

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
APPROVED AT THE FEBRUARY 6, 2017 HEARING

Monday, January 9, 2017, 6:00 PM, Second Floor Meeting Room, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, Cambridge

Commission Members present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Monika Pauli *Member*; Margaret McMahon and Charles Redmon, *Alternates*

Commission Members absent: Lestra Litchfield and Sue-Ellen Myers, *Members*

Staff present: Samantha Paull Elliott

Members of the Public: See attached list.

Ms. Nancy Goodwin, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. She reviewed the agenda as well as meeting procedures. She designated that all alternates present would be voting.

MC-5131: 56 Highland Avenue, by Sara H. Gardner. Remove siding, install new siding, alter window openings, replace roofing material, re-establish open front porches, and replace windows as part of a larger renovation project.

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

Ms. Sara Gardner, an owner of 56 Highland Avenue and architect for the project, said her husband and she purchased the home years ago. They converted the structure into a two family, from a three family home - renovating the first and third floors for the owners unit and renting out the second floor. She said the proposal would allow her to finish the renovation of the structure for the second floor unit and the exterior. Ms. Gardner noted that the exterior renovation included reestablishing the historically open front porches, removing 4 layers of siding and installing a new layer of wood shingles.

Mr. Charles Redmon, Commissioner, asked if similar shingle structures existed in the area. Ms. Elliott noted that the areas of Highland Avenue, Highland Park, Ellsworth Avenue and Ellsworth Park had similar two family homes with the two-story front porches and gambrel roof features. She noted that there were a handful of owners, builders and architects designing and building these structures on these streets which had a few different types of architectural elements to distinguish between the different owners/builders such as brackets and molding profiles. She said that there were a variety of siding materials - some clapboards only, some shingles only, and some were a mixture - both originally and later historic additions. Ms. Gardner added that she was proposing shingles because of the curved bay on the front elevation and being uncertain of the shape of the siding underneath and the potential for curved siding to be recreated if it needed to be replaced. Ms. Gardner noted that there was also a small step on the front elevation in the gable end. Ms. Elliott noted that many times those features were indicative of decorative shingles in the gable end - some in the area had a diamond pattern in the gable end. She suggested that Ms. Gardner work with the removal company to slowly remove the siding layers to allow her to obtain clues when she goes back with siding in the future.

Mr. Redmond asked if she was proposing to construct a skirt between the first and second floor. Ms. Gardner replied that she had been thinking about that and would be happy to include it to add some architectural interest back into the structure.

Mr. Redmon asked the owner to elaborate on the proposed window alterations. Ms. Gardner said that she was hoping to bring additional light into the kitchen spaces which had small windows due to the existing asbestos siding and her not wanting to do abatement to make the openings larger. Ms. Goodwin asked if the proposed replacement windows would match the previously replaced windows. Ms. Gardner replied yes to create consistency.

Ms. Goodwin noted that much of the features and finishes will depend on what elements she finds during demolition. Ms. Gardner said yes she was excited to unveil the structure's architecture. Ms. Goodwin added that the Commission can come on site to help discern details and discuss architectural elements if needed. Ms. Gardner replied that would be great and asked if they offered color help. Ms. Elliott noted that Susan Maycock, of the Historical Commission staff, offer paint consults and would be happy to help coordinate with Ms. Gardner. Ms. Elliott offered to send along Ms. Maycock's contact information.

Ms. Goodwin asked for public comments and questions - there were none. She read an email submitted by an abutter, Edward White. He offered his support of the project and the applicant.

Mr. Tony Hsiao, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Mr. Redmon seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Minutes

Ms. Goodwin noted she read the minutes and offered correction of a few typos. Mr. Redmon made a motion to accept the minutes for September 12, 2016. Ms. Monika Pauli, Commissioner, seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to accept the October 17, 2016 as edited. Ms. Monika Pauli, Commissioner, seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

Mr. Redmon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hsiao seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Paull Elliott
Preservation Administrator

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

Sara Gardner Owner + Architect 56 Highland Avenue

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