

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 2, 2024, 6:00 PM, online Zoom meeting

Commission Members present: Lestra Litchfield, *Vice Chair*; Charles Redmon, Katinka Hakuta, *Members*, Catherine Tice, Nan Laird, *Alternates*

Absent: Monika Pauli; Tony Hsiao, *Chair*

Staff present: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public: See attached list

This meeting was held via online zoom webinar <http://tinyurl.com/MCJan2024> 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 893 9819 5911.

Commission Vice Chair Lestra Litchfield made introductions, explained the process for the hearing, and called the meeting to order at 6:02.

MC-6902: 72A Inman Street, by Angela Jaimes & Daniel Monet. Alter fenestration, construct dormers.

Ms. Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator, introduced the project and showed slides of the property and stated that the review was non-binding.

Mr. Jonathan Pagaduan, the architect for the applicants, presented drawings of the project. Regarding the window replacement, he explained that they are replacing the sash, only using 2/2 double hung. As a result, the glass portion will be slightly smaller to fit the opening. Mr. Pagaduan also went over the proposed dormers saying he reviewed the City of Cambridge guidelines and kept the dormers below the ridgeline and broke them up to break up the massing and stay within the dimensions set by the guidelines. He also mentioned that he looked at the other houses in the neighborhood and felt that what they're proposing fits in with the existing context.

Commission Questions

Commissioner Katinka Hakuta asked for clarification on the window frame. Mr. Pagaduan answered that the frames will be removed to insert the new windows and then reinstalled.

Ms. Litchfield asked if they are using simulated divided lites (SDL) which the Commission prefers. Mr. Pagaduan confirmed the windows will have SDL.

Commissioner Catherine Tice asked about the material of the new windows, that it looks like they are aluminum. Mr. Pagaduan replied that he wasn't sure. Ms. Crosbie pointed out that the application listed Marvin Elevate windows which are wood clad. Ms. Pagaduan said he would confirm with the contractor. Mr. Redmon commented that he looked at the Marvin website and the Elevate windows do have a wood interior.

Commissioner Nan Laird asked about the existing aluminum siding. Mr. Pagaduan answered that the siding will remain, and the cladding on the dormers will match the rest of the building. Ms. Laird asked if the outside window trim will remain. Mr. Pagaduan replied yes.

Public Questions

Mr. Keith Killian of 340 Harvard Street asked about the original pitch of the roof and said that he thought the surrounding houses didn't seem as steep as this one. Mr. Pagaduan responded that the angle provides the required 7-foot height without extending all the way to the ridgeline.

Mr. Joe Artley of 72 Inman Street expressed his support and mentioned that the windows are fiberglass and wood.

Ms. Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street asked about the proposed Marvin windows, specifically on page 4 of the drawings, where the frames look wider than they are now. Mr. Pagaduan confirmed that the new windows will have less glass. Ms. Meyer then asked about the extension in the rear where there's a 2/1 window. Mr. Pagaduan responded that they are not touching that window. She also asked about the basement windows. Mr. Pagaduan answered they are not changing the basement windows.

Public Comments

Ms. Meyer commented that the proposal appears straightforward but was concerned about the size of the proposed dormers, but thinks the angle is appropriate and likes that they are uneven. She also commented that she wasn't sure about 2/1 or 2/2 windows and asked about the grids. Ms. Litchfield clarified the SDL profile and that this is what the Commission prefers if the windows must be replaced.

Mr. Artley reiterated his support as a direct abutter to the project.

Commission Comments

Ms. Laird asked the applicants if they needed a variance. Mr. Pagaduan answered that they need a special permit because it is a non-conforming lot.

Commissioner Chuck Redmon commented that the proposal looks good.

Ms. Litchfield stated that she's glad they broke up the dormers and complied with the City's guidelines. She observed that the chimney was being removed and wondered how visible it is. Ms. Crosbie answered that it is visible from across the street. Ms. Laird said she went by the house and saw the chimney. She also commented that the house looks lonely and perhaps the siding has contributed to that.

Ms. Litchfield advised the owners that when they decide to remove the siding, they should look at the 1965 image of the house that Ms. Crosbie showed and use it as a guide for bringing back the original details. Ms. Angela Jaimes, one of the owners, said they would love to do that at some point when they have the funds.

Mr. Redmon motioned to approve the proposal as submitted. Ms. Laird seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.

MC-6903: 1 Lamont Avenue, by 1 Lamont Ave LLC. Alter fenestration and entrance, replace siding and trim.

Ms. Crosbie showed slides of the 2-family house and noted this is a non-binding review.

Mr. Steve Suida, the owner, explained that he is converting the two-family house to a single-family home. He stated that there might be wood shingle siding underneath the existing siding and would keep it if it's still in good condition, but right now he is proposing Hardieboard clapboard with staggered shingles on the top floor. He also pointed out that this will be a gut renovation. For the windows, he is looking at Anderson 400 and Pella wood/aluminum clad windows. Mr. Suida showed slides of a previous project he did in Somerville to convey the kind of renovations he does.

Commission Questions

Ms. Laird asked about the yard space. Mr. Suida answered that there's a little space in the rear, and that he is required by the City to provide some green space as part of a green score. Ms. Laird asked about parking. Mr. Suida replied that he is not providing parking spaces. Ms. Laird noted that the view from the street is limited.

Ms. Hakuta asked what the inspiration was for the proposed 2/2 windows. Mr. Suida replied that they might not use the 2/2, but they do like the aesthetic. Mr. Suida showed images of a previous project in Somerville to illustrate the kind of renovations he does.

Public Questions

Ms. Meyer asked about the location of the mechanicals. Mr. Suida answered that they will be in the rear of the property. Ms. Meyer asked for clarification of Mr. Suida's previous comment about windows changing. Mr. Suida replied that he was referring to the kitchen only and that there might be some modifications to the window locations because of the kitchen layout, but 98% of the windows shown will stay in those locations.

Public Comments

Ms. Meyer stated that CHC staff should be consulted when tweaking the plans and that she did not understand the comparison to the house in Somerville. Mr. Suida responded that the Somerville project was intended to demonstrate the kinds of details he incorporates into his projects, not to show what this project will specifically look like.

Mr. John Alves, the previous owner of the building, said he was excited to see what Mr. Suida does with the renovation and supports what's been proposed.

Commission Comments

Ms. Litchfield explained the Commission's stance on siding and that removing the existing siding is great, and it would also be beneficial to see what is underneath and perhaps restore the original siding. Ms. Litchfield further explained that the Commission discourages the use of Hardieboard because it does not have the same characteristics as wood clapboard. She also pointed out that there are different kinds of Hardieboard and if absolutely necessary the flat surface boards are better than the faux wood patterns. She also pointed out that the Hardieboard shingles are even worse. She encouraged the applicant to investigate what

remains on the structure, that there could be shadow lines that inform the detailing, corner boards, etc. and to consult with staff to strike the right balance with details. She called attention to the porch detailing and window surrounds as specific issues to work on with staff. Ms. Litchfield also asked if the windows would have SDL. Mr. Suida confirmed they will have SDL.

Mr. Redmon stated that he would have liked to have seen a landscape plan. Mr. Suida answered that he can forward one to staff. Mr. Suida noted the challenge of bringing back details that are no longer extant. Ms. Crosbie commented that the original builder of the house, James Brown, built many of the homes in the neighborhood so looking at those can provide some guidance.

Ms. Hakuta stated for the record that other applicants have been asked to return to the Commission with more fully developed details but in this case, which is non-binding, she encouraged the applicant to work with staff.

Ms. Laird wondered if there was a plan showing the surrounding buildings and commented that there wasn't much to the landscape right now. Mr. Suida showed a site plan that illustrated the extent of the green space and paving. Ms. Laird said she thought the neighborhood is rather dense and that there is not much space between the houses.

Ms. Litchfield referred to the proposed Azek trim and recommended consulting with staff. She noted that on the upper levels of the building the Azek is not as noticeable, but it does tend to shrink especially on the porch details. She explained that pvc doesn't age that well, and that wood works better for details. Mr. Suida mentioned the expense of using wood but stated that he also wants to create a high-quality project. Ms. Litchfield raised the possibility of using Hardieboard only on the sides of the building that are not visible.

Ms. Laird motioned to approve the project with the recommendation to consult with staff on trim, siding, and porch detailing, and landscaping. Mr. Redmon seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.

MC-6888 (CONTINUED): 342-344 Harvard Street, by Waxwing LLC c/o Nathan Wong. Alter fenestration, replace railings, windows and exterior trim; install new siding, egress windows and doors, window wells.

Ms. Crosbie provided background on the continued case from the previous month. The building known as the Samuel Rindge house is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the review is therefore binding. She explained that the applicant was asked to return to provide additional information on the front doors, window details and type, cladding, location of heat pumps, and landscaping.

Mr. Steve Hiserodt, the architect, went over the site and landscape plan showing plantings including shrubs, hedges, groundcover, lawn, as well as paved areas, asphalt driveway, and the location of mechanicals. Mr. Hiserodt mentioned that some existing shrubs may have to be replaced. He also pointed out that the plantings along the perimeter of house are not in great condition and will be impacted during construction and therefore will be replaced with plants such as rhododendrons by entrances, along with bell heather and hydrangea. Some of the lawn

area will be replaced with ground cover, such as creeping phlox, to replace some lawn that did not grow well. He also showed the asphalt driveway and walkways with concrete pavers. The existing granite steps are to remain and be repaired. He also showed locations for mechanicals which will be screened.

Mr. Hiserodt explained the windows will be replaced with Marvin Ultimate double hung windows, aluminum clad with SDL and space bar, argon filled. Mr. Hiserodt explained this product is one of the better energy efficient windows available. The dormer windows are to be restored with their arches, but there is an issue with the configuration – the window openings and don't meet the building code's egress requirements and added that because they are creating 5 units, they have to comply with the commercial code. Mr. Hiserodt proposed three options, including a true double hung window but the lower sash does not provide a big enough opening; a casement window that looks like a double hung window; or a standard rectangular window with no arch. Mr. Hiserodt then showed the entry doors which do not meet the current code, which requires each door to be 2'-6" wide. He then explained that these cannot be restored in their current size and configuration because double doors are not allowed for egress and the existing doors do not provide the necessary width. He proposed to widen the space for the doors by extending toward the center, with new wider doors that match in form with the existing doors. Otherwise, a separate door will have to be added for every unit, which is a more significant alteration.

Mr. Hiserodt also proposed a 4-inch red cedar clapboard for the siding. He mentioned that he looked under a few asbestos panels and did not see the original siding but noted that perhaps during construction some remnants might be discovered. For trim, the intention is to match existing sills and band molding, as well as the scroll details on dormer windows.

Commission Questions

Ms. Laird asked about parking. Mr. Hiserodt answered there will be three spaces, but the drawing only shows 2 to make the other features more visible. Regarding the front door, Ms. Laird asked if the front steps must be replaced. Mr. Hiserodt replied that the steps will remain and that they are in good shape.

Mr. Redmon asked if the code requires adjustments of the handrails. Mr. Hiserodt answered not really but right now there's currently one center rail and he would like to install two in the center to make it easier to grasp them. The rails on either side are original and will be retained; the center rails will be code compliant.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the transoms over the front doors will be retained. Mr. Hiserodt replied yes. Ms. Litchfield asked about the center brackets. Mr. Hiserodt said he needs to look at them in more detail to see how close they get. Ms. Litchfield stated she had no problem with only one center bracket. Ms. Litchfield asked if the shutters will be wood. Mr. Hiserodt replied yes.

Public Questions and Comments

Mr. Keith Killian of 340 Harvard Street asked about the fence bordering the two properties. Mr. Hiserodt replied that the fence is on Mr. Killian's side and would be happy to discuss the best options and come to an agreement. Mr. Killian replied that they would love to meet and discuss

better options than what is there now. Mr. Hiserodt mentioned that 14 Dana should also be consulted about fencing.

Ms. Meyer asked about the dotted red lines on an elevation drawing. Mr. Hiserodt explained that the dotted lines show where windows are being altered. She also asked if new doors are being fabricated or will the existing doors be altered. Mr. Hiserodt answered that new doors will have to be installed and that Marvin has an appropriate option. Ms. Meyer asked how many inches need to be added and whether the arched transom windows on the front doors will be preserved. Mr. Hiserodt explained the required measurements and confirmed that the transoms will still be arched.

Public Comments

Ms. Meyer commented that the front doors should look like wood, not prefabricated. Mr. Hiserodt assured her that the doors would be wood. Ms. Meyer also said that she hopes that the dormer windows will be arched.

Commission Comments

Mr. Redmon thanked the applicants for addressing the issues raised by the Commission and believed the solutions should work. Ms. Litchfield asked Mr. Redmon for his opinion regarding the dormer windows and asked Mr. Hiserodt to show the drawing again. Mr. Hiserodt recapped the options. Ms. Litchfield asked if the casement windows would have to swing out. Mr. Hiserodt answered that the window could potentially swing inside. Ms. Litchfield commented that an outward swing would not be ideal. Mr. Hiserodt agreed. Mr. Hiserodt also mentioned the safety concerns around the window egress requirements that impact how the dormer windows are configured.

Mr. Redmon commented that he preferred the arched casement window. Ms. Tice agreed, and Ms. Litchfield also concurred. Mr. Hiserodt said he needs to make sure that the casement window configuration will work as the required egress.

Ms. Litchfield asked about the window configuration. Mr. Hiserodt said all the windows will be 2/2.

Ms. Hakuta concurred with Mr. Redmon's appreciation for the applicants' efforts to address all the questions/concerns raised by the Commission.

Ms. Litchfield summarized the outstanding issues including the dormer windows and the front entrance.

Ms. Tice commented that the asphalt paving will absorb a lot of heat. Mr. Hiserodt agreed and said they will look at other solutions.

Mr. Redmon motioned to approve the proposal with the condition that the following areas of concern are reviewed by CHC staff: dormer window detailing, final front entrance design and paving alternatives for the driveway. Ms. Tice seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.
Respectfully submitted,
Allison A. Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Members of the Public Present on January 2, 2024Panelists:

Jonathan Pagaduan

Angela Jaimes

Steve Suida

Nathan Wong

Steve Hiserodt, architect

architect

72A Inman Street

Revere, MA

Waxwing LLC

Brookline, MA

Attendees:

Marilee Meyer

Joe Artley

John Alves

Keith Killian

Jennifer Hou

Florence Killian

10 Dana Street

72 Inman Street

previously 1 Lamont Ave

340 Harvard Street

14 Dana Street

340 Harvard Street