MINUTES
RECONVENED MEETING OF
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
ONE JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6:30 p.m. December 7, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Joseph Almeida, Vice-Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Members Jon Wyckoff, Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig; City Council Representative Nancy Pearson; and Alternate John Mayer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alternate Richard Shea

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

Chairman Almeida stated that this meeting would be his last. He added that it has been a great privilege to serve the Portsmouth community and the Historic District.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 2, 2016

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to approve the minutes as presented.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 275 Islington Street

2. 601 Islington Street – stipulation that the final arrangement of solar arrays conform with life safety codes.

3. 138 Maplewood Avenue

4. 24 Market Street

5. 100 Market Street

6. 774 Middle Street, #3 – the applicant requested that the stipulation relating to the rear dormer be removed and that the Administrative Approval item be approved as before.

7. 84/86 Pleasant Street – three stipulations suggested.

8. 383 Pleasant Street
9. 43 Whidden Street

10. 121 Bow Street

11. 173/175 Market Street

With regards to the 173/175 Market Street application, Mr. Wyckoff said he thought the muntins on the large commercial 1st-floor windows were undersized and noted that he couldn’t find the specifications. It was further discussed. Bill Bartell of CJ Architects stated that there were two different muntin sizes, one for the storefront and one for the residential, and he reviewed the dimensions. Mr. Wyckoff said he was satisfied.

Mr. Cracknell confirmed that only Administrative Approval Items #2 and #7 had stipulations.

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the Administrative Approvals, with stipulations for Items #2 and #7. Reagan seconded the motion.

The motion passed by unanimous (7-0) vote.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Petition of Neal Pleasant Street Properties, LLC, owner, for property located at 420 Pleasant Street, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (re-construct chimney) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 56 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The owner Charles Neal stated that he wanted to reconstruct the chimney. He showed a sample of the desired chimney to the Commissioners.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether the chimney would remain functional. Mr. Neal said the chimney had not been functional. Ms. Ruedig confirmed that a faux chimney would not be reconstructed.

Mr. Rawling asked what the color of the replacement would be and whether there was red brick underneath the stucco. Mr. Neal said it was an accurate match.

Chairman Almeida asked Mr. Neal to speak to his mason’s experience with chimneys. Mr. Neal introduced John Prince, who said that the mason was well qualified. Ms. Ruedig asked whether the brick was solid, and Mr. Prince said yes. It was further discussed. Mr. Mayer asked whether the rebuild would go to the attic floor and who manufactured the brick. Mr. Prince said he took it down to a point where it was safe and secure and that Morin Brick Company made the brick.
SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Richard Nylander of 17 Franklin Street said that he supported the application and applauded the applicant’s perseverance in returning the distinctive chimney feature to the neighborhood.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Ruedig made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, with the following stipulation:

1) That a morin waterstruck restoration brick shall be used with a lime based mortar mix.

Mr. Wyckoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote (7-0).

2. Petition of Ida Barry House Condominium Association, owner, and St. Jean Real Estate Holdings, LLC, for property located at 200 Marcy Street, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace windows) as per plans in file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 85-2 and 85-3 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant Ben St. Jean was present to speak to the application. He noted that the building had been neglected for several years and that the windows and sills were rotting. He said he wanted to rebuild the windows per the submitted drawings.

Mr. Wyckoff asked what year the building was built, and Mr. St. Jean said he wasn’t sure. He said it was moved from Gate Street to Hancock Street, then to Marcy Street in 1980, at which time an addition was added. Mr. Wyckoff noted that the trim around the front door, the door itself, and the clapboards all looked new. Mr. St. Jean stated that the windows were not new, and the door trim, the door and the skylights were replaced in the last 60 days and were done in kind. Chairman Almeida remarked that the dimensions of the building suggested that it wasn’t a very historic building. They discussed it further.

Mr. Rawling asked whether double hung windows had been considered. Mr. St. Jean said that all the windows were double hung and that the casement windows would be replaced with double hung windows. Ms. Ruedig asked how old the original windows were, and Mr. St. Jean said he wasn’t sure but that they were all wood and would be replaced in kind. Ms. Ruedig said she preferred that the existing windows be restored. Mr. St. Jean said the windows were probably 30 years old and not quality windows, and to repair them would be like trying to repair the casement windows.

Vice-Chairman Lombardi asked whether the same pattern of windows would be installed, and Mr. St. Jean replied yes, noting that they would be double hung, 6/6, with half screens. Ms.
Ruedig asked whether the smaller three-quarters muntin size could be used, and Mr. St. Jean said yes.

Chairman Almeida suggested a stipulation stating that the specification be provided and that the muntin by three-quarters.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether the casements would be replaced with 6/6 double hung windows and thought they may be too wide. Chairman Almeida asked whether the windows would be the same dimensions. Mr. St. Jean said they would.

The first-floor windows were further discussed. Mr. St. Jean said he would ensure that the windows followed the pattern. He suggested that the higher windows be 4/4 instead of 6/6.

Mr. Cracknell said Mr. St. Jean could submit the drawing and do it as an Administrative Approval item.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

No one rose to speak, and Chairman Almeida closed the public hearing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Rawling made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application, with the following stipulations:

1) All new construction windows shall be SDL, double hung, 6/6 Anderson 400 series.
2) All new windows shall be field painted.
3) Half screens shall be used.
4) The window muntin size shall be ¾”.
5) A shop drawing/elevation shall be submitted for administrative approval prior to replacement of the 1st floor casement windows.

Mr. Wyckoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote (7-0).

3. Petition of Howard Street Condominium Association, owner, and Lynda M. Andersson, applicant, for property located at 33 Howard Street, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 83-1 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic District.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The owner Lynda Andersson stated that the back windows had been leaking for several years, destroying most of the clapboards.
Chairman Almeida asked what the windows would be replaced with and Ms. Andersson said it would be Andersen 400 Series. Chairman Almeida asked the number of windows, and Ms. Andersson said she thought there were six, noting that one was very small in the pantry area.

Mr. Wyckoff asked why extensions, especially on the first-floor windows, were used with the Anderson 400 Series, and he asked about the small Fibrex strips on the outside. Ms. Andersson said her contractor said the strips would make it look better.

Mr. Wyckoff noted that the 6/4 window had not been replaced. Ms. Andersson said that window didn’t leak. Mr. Wyckoff suggested that Ms. Andersson ask her new contractor to remove the trim panels. He further explained why and how they should be removed. Mr. Wyckoff also suggested that Ms. Andersson return with her new contractor for an Administrative Approval after she received a new design. It was further discussed.

Ms. Ruedig asked where the sixth window was, and Ms. Andersson pointed it out. Ms. Ruedig suggested that the windows be restored, but Ms. Andersson said she couldn’t find anyone to do it and that the windows were not original. Chairman Almeida suggested that the window on the side be replaced with a higher-quality window than an Andersen 400 Series due to its prominence.

Mr. Cracknell explained that if the small window was restored, Ms. Andersson would not have to come before the Commission again, but if it was replaced with anything else, she’d have to return. He said the application that evening would be reduced to five windows instead of six, and it would be the back of the house and not the side. He said Ms. Andersson could return to the Commission for an Administrative Approval for the remaining window.

Mr. Wyckoff said he disagreed with the comment that the Andersen 400 Series wasn’t a quality window for the side of the house. He said that, if the one underneath it were done so that both windows were in an ell and not part of the original house, it might take some of the sting out of the fact that they were 1900-era 2/2 windows. He hoped that any replacements done on the rest of the windows would be 6/6 windows to be more in keeping with the District and the age of the house. He agreed that only five windows on the back could be approved that evening.

Mr. Mayer noted that the other side of the duplex had storm windows. Ms. Andersson said the neighbors did it without letting her know. Mr. Mayer asked how old the windows on the front and side of the building were. Ms. Andersson said she didn’t know because she had never been able to open those windows.

Chairman Almeida said the Commission would consider the five back windows and noted that half screens had to be addressed as well.

Mr. Wyckoff suggested a stipulation that the new contractor install stop covers.

**SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

No one rose to speak, and Chairman Almeida closed the public hearing.
DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the five windows only, with the following stipulations:

1) This approval applies to the five rear windows only.
2) The stop covers on the new windows shall be removed or adjusted and any gaps shall be caulked and painted.
3) A half screen shall be used.
4) The window on the side of the house shall be restored, replaced in-kind, or re-submitted for HDC approval prior to replacement.
5) The condominium association shall consent to approval of this application prior to The issuance of a building permit.

Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote (7-0).

4. Petition of Brian J. Bednarek, owner, for property located at 10 Humphreys Court, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing garage) and allow new construction to an existing structure (rebuild garage with mud room connector) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 43 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic District.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Jennifer Ramsey of SOMMA Studios was present on behalf of the applicant. She distributed a letter containing signatures of neighbors and abutters for approval for the application to Chairman Almeida. She then reviewed the site plan and specification sheets. She noted that there were two new double windows on the back of the structure.

Mr. Mayer asked how old the house was. Ms. Ramsey said it was built in the 1960s. Mr. Mayer said he hated to see the chimney go, and Ms. Ramsey said it took up too much space. Vice-Chairman Lombardi also said he hated to see the chimney removed. Mr. Wyckoff said the house was busy with several dormers and the addition, so he felt that the chimney was wasted and off-center. He said he would not have allowed that chimney to be built at that location and noted that it was a utilitarian chimney.

Mr. Wyckoff asked whether the windows had inside screens, and Ms. Ramsey said yes. Chairman Almeida said he was happy to see the overhang inclusion and thought it was a nice touch.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

No one rose to speak, and Chairman Almeida closed the public hearing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION
Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, and Ms. Ruedig seconded it.

Mr. Wyckoff said he didn’t think that the chimney in that location was important to the design of the house. He said he hated to lose chimneys but didn’t think it would be a game changer. He said the house was a 1960s one and maintained the special character of the District. He noted that the Commission had already assessed the historical significance and felt that the shape of the windows and the defining character matched surrounding properties. He said that, in general, it was a good addition for the house.

*The motion passed by unanimous vote (7-0).*

5. Petition of Rockingham House Condominium Association, owner, and Eileen Kane, applicant, for property located at 401 State Street, #501, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace five windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 3M and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

The owner Eileen Kane was present to speak to the petition and reviewed her application.

Chairman Almeida stated that the building had a blanket approval for a particular window specification and asked why Ms. Kane wanted to move away from that. Ms. Kane said her husband thought the Pella window was better quality.

Ms. Ruedig noted that it would be alright as long as the exterior arrangement, color, glass size and so on matched the rest of the building. Mr. Rawling said it was a quality replacement.

Chairman Almeida asked how it might differ from the blanket approval. Ms. Kane’s window representative Luke Hanscom explained how the windows differed, noting that there would be no drastic difference between the two types of windows. Chairman Almeida asked whether the glass area would be identical. Mr. Hanscom said he could replicate the top piece across.

Mr. Wyckoff asked about screens. Ms. Kane said she wanted a full screen because the upstairs was so hot but said she could do a half screen.

Chairman Almeida noted that the building-wide approval of windows might include allowing a full screen. Mr. Hanscom asked whether they could provide both types of screens, and after a site visit, they could determine whether or not the visibility of the full screen would cause a problem, and if so, they would revert back to the half screen.

Chairman Almeida said it might be worth reading the blanket approval. Mr. Cracknell then read the blanket approval, saying that it was granted for all double hung windows in the building.
provided that they were consistent with the June 1, 2011 HDC approval for Andersen 400 series full-divided-light, with a spacer bar, bronze color with half screens and replaced in kind. It was also noted that the replacement window would be placed in its original location with the same glass pane and the brick return exposed.

Chairman Almeida asked whether it was specified that there would be a specific muntin pattern. Mr. Cracknell said the brick exposure was important as well as the color and that the Andersen 400 Series window would be substituted by a Pella window, and everything else would apply.

**SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

No one rose to speak, and Chairman Almeida closed the public hearing.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Ms. Ruedig made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, with the following stipulation:*

1) That the conditions of the February 1, 2012 blanket approval shall fully apply except that the Pella window shall be used as presented.

*Mr. Wyckoff seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote (7-0).*

**IV. WORK SESSIONS**

A. Work Session requested by Unitarian Universalist Church, owner, for property located at 206 Court Street, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct 3 story addition) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 34 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

Steve McHenry of McHenry Architecture was present to speak to the petition, along with Jeremiah Johnson of McHenry Architecture and Eric Lipsitt, the Chair of the Building Implementation Committee.

Mr. Lipsitt reviewed the congregation’s history and various venues. He said the church also owned the building behind the church and wanted to expand its size. He showed photos of recent renovations. He discussed Phase 2 of the contemporary addition and said he wanted to maximize the footprint. He noted that the addition would house office staff, classroom and meeting spaces, and office rental spaces. He discussed the lot line and setbacks and showed the neighborhood context via photos. He discussed the reasons for the contemporary design and said the addition’s design was changed based on the Commissioners’ comments. He noted that the elevator shaft was set back a few feet so that it wouldn’t get in the way of the glass.
Mr. McHenry reviewed the specifications and described the differences from the last work session. He said there was a more harmonious connection between the old and the new. He also discussed the brick material.

Vice-Chairman Lombardi said he thought the new design was successful in separating the building from the other one and felt that the glass going into the building would be a solution, but he didn’t like that it reached above the roofline of the house. He said the size view was brutal and wasn’t sure why the applicant didn’t want light going into the stairwells. He said it seemed like a blank wall.

Mr. Rawling said he thought it was overly stark and needed to be softened. He agreed that the distinction of the addition separated from the building started to free up the expression a bit more. He thought it was too boxy and suggested that projecting the upper lintels or getting relief from the existing building might break up the box. He said he didn’t see the success of the big glass front with an elevator one or two feet behind the glass and thought it was wasted space. He also didn’t see that the big glass front enhanced the front elevation and suggested that something reflect proportions from surrounding buildings. He said the applicant had the responsibility of being contextually sensitive to the surrounding buildings.

Chairman Almeida raised the issue of how the addition and the use of glass connected and asked the applicant if he had considered a true glass box, like a display glass box rather than the clunky frame aspect. He suggested a sheer plane of glass with a tint. He said he loved the idea of the addition being a very contemporary expression but felt that it had to be hit out of the park. He said the methods of restoring the historic home were just as important as the addition and wanted to know how the masonry would be treated and how the early windows would be dealt with. He stressed that he wanted to see the highest level of quality of the old building and the addition.

Mr. Mayer asked what original material would be retained in the interior. Mr. McHenry said they would remain true to the framing system. Mr. Mayer said he felt that the height of the new building still overpowered the original structure and suggested that the corridors be adjusted or that the footprint allow the height to come down. He felt that the amount of corridor space was huge. It was further discussed.

Mr. Wyckoff said he still had a lot of problems with the addition and understood what Mr. Rawling meant by the fact that it was too brutal. He explained that ‘brutal’ meant 1960s and 1970s architecture. He said Mr. Rawling suggested accenting a cornice or having relief at the top of the box, perhaps by projecting bricks or some sort of horizontal line around the whole building so that it didn’t look like it was made out of Lego blocks. He said he didn’t see the value of the space behind the second- and third-floor windows. He said the elevator could be more independent and have its own tower to break up the clock in the front.

Ms. Ruedig said she agreed with a lot of the Commissioners’ comments and felt that one of the biggest challenges in the District was a contemporary addition. She said the addition seemed too plain and looked like it stood alone as a tiny office tower. She said the window rhythm was important in the original building and felt that the addition did not reflect the old building enough. She said the entrance could be offset so that it was closer to the original building and
seem like it was more of an addition. She suggested softening the addition and making it less symmetrical by making it a bit lighter and transparent.

Mr. Rawling suggested that, on the front façade, the elevator tower could read through as a brick cube and have glass connecting it, be done in a grid, and pick up proportions of the windows that played off the church. It would start to introduce a texture that would soften the building.

Vice-Chair Lombardi said he kept seeing the roof of the house and the church as a low-angle roof and wondered if there was a way to have a lower profile on the side and move the elevator so that it wasn’t right next to the door. He said that a low-profile roof could accommodate the mechanicals on the elevator that were currently in the flat-top, straight-edge box.

Mr. Mayer said the addition would be stepped so that the first floor was moved closer to the street, which might make the massing not so stark. It was discussed further.

Chairman Almeida suggested that the plane be brought forward and away from the building completely so that it appeared as though it turned and stopped 6 feet shy of the building. The entrance to the building would be through the void, and from the front, it would appear that it wasn’t touching at all. Mr. Wyckoff suggested anything that would break up the front and said he liked Mr. Rawling’s idea of separating the elevator and doing something between the elevator and the building. He said he also liked Mr. Mayer’s idea of breaking up the front. He was pleased with the rear fenestration on the back but felt that the front could be softened and given more detail.

Chairman Almeida asked for public comment.

Sally Zimmerman said she was the Senior Preservation Services Manager of the Historical Society and represented the interest of the Langdon House. She said the Commission expressed her concerns and that she thought it was critical that the building be deliberately contemporary. She asked whether the elevator was hydraulic, and Mr. McHenry said it was. Mr. Lipsitt explained that the addition would house several staff members. Ms. Zimmerman suggested that he keep his space options as flexible as possible.

Rick Beckstead of 1395 Islington Street said the addition looked contemporary from the front but not from the back. He said the back was important.

Chairman Almeida said the wall planes could stop short of meeting at the corners. He said they could be very stark, giant slabs of slate with a flat metal finish and even some sculpture. He said he wanted to see a series of surfaces that did not detract from the original building.

Mr. Rawling said he was reluctant to support gray brick to match the painted finish on the existing building and said it was also sensitive to the context of surrounding structures.

Sally Zimmerman approached the podium again and said she had worked for the Cambridge Historic Commission and was responsible for two large designs, which included textural takes on
brick. She briefly described her experience with similar buildings and said they ended up making a smaller building that fit in better.

B. Work Session requested by Thirty Maplewood, LLC, owner, for property located at 46-64 Maplewood Avenue, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (construct new mixed use, 3 to 3 ½ story building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lot 2 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

Jennifer Ramsey of SOMMA Studios was present on behalf of the applicant. She reviewed the packet and also discussed an art feature that would accent the building. She also reviewed several details, like the masonry, deck, and horizontal banding.

Mr. Mayer said he was worried about the lifespan of choices made for that type of building, and he referenced another building where the materials failed.

Mr. Wyckoff said he agreed that the quality of materials had to be discussed, especially since the applicant had to get a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). He said that the storefront windows in the wooden sections concerned him and asked whether they would have extruded aluminum storefront systems like Dunkin Donuts had. Ms. Ramsey said they would. Mr. Wyckoff said it concerned him because the chosen style had a western look, with no quality. They were just extruded. Ms. Ramsey said they could look at other styles.

Vice-Chairman Lombardi said he felt that the Commission was discussing material details when there were still massing design issues that had to be considered. He said he hadn’t understood the recessed deck before, and it bothered him because it was the public presentation of the building and could be the tallest part of the building. He said the Commission had discussed how it should read vertical. He thought the bullnose in the middle of it killed the verticalness.

Ms. Ruedig said that the upper part had changed and noted that there originally was a higher area, like a cutout. Ms. Ramsey said it still happened along the sides and that they changed the color of the bullnose to match the darker color of the space. She discussed it further.

Vice-Chairman Lombardi said the deck was the killer, and he was also concerned about the colonnade. He said it was a dead walkway and felt that the colonnade needed to have more height because it was too heavy and low.

Ms. Ruedig said she was still concerned about all the colors and materials and felt that it was too much. She said the darkening of the building made it less inviting. She said she was also concerned about the addition looking like it was too much of a contrast because it was very dark and heavy and more complex than necessary. She said she appreciated that there were so many door fronts and hoped they would all be active. It was further discussed. Chairman Almeida suggested a sculptural piece that could wrap the building. Vice-Chairman Lombardi referred to
flatiron buildings, noting that they were tall and vertical and didn’t have big horizontal details in
the middle.

Mr. Rawling said he couldn’t see how the colors and materials related to one another and felt that
the color scheme didn’t fit in with the streetscape. He noted that there were nearby examples
that could be referred to. He didn’t like the way the fake wood material was used on the
dominant part of the structure. As for the paired windows, he said they should be featured
windows. He said the details were too crude and clunky and that the building looked like an
abstract expression that had not been developed.

Mr. Wyckoff said that if Commissioner Shea were present, he would say that he’d like to see the
project represent Portsmouth more. Councilor Pearson said she would challenge that a bit on
that elevation. She said the clapboards reminded her of Portsmouth and didn’t think the
Commission should get too concerned about color at that point. Mr. Rawling said the
Commission had to focus on materials and color schemes. Chairman Almeida noted that
Portsmouth had varied architectural styles, and he didn’t understand why some of the
Commissioners felt that the addition didn’t look like Portsmouth.

Mr. Wyckoff referred to the prevalence of horizontal banding and brick throughout Portsmouth.
He said the Athenaeum was like the bullnose when it was originally built and was horizontal. He
also thought it had marble bands that had been copied on other buildings, like the Sheraton
Hotel, and seemed to bring it in together.

Chairman Almeida asked if anyone from the public wanted to speak.

Rick Beckstead of 1395 Islington Street said complements did not detract. He said the addition
was modern and eclectic but felt that the horizontal border would be a nightmare on the corner.

_The applicant indicated that she would continue the work session to a future date._

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:15 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to adjourn the
meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on January 4, 2017.