

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
APPROVED AT THE JANUARY 9, 2017 MEETING

Monday, September 12, 2016, 6:00 PM, Lombardi Building, Basement Meeting Room, 831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

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

Commission Members absent: Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Lestra Litchfield, *Member*

Staff present: Samantha Paull Elliott

Members of the Public: See attached list.

Ms. Nancy Goodwin, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:16pm. She reviewed the agenda as well as meeting procedures. She designated all alternates present would be voting.

MC-5053: 20 Leonard Avenue, by Jeremy Angier. Alter garage.

Ms. Samantha Paull Elliott, staff, showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Ms. Ann Hirsch, an owner of 20 Leonard Avenue, introduced herself along with her husband, Jeremy Angier, as artists hoping to build a loft office space. She said they were proposing to transform the garage into a structure that provided office space. She showed their concept mock up on PowerPoint slides. Ms. Hirsch said the plan was to remove the block of the original structure down to first two courses of block, construct a new frame, cover it in wood clapboard and construct shed dormers at the back of the structure. She noted that the structure was currently 10 feet tall and would increase to 19 feet in height. She added they were hoping to replace the chain link fence with a wood fence.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there was a second floor in the garage. Ms. Hirsch said that they were proposing a 38 square foot loft space.

Ms. Goodwin asked what was proposed as exterior siding. Ms. Hirsch said hardiboard or shingle to match the primary structure.

Ms. Sue Ellen Myers, Commissioner, asked if it would have a bathroom. Ms. Hirsch said it may have a sink/toilet, noting that it would not function as a standalone unit. Ms. Myers asked if they owned the garage. Ms. Hirsch said they were in the process of purchasing it from the upstairs neighbors. Ms. Goodwin asked if they needed a variance. Ms. Hirsch replied yes as it was a nonconforming structure.

Ms. Margaret McMahon, Commissioner, suggested they consider using the same shingle cladding as the primary structure. Ms. Hirsch said they would look at it

Ms. Goodwin said that a floorplan would have been helpful and asked if the fence would mask the structure. Ms. Hirsch said yes. Mr. Charles Redmon, Commissioner, asked if the deck was next to it in the

backyard. Ms. Hirsch replied yes and that the studio would open on to the garden. Mr. Redmon asked if they had considered how much shade this would add to the backyard. Ms. Hirsch said yes and noted that the backyard was almost completely shaded as it was.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions of fact from the public – there were none. She asked for comments from the public – there were none.

Ms. Goodwin noted that the Commission did not generally support the use of hardiboard.

Ms. Monika Pauli, Commissioner, said that it appeared that the pitch on the garage was steeper than the existing and that the proposed garage's pitch should better relate to the primary structure. Ms. Hirsch said they were hoping to have the additional height for the loft space. Mr. Redmon suggested slightly adding to the height to be able to reduce the pitch. Ms. Pauli agreed. Ms. Hirsch said they could do that.

Ms. Goodwin said that if the Commission granted approval, the applicant would be required to return to staff with final plans after the project was through the zoning process. Ms. Hirsch agreed.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the general proposal as submitted with the condition that they return to staff with final detailed plans and a landscape plan after zoning review. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Ms. Pauli recused herself and joined the audience as an abutter.

MC-5054: 334 Harvard Street, by Akelius. Renovate exterior, replace windows, alter balcony railings, construct new entry, install solar panels or green roof, construct railing for roof deck, and alter barrel roof.

Ms. Elliott showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Mr. David Wilkins, representative with Centerpoint Architects, introduced himself and Edward "Ted" Davis of Akelius, the owners. Mr. Wilkins said the proposal was to renovate the structure and increase energy efficiency. He noted that the property had deferred maintenance, which increased the scope to include extensive masonry repair, in addition to the removal of AC units, alteration of the front entrance, replacement of the concrete block fence, addition of greenery along the fence edge, window replacement, replace balcony railings, repair of the barrel vault roof, repair the roof deck, install solar panels, and install a green roof.

Mr. Redmon asked if they were proposing a grade change. Mr. Wilkins replied about a foot and a half.

Ms. Goodwin asked if they were staying apartments or if they were being converted into condominiums. Mr. Davis replied that they were staying apartments. He added that the company chose the property to renovate as a long term investment.

Ms. Myers asked what was proposed for the entrance to the lobby. Mr. Davis reviewed the plans and noted that the proposed glass extension would end just before the edge of the existing masonry fence. Mr. Redmon asked if those fences were for ground floor units. Mr. Davis replied yes.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions from the public.

Ms. Carleen Roberts, resident at 47 Roberts Road, asked how the renovations would be completed with tenants living there. Mr. Davis replied that they would be done over time and renovated primarily as tenants vacated units, unless some renovation components could be done while tenants were residing in units.

Ms. Goodwin asked where the HVAC condensers would be located. Mr. Davis replied that they would be located on a balcony or the roof.

Ms. Elliott asked what finish was proposed for the windows. Mr. Davis said white vinyl. Ms. Elliott asked if they had looked at other materials or colors. Mr. Davis replied that they had but were concerned about the price of other materials. Ms. Myers asked how long it would take to replace the windows. Mr. Davis replied they were estimating two (2) years as about 1/3 of the structure was currently vacant, with an additional 6 units becoming vacant in December. He added that they hoped to offer renovated units to existing tenants to get them to move into renovated units to help speed the overall renovation project along.

Mr. Redmon asked if they were painting the barrel vault roof. Mr. Davis replied that they were looking to restore it and add up-lighting.

Ms. Goodwin called for comments, there were none.

Mr. Redmon commended them for their undertaking and for preserving much of the historic fabric.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the applicant returning to staff with final plans for site work. Ms. McMahon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

Ms. Pauli rejoined the Commission.

MC-5055: 44 Roberts Road, Unit #2, by Michael & Jennifer Jacobs. Alter windows.

Ms. Elliott gave an overview of the structure's history, proposal, and showed slides.

Mr. Michael Jacobs, an owner, introduced himself and his wife, Jennifer. He said they purchased the unit in 2014 and appreciated the neighborhood. He noted that they were in the process of planning a kitchen renovation and were proposing to alter the windows to match the other units.

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

Mr. John Roberts, a resident at 47 Roberts Road, offered his support of the project and noted that the proposed alteration would improve the consistency on the elevation. Ms. Carleen Roberts, a resident at 47 Roberts Road, mentioned her excitement about the street's renovation projects and offered her support for the project.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to accept the application as submitted. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

MC-5056: 6 Maple Avenue, by John Herron & Julia Moore. Construct addition and alter grade for driveway.

Ms. Elliott gave overviews of the structure's history and application, then showed slides.

Mr. John Herron, an owner, introduced himself and his wife, Julia Moore. He noted they had owned the structure for the past 13 years and had supported the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District. He shared that their goal was to downsize while staying in the area but constructing an addition styled as a carriage house rather than subdivide the interior of the main house.

Mr. John Lodge, the architect for the project, said that the plan was to create most of living space on one floor with a second floor for a guest room and office. He noted that the site sloped from Maple Avenue back toward Fayette Street and thus the first floor would be about one and a half (1 ½) feet below the existing level of the primary structure. He noted that the majority of the proposed structure would not be readily visible from the public way due to the grade change of the lot. Mr. Lodge added that the proposed two story volume would have clapboards along with a new open picket fence wrapping exterior of property.

Ms. McMahon asked if they were selling the house. Mr. Herron replied that their goal was to occupy the rear unit and sell the primary structure as a single family. Ms. Myers asked if the units would be separate dwellings. Mr. Lodge replied that they would be attached condo units. Ms. Myers suggested returning with a 3-D model because of the complexity of the proposal.

Ms. Goodwin echoed Ms. Myers request for a 3-D model with the adjacent buildings massing represented.

Ms. Pauli asked if there were new shadows created. Mr. Lodge replied possibly, but noted that it would not cause shadows on the neighboring properties.

Ms. McMahon asked if trees were being removed. Mr. Lodge said no, with the exception of one small tree that was ailing in the right side (south) yard.

Mr. Redmon asked if the roof of the one story element would be used as a roof deck. Mr. Lodge replied no that it would be covered with succulents or gravel.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there were parking issues. Mr. Lodge said no that it conformed to meet required parking on-site. Ms. Goodwin asked what was being added to the site for parking. Mr. Lodge said that currently there was a fence and cobblestone drive. He said that the drive was proposed to be extended and two parking spaces would be provided.

Ms. Constance Hilton, resident at 2 Fayette Park, said her property directly abutted the lot. She said Fayette Park was a multifamily street with a higher density than 6 Maple Avenue. She expressed concern over the parking spaces toward Fayette Park, the potential change to the living experience on Fayette Park and the loss of the existing trees/vegetation.

Ms. Moore noted that the space abutting Fayette Park was a turnaround space and that they were not proposing to remove the apple tree. Mr. Herron said he would be happy to work with abutters and accommodate their concerns along with proving additional landscaping.

Ms. Hilton asked what the distance from the shed to the rear property line. Mr. Lodge replied about 24 feet. Ms. Hilton asked for the height of the shed. Mr. Lodge replied eight (8) feet. Ms. Hilton expressed concern over the loss of thru-views and water run off as Fayette Park had problems with wet basements and rats.

Ms. Goodwin recommended continuing the application to allow the applicant to meet with abutters, work out details and possibly for the Commission to have an Architect's Committee meeting on-site. The applicants agreed.

Ms. McMahon expressed concern with the potential impact on the primary structure and didn't feel that adding additional housing stock was necessary for Mid Cambridge. Mr. Herron noted that there was a low supply of housing in Cambridge and felt adding additional housing stock would be helpful to the area. Mr. Redmon added that models and 3-D views might be helpful to explain and visualize the project.

Ms. Hilton added that she hoped that projects would reflect the character of the area versus having a negative impact on the character of the house such as the alterations on the white house at the northeast corner of Maple and Broadway, which occurred before the district was enacted.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to continue the application until the October 17, 2016 hearing. Ms. Pauli seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Minutes

Ms. Myers made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 2, 2016 meeting as submitted. Ms. McMahon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Ms. Myers made a motion to approve the minutes from July 11, 2016 as submitted. Ms. McMahon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to adjourn the hearing. Ms. McMahon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Paull Elliott
Preservation Administrator

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

Ann Hirsch & Jeremy Angier	Owners	20 Leonard Avenue
Edward Davis	Owner's Representative	3 Post Office Square, Boston
Michael & Jennifer Jacobs	Owners	44 Roberts Road, #2
Jock Herron	Owner	6 Maple Avenue
Julia Moore	Owner	6 Maple Avenue
John Lodge	Architect	6 Maple Avenue [sic]
Brett Lechy	Architect	– unlisted –
John Roberts	Neighbor	44 Roberts Road [sic – live at 47]
Carla Roberts	Neighbor	44 Roberts Road [sic – live at 47]
David Wilkins	Architect	– unlisted –
Helen Snively	Abutter	1 Fayette Park
Marjorie Saunders	Abutter	7 Maple Ave, #2
Constance Hilton	Abutter	2 Fayette Park

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