

## Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

August 8, 2019 - 806 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge Senior Center - 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Susannah Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Joseph Ferrara, Jo Solet, *Members*; Gavin Kleespies, *Alternate*

Members absent: Bruce Irving, *Chair*; William G. Barry, Robert Crocker, Chandra Harrington, *Members*; Paula Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternates*

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*; Eric Hill, *Survey Director*

Public present: See attached list.

With a quorum present, Vice Chair Tobin called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M. She introduced the Commission members and staff. The Chair noted that alternate member Mr. Kleespies could vote on all matters. The Chair then described the consent agenda procedure and recommended Case 4155 for approval per those procedures.

**Case 4155: 89 Brattle St., by Lesley University.** Install signs on Sherrill Hall and Washburn Commons.

Mr. Kleespies moved to approve Case 4155, subject to review and approval of construction details by CHC staff. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

### Public Meeting: Informational Presentation

Report on the Nineteenth Amendment Centennial Committee's site selection study for a piece of public art. The Cambridge Common is among the list of sites being considered.

Mr. Sullivan introduced the topic. He showed slides and a map of the Cambridge Common and described the existing monuments. If the City made a formal application, it would be seeking a certificate of appropriateness for installation of the art piece.

Lisa Peterson, Deputy City Manager, introduced Jennifer Matthews and Lillian Hsu. Ms. Peterson indicated that a piece of public art, though not necessarily a figurative statue, would speak to the contributions of Cambridge women to the city. She said the committee had looked at ten sites and narrowed it down to three. At this point in the process the committee was reaching out to stake holders for each potential site. The three sites under consideration were the Cambridge Public Library, Tubman Square on River Street, and Cambridge Common.

Jennifer Matthews of the City Manager's office described the potential location on the Common where a piece of public art could be installed as the northeast corner of the Common near Massachusetts Ave. She described some of the comments made by members of the art committee as to why the Cambridge Common would be a suitable site and one that the suffragists themselves would likely have selected due to its prominence and visibility.

Sarah Burks, herself a member of the art committee, said that the only other piece of public art on the Common that included a figure of a woman was the Irish Famine monument. She noted that in that sculpture the female figure was the one left behind in Ireland. She said she hoped that if the Common is selected as the site of the suffrage art piece that a strong and resilient image of women would be the result.

Lillian Hsu of the Arts Council explained the process required for commissioning a piece of public art including a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) which would go out next week. Artists interested in being considered for the project would register in a database. The number of candidates would be narrowed down to three or four finalists by an art jury. The site would be selected, and then the artists would develop proposals. The artists would engage the public as well as interest groups for the site and develop their final proposals. The selection committee would select a design and announce the winner by August 2020, at which point the art piece would begin construction.

Ms. Tobin asked for questions of fact from the Commission.

Mr. Kleespies asked if Wheeler Park in Cambridgeport next to the 888 Memorial Drive historic marker had been considered as a location for this artwork.

Ms. Burks answered that the committee had considered that site but determined that it was already built out and fully designed with art. Ms. Peterson noted that the park has a labyrinth, mature trees, and a headhouse for a parking structure. Ms. Hsu noted that the preferred sites are close to public transportation.

Ms. Tobin asked for public questions or comments.

Polly Harold of 46 Irving Street said that having representation of women on the Cambridge Common would be great. It was a central location and underutilized. If it would help bring more people, that would be great, but she said that she doubted that it would.

Dr. Solet said the choice of the Common was potentially a good one. The women's march in 2018 took place there. The site would tie women to Cambridge's history.

Mr. Kleespies said that he was supportive of a public art piece for the Nineteenth Amendment. His employer, the Massachusetts Historical Society, currently had an exhibit on the topic. He had some concerns about putting an art piece on the Common. The Common was meant to be open space. The Civil War monument was controversial in its day and brought a lawsuit because it broke up the public open space. Not all of the existing monuments contributed positively to the Common.

Mr. Ferrara agreed. He said the City should preserve as much open space as possible on the Common. He would be interested in the potential footprint and size of the art piece; perhaps the art piece could be a literal gateway to the Common.

Mr. Sullivan said Mr. Kleespies was referring to historical tension about open space versus programmed space and monuments. The conclusion of the Irish famine monument review was to require that applications first be reviewed by the Public Art Commission. The current conversation was only to take the Commission's temperature about the idea and that no formal action was needed at this time.

Sheila Deery asked about the three tombstone markers shown on the map of the Common. She said she was concerned that moving tombstones was sacrilegious and against the law. Mr. Sullivan said the markers were not actual tombstones but historic site markers made in that shape by the City in 1880.

Ms. Tobin said she was fully in support of an art piece for the Nineteenth Amendment but perhaps its prominence would get lost as only one of many monuments on the Cambridge Common. She thanked the city staff for the presentation.

Ms. Matthews said the art committee hoped to finalize a location for the art piece by October 1<sup>st</sup>. She encouraged the Commission, including members that were absent, to give any additional feedback on the concept to the art committee.

#### Public Hearing: Landmark Designation Proceedings

**Case L-128: 116 Brookline St. and 112 Pacific Street. Ledgemoor, LLC, owner.** Consider draft landmark study report and make a recommendation to the city council.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and summarized the landmark designation report. He described the architecture of the EMF building and the Metropolitan Ice Company building as well as changes to those buildings over time. Abraham Katz had started EMF to sell appliances, radios, cameras, etc., much like the Lechmere Sales Company in East Cambridge. In 1950 an eight-foot deep storefront addition designed by William Galvin was added to the front of the building. He noted the location of a mural on the north wall. He reported that in October and March the Historical Commission had approved certificates of appropriateness for alterations and restoration work. He said it was the staff opinion that the buildings met the criteria for designation, but because alterations had already been approved during the study process he was not sure that landmark designation was needed.

Ms. Tobin asked for questions from members of the Commission.

Dr. Solet asked whether any further as-of-right development could occur on the property or if other alterations might be made and not get reviewed if the property was not landmarked. Mr. Sullivan answered that would be the case if the Commission decided to take no action. Dr. Solet said that designation might bring recognition to the building. Mr. Sullivan described the significance of the artists' and musicians' use of the building over the previous ten years. The landmark report included interviews with tenants from this period of the building's history.

There being no questions of fact or comments from members of the public, Ms. Tobin asked the owner if he wanted to make a statement.

John Di Giovanni, principal of Ledgemoor LLC, said the previous owner had neglected the building for decades. Ledgemoor had secured a single tenant for the entire building; the move-in date would be January 2020. He had received good feedback during construction from the neighbors. He asked if the Commission would have landmarked the building in its previous condition. He did not plan any further changes or new construction on the site. He would still come back to the Commission for review of landscaping and a fence.

Mr. Kleespies indicated that the appearance of the property was very good. It was a fantastic building. Regarding the question of whether it was worthy of landmark status, he said it was an

opportunity to acknowledge Cambridge's industrial history, which often did not get much attention. This was the last industrial site on Brookline street to be redeveloped. The history of the building as a site of music culture and counterculture was also important. That aspect of the Cambridge community was fading away. There would be value to landmarking it.

Mr. Ferrara said the Commission had other tools like preservation awards to recognize architectural history and social history. Landmark designation was a heavy regulatory tool.

Dr. Solet agreed with Mr. Kleespies that this situation called more for recognition and celebration than regulation.

Mr. Sullivan noted that painted signs would be vulnerable if the building was not landmarked.

James Rafferty, attorney for the owners, said that they had discussed trying to create tangible evidence of the building's history. A preservation easement for the signs or a marker about its industrial and cultural history were being considered. He said that sort of recognition would not happen by landmarking the property. Landmarking was a blunt instrument, though the review process wasn't too cumbersome. He offered to extend the landmark study protection for a couple of months to see about alternatives to designation.

Dr. Solet said it sounded as if the owners were not a hundred percent in favor of landmarking the property. Mr. DiGiovanni said that the time could be used to talk with the new tenant about ways of marking the history of the building. He noted some aspects of the interior renovation that reclaimed the building's past.

Mr. Kleespies said he was not opposed to a preservation easement. He said it would be nice to have a historic plaque addressing the cultural history of the building.

Mr. Ferrara said there were enough moving parts to merit extending the study protections and discussing the matter again in a couple of months.

Dr Solet said she did not know what it was people were afraid of. There was no downside to landmarking the property. Why not go for it?

Mr. Rafferty said there was a willingness to collaborate. Perhaps they could find a way to exceed the protections of landmark designation. He agreed to a continuation.

In view of the owner's consent to extend the protections of the landmark study period, Dr Solet moved to continue the hearing for three months to allow discussion of ways to celebrate the history of the building. Mr. Ferrara seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

#### Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

**Case 4112 (continued): 135 Western Ave., by Bluepower LLC.** Renovate the exterior of the front portion of the house and construct additions at side and rear.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and described the architecture of the Greek Revival house with a two-story portico facing Western Avenue.

Steve Days noted that he had been before the Commission in June and had received the Commission's feedback on the previous design. His architects had incorporated the Commission's comments into a revised proposal. He said that he often showed off the building to visitors to this country. It really was a landmark in the community, and he was proud to preserve it. He said the new back unit would bring the property into the modern day.

Tanya Carrier of Khalsa Design described the changes from the previous design. The previous design incorporated larger lap siding and extruded corner boards on the addition. In the revised design they had chosen more traditional exposure with traditional corner boards. The large windows on the rear addition were retained, but a traditional entrance canopy was now proposed. There was also a traditional railing style on the front steps and at the window wells. She noted that the overall massing of the addition had been approved by the Commission and incorporated into the landmark order. There were two options on the south side of the building where an existing one-story bump-out was located. That bump-out could receive a second-floor addition or not. She said the Commission had asked for a street view, which she displayed. The colors of the addition had been changed to match the main house.

Dr Solet asked about the roof shape. Ms. Carrier explained that the roof of the ell was lower than the ridge of the main house, but the additional space was accommodated with a lower pitched roof. There was still a pitch; it was not entirely flat. It would shed water and snow and would have a gutter.

There being no questions of fact or comments from members of the public, Ms. Tobin closed the public comment period.

Mr. Kleespies noted that he had not been present at the last meeting. He said that it was an important building. The addition being wider than the main block of the house was disappointing. He asked if it had to extend to the north of the main block of the house. He said the existing character of the house was compact and classic. Mr. Sullivan noted that the massing had previously been approved by the Commission. This hearing was to consider the details of the design.

Mr. Ferrara said the new design was more traditional and less flamboyant than the previous one. It had a simplified character with traditional trim. He asked if the windows had to be so large. He said he appreciated the alternate scheme on the south side and recommended leaving the bump-out at the present one-story size.

Dr Solet asked if a second story addition on the south could camouflage the width of the ell. Mr. Days said that the second floor would help balance the overall massing of the addition. Mr. Ferrara said leaving off the second-floor addition on the south side would minimize the added mass to the building. He asked the other Commission members to comment on the window sizes in the rear addition.

Mr. Sullivan said the portico of the historic house stole the show and anything short of neon signs would not distract from that. He recommended approving the alternative scheme with the one-story bump-out on the south side. In his opinion the modern windows were not inappropriate. They did not face the

street and would be seen at an oblique angle. The overall design was not inappropriate per the terms of the landmark designation order.

Dr Solet said she did not object to the window sizes. She noted that plantings in the side yard would further obscure the windows and add privacy. Mr. Kleespies commented that the removal of the dormer was beneficial to the design.

Mr. Ferrara moved to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the proposal with the alternate scheme retaining a single-story bump-out on the south side and delegated review and approval of further construction details to the Commission staff. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

**Case 4142 (continued): 82 Mt. Auburn St., by 45 Dunster Street LLC, owner o/b/o Dig Inn restaurant, tenant.** Install kitchen exhaust fan and associated duct work on the west side wall.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that the application was for an exhaust fan and duct-work at the back of the west side wall of the building.

James Rafferty, attorney for the applicants, apologized that the whole team had not been present at the previous hearing. At the request of the Commission, they had studied a shroud for the exhaust equipment but felt that it was not the best design option. He noted that the location of the equipment would be at the back of the side elevation, behind a tree and a fire escape. The second-floor tenant had control over the rear courtyard and rear elevation, which meant that the applicant could not place air conditioning or exhaust equipment there. As a result, the air conditioning equipment had been moved to the west side of the building.

Keith Bettencourt of BKA architects said they had explored a few different options for the equipment. He displayed the proposed plans and elevations. He indicated the location of three air conditioning units, two on the ground and one hung on the building. They would have vibration isolators. He showed the original proposal for the exhaust fan and ducts in shiny stainless steel. He displayed option two with shrouded equipment, which increased the mass of the installation. Then he showed the preferred option with the equipment painted black, which would have the least visual impact. The equipment would be 5' 6" high and located 5' away from the building in an insulated enclosure that would absorb the sound. The enclosure would also cover the exhaust fan.

Mr. Rafferty noted that several months ago the owner had received permission for a handicap ramp and entrance door on the west elevation near the sidewalk. He introduced Eric Henry, an executive of Dig Inn restaurants, and Samuel Gruber, an executive vice president. He said the restaurant served low-impact, healthy food with lots of veggies. The fan would cease operation about 9:00 PM. He apologized that the representative present at the first hearing did not have sufficient knowledge of the proposal.

Dr. Solet said she was the member who had expressed concern about the noise levels of the equipment. She had hoped that they would come back with a different fan unit than originally proposed. Mr. Bettencourt replied that Captive Air had assured them that this was the quietest unit available. The

absorbent screen was a new part of the proposal. Dr. Solet asked if they were confident that they could meet the noise ordinance requirement of 65 decibels. Mr. Bettencourt replied in the affirmative. The fan was the noisiest element of the ensemble. Dr. Solet noted her skepticism that the installation would meet the sound limitations because the specifications of the fan alone were that it operated at 73.3db. Mr. Rafferty said this type of equipment was installed every day all over the city, pursuant to permits with signed affidavits that they would meet the noise ordinance. Nothing was unusual about this type of fan for a restaurant in Harvard Square. BKA Architecture did a lot of restaurant design and are fully capable of designing the equipment for this site. He appreciated the Commissioner's concern, but they would comply with the ordinance.

Mr. Ferrara asked how long the black paint would last on the equipment Mr. Bettencourt answered that the powder coating would last at least ten years.

Ms. Tobin asked for questions of fact from the public.

Sheila Deery asked about the current owner of the building; Lisa Shaw answered that it was the Fly Club. Ms. Deery asked if notices had been mailed by certified mail. Ms. Burks described the notification procedures, which did not involve certified mail because that was not required by ordinance. Ms. Deery asked if the Fire Department had been notified. Mr. Rafferty answered that as part of the building permit review process the department had signed off on the permits. Ms. Deery said she was afraid that the glass of the building next door would shatter from the noise of the mechanical equipment. Mr. Rafferty responded, through the chair, that he was not aware of direct discussions with the abutters, but there had been three public hearings with adequate notification. Mr. Bettencourt said the installation would have zero impact on the adjacent building or public safety. Ms. Deery asked about public health implications Mr. Bettencourt replied that the Public Health Department had issued a permit for the restaurant.

An attorney representing the Hasty Pudding Club, the tenant on the second floor, asked what time of day the fan would start operating, and whether it would run consistently. Eric Henry of Dig Inn restaurant said that food preparation would start at 7:30 or 8:00 in the morning. The fan would only be on when the stove was in operation.

Ms. Tobin asked for public comment, but there was none. She closed the public comment period.

Dr Solet asked if the License Commission had seen the condenser units on the plan. She noted that the air conditioners had not been discussed last month. Mr. Rafferty replied in the negative; the condensers had originally been planned for the rear elevation in a window well and had not been the focus of discussion before the License Commission.

Mr. Ferrara thanked the architect for showing all three options. He said option three, with the black mechanical equipment, was the least obtrusive, and he was in favor of that proposal.

Mr. Kleespies said that the building was on the site of the first meeting house in Cambridge.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness for the black painted scheme, as

presented. Mr. Kleespies seconded. Ms. Tobin asked if there was discussion on the motion. Dr. Solet said she was in a tough position because she doubted that they could meet the requirements of the noise ordinance. The motion passed 3-1 with Dr. Solet voting in opposition.

**Case 4156: 113 Brattle St., by Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Inc.** Remove a portion of 1959 classroom addition and construct a replacement addition.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides and explained that there were two existing additions to the house, the first dating to a year or two after the house was built and the second being a brick classroom addition of 1959. He described the abutting properties including the Longfellow-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, a publicly-owned entity that offered visibility along the entire eastern margin of the applicant's property. He reported that the Commission had reviewed an application for a new classroom addition in 2015; the hearing had been continued but the applicants never returned.

James Rafferty, attorney for the applicant, introduced the case for his client.

Levering White of the Lincoln Institute said they had opened the Institute in 1991 in this building after a gut renovation. He said there were not sufficient bathrooms in the current space. The Institute wanted to keep the existing views of the building unchanged and the fenestration intact from the Longfellow House side of the building. The National Park Service had objected to the previous application. They had shown the new design proposal to the Park Service and received a different response this time. They had support from the National Park Service and from the other neighbors and institutions nearby. The Institute took its stewardship of the building very seriously. The classroom wing needed to be modified. He said it had flooded the previous night and the heat had failed several times last winter.

Randy Kreie of Dimella Shaffer Architects said they had carefully studied the design and program for the classroom wing. The addition did not require much new square footage. The National Park Service had requested that the facade facing the Longfellow House remain the same, and it would. The neighbor to the rear wanted the ivy to be replanted. The new design would widen the classroom wing and add a vestibule. There was an existing acoustical enclosure at the rear of the building to enclose the air conditioning equipment. He noted the view from the street down the driveway and from next door at 115 Brattle Street. The addition would be separated from the original house with a lightwell on the west side. The proportions of the acoustical enclosure would change. The new classroom wing would have a slightly taller roof than the existing, but it would still be below that of the main house. The elevator headhouse would be modified to blend into the main roof better.

Ms. Tobin asked for questions from members of the Commission.

Dr. Solet asked about the additional bathrooms, which were not shown on the plans. Mr. Kreie said accessible bathrooms would be provided on every level; the floor plans were still in development.

There were no questions of fact or comments from members of the public, and Ms. Tobin closed the public comment period.



Mr. Sullivan noted receipt of a letter of support from the Aiellos at 2½ Berkeley Street, a letter of support from the National Park Service, and a letter of support, with a caveat about the ivy, from the abutting Sorenson family. He noted that Mr. Sorenson requested reasonable weekday construction hours and that his driveway remain off limits to construction vehicles.

Mr. Ferrara asked if the ivy was within the commission's jurisdiction. Mr. Sullivan said he usually advises against planting ivy because it can damage the building, but that plant materials were generally outside of the commission's jurisdiction unless they were required as a mitigation measure. He recommended delegating details of a trellis to the staff.

Dr. Solet noted that there were several elderly neighbors. She hoped that the applicants would abide by the requests for construction remediation measures. When would the project start? Mr. Rafferty said they still needed Board of Zoning Appeal approval for changes to the nonconforming structure. The start date would be in 2020.

Mr. Kleespies moved to approve a certificate of appropriateness for the application as submitted, with details and materials delegated to the staff. Dr. Solet seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

#### Preservation Grants

**Case IPG 19-5: 299 Western Ave. by Western Avenue Baptist Church #3. \$6,500** Additional funding requested for carpentry associated with mold remediation.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the Western Avenue Baptist Church. He said there had been water infiltration and a mold infestation had been discovered in June. The church needed carpentry repairs where the water had damaged the building and mold remediation had taken place. The application was for \$6,500, and there was a remaining preservation grant fund balance of \$9,059.07. He recommended approving the grant.

Dr. Solet moved to approve a grant of \$6,500 for the work as described by Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Ferrara seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

#### Minutes

Dr. Solet noted that she had not been present at the June 27 meeting. On page 10 of the July 11 minutes, she recommended changing "her street" to "Berkeley Street in the Old Cambridge Historic District."

Mr. Kleespies moved to approve the June 27 minutes, as presented, and the July 11 minutes, as corrected. Mr. Ferrara seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

Dr. Solet moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kleespies seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks

Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public  
Who Signed the Attendance List on August 8, 2019**

Matthew Brownell	29 Everett St
Lisa Peterson	City Manager's Office
Jennifer Matthews	City Manager's Office
Lillian Hsu	Arts Council
Polly Harold	46 Irving St
Guihong Wei	113 Brattle St
Levering White	113 Brattle St
Vinod Parmeshwar	113 Brattle St
Xinrui Shi	113 Brattle St
George McCarthy	115 Brattle St
Randy Kreie	Dimella Shaffer, 281 Summer St, Boston
Adam Yothers	Dimella Shaffer, 281 Summer St, Boston
XiaoRu Zhang	
Hao Zhang	
Pam McCutcheon	45 Dunster St
John DiGiovanni	50 Church St
Paul Gibbs	PGF Advisors, Sandwich
Beaver Spooner	329 Walden St
Mel Downes	330 Concord Ave

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.