

Minutes

Historic District Commission

Thursday, March 26, 2008

7:00p.m.

3rd Floor Conference Room

Members Present: Steiner, Chairman

Sternberg

Martocchia

Staff Present: Hayward

Public Present: See Attached Sign –In Form

- 1. Public Hearing Continuance– Certificate of Appropriateness –113-135 Mount Auburn Street, to remove all existing decayed and damaged store fronts and replace them with new store fronts, windows, doors and awnings, Gerald Mazzeo, applicant.**

Steiner reported that the initial application has been revised. (See attached email to Hayward from Steiner).

Gerald Mazzeo, owner, applicant, reported that the plan submitted 3/19/2008 is what is proposed. He submitted specs for proposed door replacement. He explained that existing signage will be removed as stores are renovated.

Martocchia suggested that the wording of the original application needs to be changed to reflect the agreed changes. Hayward informed that the final CA will reflect the change.

Steiner inquired if the glass along the top could be saved. Mazzeo said it could not be saved.

Sternberg inquired what kind of wood would be used. Mazzeo responded that Spanish cedar with a mix of pine would be a possibility. Sternberg thought MDO was not wood. Mazzeo indicated that it was a composite like plywood.

Steiner inquired if zoning requires material data. Martocchia responded that it did not.

Martocchia questioned whether an effort would be made to salvage existing materials. Mazzeo responded that he will make every effort to restore existing materials if possible.

Steiner suggested that the application would be limited to two storefronts. If successful, the effort will be continued throughout the rest of the storefronts. Mazzeo is anxious to begin the work and hopes to continue the work throughout the storefronts over the next 6 months. He indicated that he wants to convince Sakura massage to remove her awning and replace it with something better. He wants the HDC support.

Steiner indicated that the HDC is supportive of the awning being replaced with adequate notification.

Sternberg was aware that the top glass portion of the storefront was rotted. She did not want that feature to be lost to an all wood treatment. She wondered how the interior ceiling being supported. Mazzeo reported that the ceiling is supported at mid-glass. Sternberg questioned why the glass could not be saved. Mazzeo indicated that he was not sure what would be found when the glass and wood was removed and that it would be impractical and too expensive to replace. He indicated it would be replaced with safety, tempered glass.

Rena Baskin, 15 Franklin Street, and Fran Forman, 49 Russell Avenue, wanted to know what kind of signage was proposed. Mazzeo responded that the signage would be uniform for all the storefronts.

Steiner and Sternberg proposed that the application narrative be changed to indicate what was being proposed and that the proposed plan be identified as (Exhibit A) and the proposed doors as (Exhibit B).

Martocchia suggested that the HDC approve the proposed plans for 125 and 127 Mount Auburn and if successful, the improvements would be approved for the rest of the storefronts. Hayward concurred that the HDC vote on the 125 and 127 Mount Auburn segment tonight, and that the improvements to the remaining block of storefronts be continued as a public hearing item for a period of one year to allow additional storefront improvements to be reviewed as they are scheduled.

Vote: Sternberg moved to remove original CA application narrative for 113-125 Mount Auburn and that it be updated to include what is being proposed (See Exhibit A). Martocchia seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mazzeo submitted (Exhibit C) a new drawing for the proposed awnings. Sternberg preferred that the awning be lower, off the brick face. Mazzeo prefers three awnings, separated, over the two storefronts. Sternberg inquired if there would be more support for three awnings versus two. Mazzeo indicated that the support would be the same amount for both configurations. However, he liked the HDC suggestion for two awnings. Martocchia likes individual awnings over storefronts. However, he said a blank awning was confusing.

Forman did not like the horizontal band at the bottom of the proposed awnings.

Jim Caruso, 33 Franklin Street, questioned whether awnings were historic. Steiner responded that awnings could be considered a controlled historic change and there is a compliment of contemporary items with historic features.

Baskin questioned the historic consideration for lettering. Steiner responded that lettering is important for identifying the individuality of a storeowner. Mazzeo, he noted, should be sensitive to the store owner needs.

Steinberg preferred two awnings versus three. She noted that the placement of the awnings as indicated in the plan (Exhibit C) was satisfactory.

Martocchia preferred giving flexibility to the applicant over contemporary items.

Steiner inquired whether the applicant was going to work out signage issues with the individual business tenants. Mazzeo responded that he was not going to give much allowance to the individual tenants as he preferred minimal individuality for signage.

Mazzeo indicated that the awnings that he was proposing could be seen at Frank's Steakhouse in North Cambridge. He noted that the awnings are lightweight and would protect the brickwork. He proposed that the bottom strip match the minting color for the new windows.

Vote: Sternberg moved to accept the plan for the placement of the awnings as indicated in (Exhibit C) for 2 awnings. Color of the bottom strip of the awning and lettering will be left to the applicant's discretion. Martocchia seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mazzeo informed that he had not consulted with a lighting consultant but he wanted pinpoint lighting a show in (Exhibit D). Steiner preferred that the conduit be blended into the brick work and lined up with the bricks.

Vote: Sternberg moved that lighting as proposed in Exhibit A with the conduit placement as indicated in Exhibit D be adopted. Martocchia seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Neon lighting for the windows will be placed on the April Agenda for discussion.

2. Public Hearing Continuance– Certificate of Appropriateness – 80 Mount Auburn Street - Signage Replacement, Trustees of St. John's United Methodist Church

The applicant was not present. Item will be continued to the next meeting. Steiner submitted a photo of a sign as a possible sign example for the applicant. Hayward will email the example to the applicant.

3. February and March Minutes

To be approved at the April Meeting.

4. Support of Grant

Roger Erickson requested a letter of support from the HDC for a grant to fund a walking tour brochure/map. Steiner will write a letter of support and will forward it to the HDC office for submission.

5. Web Site

Steiner will look into a Mount Auburn Historic District website. The site could be a repository of articles and informational items pertinent to the HD.

6. Cemusa Bus Stops

Hayward reported that Cemusa was contacted. However DPW is holding work on the bus shelters due to permit issues.