture and character of the area. She continued that the Commission hoped the applicant would consider the Commission's comments and guidance regarding window openings, materials, symmetry and lighting before construction. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Mr. Ferreira asked if the Commission could give guidance on the next steps. Ms. Litchfield replied that the application was denied as proposed but noted that the Commission was open to the idea of renovation. She said that the design needed to be tweaked with the elements discussed during the hearing and recommended the applicant follow up with staff. She noted that it was a non-binding review but that the Commission hoped the applicant would take their comments into consideration.

Minutes

Ms. Myers made a motion to approve the January 4, 2016 minutes as submitted. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to approve the February 1, 2016 minutes as submitted. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to adjourn the hearing. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 at 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Paull
Preservation Administrator

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

Craig Fishman	Architect	905 South Main Street, Mansfield
Rui Domingos	Applicant, Naveo CEO	493 Somerville Ave, Somerville
Susan Pereira	Assistant Mngr., Naveo	493 Somerville Ave, Somerville
Charles McCannon	Naveo	54 Garden St, Cambridge
Thomas Janowski	Representative, Sungevity	66 Franklin St, Oakland, CA
Paul Ferreira	Naveo Board Member	47 7 th Street

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