

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
APPROVED AT THE FEBRUARY 5, 2018 HEARING

Monday, September 11, 2017, 6:00 PM, 2nd Floor Meeting Room, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, Cambridge

Commission Members present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Tony Hsaio, *Vice Chair*; Lestra Litchfield and Monika Pauli, *Members*

Commission Members absent: Sue Ellen Myers, *Member*; Charles Redmon and Margaret McMahon, *Alternates*

Staff present: Sarah Burks

Members of the Public: See attached list.

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

Mr. Tony Hsiao, Vice Chair, entered.

MC-5248: 114 Inman Street, by 11 Development, LLC o/b/o Manuel Pavao, Manuel Antinio, Jose Jorge, and Beatrice Hunt. Construct dormers and demolish rear addition as part of a larger exterior renovation and project to alter church into residential units.

Ms. Goodwin disclosed that she was a neighbor but did not feel it was a conflict.

Ms. Sarah Burks, staff, showed slides and summarized the structure's history. She asked the proponent to confirm the square footage added. Mr. James Rafferty, the proponent, confirmed that it was over 750 square feet. She confirmed that the hearing was a binding hearing.

Mr. Rafferty introduced himself, the applicant Scott Schuster and Jai Sing Khalsa of Khalsa Design. Mr. Khalsa reviewed the proposal, noting the square footage was increasing from 5,338 sqft to 9,520 sqft, most of which was within the existing envelope. He noted that most of the square footage added was within the dormer additions.

Mr. Rafferty added that the church conversion needed a special permit and the dormer additions required a variance. He noted that they were proposing to remove some square footage at the rear of 114 Inman Street. Mr. Rafferty said that while the building could accommodate 9 units under zoning, they were proposing only 6 units in the church as three-level townhouses. He said the site could accommodate parking for 7 vehicles and that zoning required landscaping and bike parking.

Mr. Khalsa showed slides of the proposed design. He noted the split-level entrance with entrance areaways on the side of the church. He described the floor plans for the church units. Mr. Khalsa noted that the project would reduce the width of the existing curb cut, add a landscape buffer at the front of the parking. He noted that the church was currently 3-stories tall and would not increase in height but that windows, including the large arched window, would be reorganized for better fit into the floorplans.

He added that they would maintain the steeple but change it to a weathervane. Mr. Khalsa said that the fire stair on the left would be removed as part of the renovation process.

In regard to their half of the front double house, Mr. Khalsa reviewed the proposed changes. He noted that they were proposing to add two skylights, demolish the rear portion of the ell, enlarge the dormer and increase the size of the window in the gable end.

Mr. Hsiao asked for more information about the dormers. Mr. Khalsa replied that it would be about 270 square feet in open balconies and 300 square feet in dormers.

Mr. Hsiao asked how far below grade the areaways were proposed. Mr. Khalsa replied three (3) feet six (6) inches.

Mr. Hsiao asked what the parking layout was. Mr. Khalsa replied that the curb cut would be reduced in width.

Ms. Monika Pauli, Commissioner, asked for more information on the garden level. Mr. Khalsa clarified that it would be at the same level as the existing basement and that the scissor trusses would be modified inside to get clearer spaces.

Ms. Lestra Litchfield, Commissioner, asked what windows were proposed. Mr. Khalsa replied that the windows would be a simulated divided lite with interior and exterior muntins. He added that they would prefer a metal clad exterior.

Ms. Litchfield asked what materials were proposed from the front structure. Mr. Schuster replied that they hoped to use Hardiboard, a cementitious plank. Ms. Litchfield asked what materials were proposed for the railings for the roof decks. Mr. Khalsa replied that if clapboards were required, they would maintain the existing ones. Mr. Hsiao asked what treatment was proposed around the windows at the church. Mr. Khalsa replied that they were proposed to replicate the existing trim details. Ms. Litchfield asked what material was existing on the church. Mr. Khalsa said clapboards.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there were any questions from the public.

Ms. Mela Lyman, resident at 147 Amory Street, said her property backed up to the back of the church and asked why a 20 foot setback wasn't required. Mr. Rafferty replied that it was not required as it was a pre-existing non-conformity. He noted that the rear elevation windows were being reduced. He added that the project would need a special permit and a variance.

Ms. Susan Bean, resident at 112 Inman Street, expressed concern about the windows in the units looking into her house. Mr. Khalsa replied that it appeared from the city database that there was a 12 foot setback at the closest point and 16 feet to other windows. Ms. Bean asked if they had considered other ways to get light into the units. Mr. Khalsa replied that there was an opportunity to reduce the number of windows in the dormers, in the bathrooms, reducing the windows from three (3) to one (1) and use panels that simulate windows. Ms. Bean replied that the proposal looked nice but she was very concerned with privacy.

Ms. Kathy Fairhurst, resident at 110C Inman Street, noted that there were nine (9) units in her building and was concerned with the decks seeing into their private gardens. She asked if they could construct a

solid four (4) foot tall fence to increase privacy. Mr. Khalsa said that the decks were separated by dormers but would consider their concerns. He added that he did not think it would be a privacy issue and that it may detract aesthetically from the structure. Ms. Bean offered to have the applicants over to her unit to understand the impact.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there were any other questions from the public; there were none. She asked for comments from the public; there were none.

Ms. Pauli said that she was concerned that a higher solid railing would cast a shadow but it could be pushed back slightly and provide more privacy. Mr. Khalsa said that the decks, which were six (6) foot one (1) inch, could be reduced to about five (5) feet. He said he would look into the feasibility.

Ms. Litchfield asked what materials were proposed for the front house. Mr. Khalsa said if it was wood clapboard, it would be maintained. He continued, if it was vinyl, they were proposing to install new Hardiboard. Ms. Litchfield noted that the Commission prefers the use of historic materials and does not think Hardiboard is a good substitute for wood.

Mr. Hsiao said that the suggestions about reducing windows (with opaque panels) in dormers and pulling back the railings would improve the building. It continued, that it seemed like it would be a good idea to maintain the substantial fence in the rear, but not tall in the front. He also added that the parking appeared to be tight.

Mr. Rafferty said that was a good observation and added that they were looking for compact space approval for all spaces. Mr. Schuster added that they were all being proposed as condominiums.

Mr. Hsiao asked what material was proposed for the driveway. Mr. Khalsa clarified asphalt for the parking spaces and permeable pavers for the driveway and courtyard area. Mr. Hsiao said good and supported regularizing the fenestration. He added that the materials used were important and that natural wood would give it a restored look versus a new look, which buyers tend to like. He suggested that wood be used.

Mr. Hsiao made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The decks shall be adjusted to be pulled back one (1) foot;
2. The windows in the dormers shall be amended to reduce the transparent glazing;
3. The height of the fence shall be maintained in the rear but lowered in the front; and
4. The wood clapboards shall be restored.

Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

MC-5261: 66 Antrim Street, by Whitney Van Praagh. Construct dormer, replace windows, re-open historic porch, construct new 2nd floor front porch, construct new rear decks, add new entrance to basement apartment, alter windows, and alter doors as part of a full renovation.

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the structure's history.

The applicant and architect, Alex van Praagh, introduced himself and his wife, Whitney van Praagh. He showed photographs of previous projects he had worked on in Somerville at 47 Harrison Street, 50 Harrison Street and 7 Gould Street. He continued and gave an overview of the project, which included

reestablishing a side porch, convert house to single family use with a basement apartment that has a side entrance, replace windows with Marvin Integrity's two-over-one fiberglass exterior with wood interior windows, construct dormers, and install permeable pavers for the driveway. He noted that it would need a variance as proposed and was scheduled to be heard by the BZA later that week.

Ms. Goodwin asked what the variance was required for. Mr. van Praagh replied that the variance was required for the windows located in the setback, the dormers increased the FAR, and the decks were located in the setback.

Ms. Pauli asked why the areaways for the basement were required. Mr. van Praagh replied that the basement needed two means of egress.

Ms. Litchfield asked if he was providing egress in the bedroom basements. Mr. van Praagh replied that there was a bedroom in the back that had an egress door and that he was hoping to use part of the basement as a workshop.

Mr. Hsiao asked where the railing would intersect with the bay window. Mr. van Praagh replied that it would interact with the front trim of the bay. He noted that it would keep the same footprint of the roof. Ms. Burks noted that he was referring to an existing condition.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the side porch wrapped around. Mr. van Praagh said no.

Ms. Litchfield asked if there were new window openings. Mr. van Praagh clarified that there were new windows in the second-floor bedroom. Ms. Litchfield asked kind of windows were existing. Mr. van Praagh replied that the windows had all been previously replaced with vinyl. Ms. Litchfield asked if any of the original windows were remaining. Mr. van Praagh replied that there were no original windows but the trim was original, which he was planning on keeping.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there were any questions or comments from the public; there were none.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the windows were simulated divided lights. Mr. van Praagh replied yes.

Ms. Pauli asked if he was planning on keeping the railings on the first floor. Mr. van Praagh replied yes and they would be replicated in mahogany.

Mr. Hsiao made a motion to approve with the following recommendations:

1. The second-floor porch railing shall replicate the first-floor porch railing and detailing to maintain consistency and prevent second floor porch from looking heavy.
2. The edge of the eave shall be maintained rather than the dormer wall plane extending down into the main structure to maintain the historic roofline and character.

Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

MC-5266: 18-20 Myrtle Avenue, by Jeremy & Elisa Flower. Construct dormer, remove chimneys, replace windows, alter windows, and alter doors as part of a full renovation.

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the structure's history, including the survey photo which reflected two-over-two windows. She noted that the application was non-binding.

Mr. Jeremy Flower, an owner, introduced himself and gave an overview of the application. He noted that they did not want to change very much on the exterior. He said that the existing windows were vinyl windows and they were proposing Harvey 400 wood-clad windows. Mr. Flowers said that they were proposing to match the existing vinyl siding, as closely as possible, and they did not have the budget for a full restoration at that time. He directed the Commission to the plans submitted, which reflected the proposed window changes and the proposed shed dormer, which was set back from both ends.

Ms. Pauli asked if the windows were the same size as the existing. Mr. Flowers responded yes, same openings.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions from the public; there were none. She asked for comments from the public; there were none.

Ms. Pauli said she hoped they could restore the siding one day. Mr. Flowers replied that they hoped to one day.

Mr. Hsiao made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Litchfield seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

Ms. Goodwin had to leave at 7:50pm. Mr. Hsiao assumed the role of the Chair for the remainder of the hearing.

MC-5269: 156 Line Street, by Inman Square Properties. New construction.

Ms. Burks showed slides and summarized the site's history. She noted that the application was binding.

Mr. Sean Hope, attorney for the applicant, introduced himself, Ben Rogan, the applicant and Peter Quinn, the architect.

Mr. Quinn gave an overview of the project and reviewed the plans. He noted that it was currently part of a parking lot and backed up to a Walgreens and a condo building. He said the property was in Cambridge and Somerville. The building in Cambridge, was proposed as a 6-unit building of stacked townhouses. Mr. Quinn shared the overall site plan, noting that the site was set up with a courtyard in the center and parking at the perimeter. He said it would include generous landscaping with hardy native, low maintenance plants and a community garden. He continued that the project complied with zoning except for the additional living space in the basement.

Mr. Quinn showed the elevations, noting the siding was proposed as a fiber cement cladding of different widths with a painted concrete base. He said the wood added scale and dimensions to the structure. They were proposing to use wood bollards and aluminum rails, he added. He noted that the top floor would be set back with balconies to allow units to have outdoor space. He said he felt it respected the height of abutting structures and acted as a transition to the hospital across Line Street. He directed the Commission's attention to the included shadow study, which reflected a limited impact in winter afternoons.

Ms. Litchfield asked how much parking would be provided per unit. Mr. Quinn clarified one space per unit.

Ms. Burks asked what the treatment was for the wood on the bays. Mr. Quinn clarified that it was a horizontal tongue and groove or Seeka product.

Ms. Litchfield asked what roofing material was proposed. Mr. Rogan replied a rubber membrane. Mr. Quinn added that it would have a downspout with scuppers behind a parapet wall.

Ms. Burks asked if any units were affordable. Mr. Quinn replied that there was one affordable unit in Somerville.

Ms. Litchfield asked how many bedrooms the units would have. Mr. Quinn replied that they were all 2 and 3 bedroom units and that was dependent upon approval of basement living space. Mr. Rogan added that he hoped to have four 3-bedroom units and two 2-bedroom units. Mr. Quinn noted that the interior floorplans were still being worked on. Ms. Litchfield asked if they would include elevators. Mr. Quinn replied no. Mr. Rogan added that they were proposing a one flight entry to get into units 5 and 6.

Ms. Pauli asked if the ceiling heights were generous. Mr. Quinn replied that they were 9 feet, 6 inches with large windows and an elegant urban loft feel.

Mr. Hsiao asked if the project would be LEED certified. Mr. Rogan replied that it was not likely to be LEED certified but the plans did include many passive house concepts. Mr. Hsiao asked if they were using permeable pavers under the cars. Mr. Quinn replied that it would be incorporated into parking and walkway areas. He added that Somerville required 35% pervious. Mr. Hsiao asked about the fencing design. Mr. Quinn said it would be horizontal.

Alan Feiner, resident at 1436 Cambridge Street, expressed his concern about the impact to parking in the area.

Ms. Pauli said it was a nice project, and should have overview to confirm construction details and final colors. Mr. Quinn said that they would be happy to work with staff on that.

Mr. Hsiao proffered that it would be a vast improvement over a parking lot and that it was a thoughtful design. He appreciated their attention to detail while creating its own style, noting he felt that it was a good compliment to the setting.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to approve the application with the following condition: applicant shall communicate with staff regarding lighting, colors, mockups and final landscaping plans. Ms. Pauli seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0.

Minutes

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted from August 7, 2017. Ms. Pauli seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0.

Ms. Litchfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Pauli seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0 and the hearing was adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Elliott
Preservation Administrator

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

Jeremy & Elisa Flowers	Owners	18-20 Myrtle Avenue
Susan Bean	Neighbor	112D Inman Street
Kathy Fairhurst	Neighbor	110C Inman Street
Alan Feiner	Neighbor	1436 Cambridge Street
Rishi Chhabra	Neighbor	34 Clark Street, Somerville

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