

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 5, 2022, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Tony, Hsiao, *Chair*, Lestra Litchfield, *Vice Chair*, Charles Redmon, Katinka Hakuta, *Members*, Margaret McMahon, *Alternate*

Absent: Monika Pauli

Staff present: Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator, Eric Hill, Survey Director

Members of the Public: See attached list

Meeting held via online zoom webinar <https://tinyurl.com/MCjuly2022>

Due to statewide emergency actions limiting the size of public gatherings in response to COVID-19, this meeting was held online with remote participation and was closed to in-person attendance. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform. The meeting ID was 853 1343 2752.

The following case was withdrawn:

Case MC-6504: 116 Inman Street, by James Creighton. Install fiber cement siding and pvc trim.

Commission Chair Tony Hsiao made introductions, explained the process, and called the meeting to order at 6:04.

Case MC-6505: 352-354 Broadway, by Broadway-Inman Condo Association. Remove two chimneys.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, preservation administrator, presented slides of the property and history.

Mr. JD Paul, one of the applicants, explained that the roof was recently redone and two chimneys are leaning precariously, and confirmed as unstable by Inspectional Services. The fireplaces are to be sealed.

Commission Questions

Commissioner Charles Redmon asked how many chimneys are there. Mr. Paul replied that were four total, it's the two front ones that they are worried will collapse. Mr. Redmon asked about the condition of the other chimneys. Mr. Paul answered that one in the rear was removed and the other one is okay.

Public Questions and Comments

Ms. Crosbie read an email from Emily Talcott and Ken Lynch of 3 West Place in support of the proposed removal.

Commission Comments

Vice Chair Lestra Litchfield stated that the Commission typically does not like to see chimneys removed, they speak to the past use, but is inclined to approve this. She also asked if they

looked at repairing them. Mr. Paul replied that they did, and it was prohibitively expensive. They also don't want to break the rubber roof to install a faux structure as it would compromise the integrity of the roof membrane.

Mr. Redmon concurred with Ms. Litchfield.

Commissioner Katinka Hakuta also agreed noting that it does look dangerous.

Mr. Hsiao also concurred that this was appropriate in this case.

Mr. Redmon motioned to accept the application as submitted. Ms. Litchfield seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

Case MC-6506: 6 Cleveland Street, by Daniel Salomon. Install solar roof panels.

Ms. Crosbie presented slides of the property, noting that it's a non binding review.

Mr. Dan Salomon, the owner, explained that he has been living here for a year, that the heating is currently inadequate, and described the proposed solar panel layout.

Commission Questions

Ms. Litchfield asked if the proposed associated meters could be located somewhere other than the front façade. Mr. Salomon replied that they need to be next to the existing electrical service which is located in front.

Public Questions and Comments - none

Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield asked how high the panels are from the roof. Mr. Salomon answered that they are five inches from roof plane to top of panels. Ms. Litchfield commented that she is happy that the applicant is using solar energy.

Ms. Hakuta asked for clarification of the color of the panels, that they appear black and white in one image in the application. Mr. Salomon replied that he is flexible regarding the color. Ms. Hakuta stated she would prefer black so that it blended in. Ms. Litchfield agreed.

Mr. Hsiao concurred with the Commission members.

Ms. Litchfield motioned to accept the application. Ms. Hakuta seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

Case MC-6484: 11 Centre Street, by Ann Rosebery & Beth Warren. Install fiber cement siding and pvc trim.

Ms. Crosbie presented slides and background information on the property for the non binding review.

Ms. Ann Rosebery, one of the owners, explained that they have lived here for 30 years and have made many upgrades, including blown-in insulation last summer. This caused some of the clapboards and shingles to crack. She also stated that they do not intend to touch the original detailing. They had originally wanted cedar siding, but the materials are not available until after

the winter and the expense was also prohibitive. The fiber cement cost was reasonable. She also noted that neighbors next door have something that is similar to what they want.

Commission Questions

Mr. Hsiao asked if the applicant would emulate the shingle and clapboard siding. Ms. Roseberry answered that they are not, it will be all clapboard with a smooth finish. Mr. Hsiao noted through screen sharing that the neighboring houses have shingles.

Public Questions and Comments

Ms. Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street stated that she knows the building and the neighbors well and expressed some concern with how the fiber cement will look.

Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield remarked that the Commission really doesn't like fiber cement. She said she understood the issue with the insulation. If the primary reason is the upcoming winter, she is sure that the siding can get through another season. She noted that you can always tell that it's fiber cement because of the joints, they do not abut very closely. With wood it's a tight joint and it still breathes, but the fiber cement has cracks between each plank. Ms. Litchfield encouraged the owners to look at other examples. Ms. Rosebery replied that they have seen both good and bad examples and it comes down to the installation. Ms. Litchfield recommended that they look at the adjacent triple-deckers, not the nextdoor neighbor that is a different style. She also noted that they will have seams at the bay windows which will need trim to cover them up, and with pvc trim you will be able to tell - it's an aesthetic difference. Ms. Litchfield also asked if the porch was wood. Ms. Rosebery answered that it is wood which was still reasonably priced at the time.

Mr. Hsiao agreed with Ms. Litchfield and noted the two upper floors are wood shingles with a flare between floors and that a lot of these details will be lost with the removal of the shingles. He also commented that changing to all clapboard will change the whole aesthetic of the house - the details are small but important.

Ms. Hakuta asked about the color. Ms. Rosebery responded that they are using a darker color.

Ms. Litchfield motioned to deny the application as presented. Ms. Hakuta seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

Mr. Lou Milano, the contractor for the applicants, was not able to connect earlier and wanted to say that they are using a very good manufacturer and that the flare details will be maintained on the building.

Case MC-6485: 19 Ellsworth Avenue, by Aram Harrow & Shefali Oza. Construct dormer, remove chimney, alter fenestration.

Ms. Crosbie presented slides and history of the site of the property.

Mr. John Lodge, the architect for the owners, described the project to build a dormer to provide more space on the floor, and noted that it is currently not to code. Mr. Lodge presented slides of the proposed alterations including the removal of the chimney, new

fenestration (2/2 sash), and dormer design. He also noted that they would like to change the siding at a later date, and when they do, they will address the gable window which was previously altered. He also mentioned that there's a long lead time to order windows.

Commission Questions

Ms. Hakuta asked what material the dormer sides will be. Mr. Lodge answered that they will be fiber cement.

Public Questions

Ms. Meyer asked what the distance from the dormer is to roof ridge line. Mr. Lodge answered about a foot and assured that the proposed dormer complies with the City's guidelines.

Public Comments

Ms. Meyer commented that it is a thoughtful design.

Ms. Crosbie read an email received from Matt Hayes of 17 Ellsworth expressing support for the project.

Commission Comments

Mr. Redmon had no comments. Ms. Litchfield as well.

Mr. Hsiao pointed out the arched gable window is a feature in many of the houses on the street, small but impactful. It's a significant detail that is one of the character defining features of the street. Mr. Lodge replied that Ms. Crosbie did raise this issue in a prior discussion, he expressed concern with restoring it now before the siding is replaced and would like to wait until then. Mr. Lodge asked the Commission's opinion on another type of arched window. Mr. Hsiao responded that it would be acceptable, but he prefers the rounded arch.

Mr. Redmon motioned to accept the application as presented. Mr. Litchfield seconded, and the motion passed, 5-0.

Case MC-6447: 123 Hancock Street, by MSW Hancock LLC. Remove rear and side additions and extend existing dormer. Construct 1 new detached dwelling unit.

Ms. Crosbie briefly summarized the project and the previous review at the architects committee meeting on May 26.

Mr. Sam Wolff, the applicant, introduced the project noting that they listened to the Commission's comments. Ms. Heather Souza, the architect, presented the revised design of the third floor. Ms. Litchfield asked to see the previous design with the revised proposal. Ms. Souza showed both schemes indicating that they looked at the rhythm of the existing house portico and flipped the window typology.

Commission Questions

Ms. Hakuta asked about the windows. Ms. Souza went over the types of windows they are proposing.

Mr. Hsiao asked about the dashed element on the third floor. Ms. Souza clarified that the dashed line refers to the previously approved scheme to show how the current proposed building has been pulled back and lowered.

Public Questions and Comments

Mr. Tomar Cohen of 7 Centre Street said he appreciated the proposed plantings but would like the plantings to grow high enough to cover the second floor. He expressed his continued concern over the deck on the third floor, stating that something could fall off and land in the playground. He also said that over all this revision is an improvement.

Ms. Meyer reiterated the need to keep the vegetation low closer to the street to maintain views to the existing house. She asked about the second-floor windows and the programming, and why so close to the edge. Ms. Souza explained the interior layout.

Ms. Meyer stated she appreciated the time and effort that has gone into this project and asked about the third-floor windows. Ms. Souza answered that the windows are longer in the front and that they will have simulated divided lights.

Commission Comments

Mr. Redmon stated that the applicant and architect had done a good job.

Ms. Litchfield commented that the third-floor windows look busy now. She also questioned the landscaping and the choice of fence and gate that also look busy.

Mr. Hsiao also noted the vertical window expression and suggested punch windows instead of vertical trim. Mr. Redmon agreed.

Ms. Souza asked if this could be an advisory staff review along with the paint colors. The Commission agreed.

Ms. Litchfield complimented the applicants for sticking with this and that it has been a pleasure to work with them.

Mr. Redmon motioned to accept the proposal as submitted with the condition that the recessed façade facing the street be revised to reduce window verticality and submitted for CHC staff review and submit a final landscape plan for CHC staff review as well. Ms. Litchfield seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

The June 6, 2022 minutes were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public Present on July 5, 2022Panelists:

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JD Paul	jd paul@interstel.net
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Attendees:

Marilee Meyer	10 Dana Street
Tomar Cohen	7 Centre Street
Dan Mazur	122 Hancock Street