

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6:30 p.m.

February 1, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice Chairman Jon Wyckoff; Members Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig, Richard Shea, Molly Bolster; City Council Representative Nancy Pearson; and Alternates John Mayer, Martin Ryan

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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Chairman Lombardi read into the record the 121/123 State Street Condominium Association Request for One-Year Extension of the Certificate of Approval granted on March 2, 2016.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the one-year extension, and Mr. Shea seconded.*

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

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 4, 2017

*It was moved, seconded and **passed** by unanimous (7-0) vote to approve the January 4, 2017 minutes with a minor amendment.*

II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 2 Bow Street
2. 73 Daniel Street
3. 105 Daniel Street
4. 28 Dennett Street
5. 172 Hanover Street
6. 200 Marcy Street

1. 2 Bow Street

Mr. Cracknell reviewed the application and said the façade was restored as previously approved. He said the applicant was seeking retroactive approval for the lighting, which was installed without permission.

Mr. Shea said that, if the lighting issue had been brought before the Commission originally, the Commission would have suggested that the conduit not be exposed because it was visible. He suggested as a compromise that the applicant paint the conduit a color as close to the brick as possible. Ms. Ruedig agreed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff also agreed and noted that some of the granite windowsills were a bit undersized but felt that the project was successful in general. Mr. Mayer agreed that painting the conduit would help but wouldn't solve the problem.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** a Certificate of Approval for the application, with the stipulation that the conduit is painted a color close to the brick color.*

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

2. 73 Daniel Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant was unable to completely hide the conduit but noted that its view was limited to the public. He suggested that it be pulled for a separate discussion.

5. 172 Hanover Street

Mr. Cracknell stated that the atrium was bricked in and the applicant wanted to put a window back that would match the other previously-approved windows.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the Commission had an idea of how the transition from the window to a door would be made. Mr. Cracknell said there was a masonry separation between the two. Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that the window was tall and would not be the same size as the other windows, noting that it seemed more like a transom. He asked whether there would be brick or wood filling the gap between the transom and the door.

At that point, Joe Almeida of DeStefano Architects approached and stated that it would be a storefront system. Mr. Rawling asked that Mr. Almeida submit a drawing for approval before the installation. It was further discussed. Mr. Almeida said he had provided a detailed drawing with the package; however, the Commission didn't have it. Mr. Cracknell said he would retrieve the drawing later on in the meeting.

6. 200 Marcy Street

Mr. Cracknell stated that there was a stipulation that a shop drawing be submitted prior to installation of three proposed casement windows. He said the applicant had said that the existing placement of the window, the trim and the mulling would not change and had also provided a specification sheet of the double-hung casement windows.

Ms. Ruedig said the drawing showed half-screens. Mr. Cracknell suggested a stipulation that the screens be internal, and Ms. Ruedig agreed.

4. 28 Dennett Street

Mr. Cracknell reviewed the three changes. Vice-Chair Wyckoff stated that the back of the structure had been changed quite a bit and that the Commission used the back-of-the-building criteria, which he felt still applied. Mr. Rawling agreed.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for 28 Dennett Street and 200 Marcy Street, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous (7-0) vote.*

3. 105 Daniel Street

Mr. Cracknell said there was a grill pattern change that allowed a full screen and that he had asked the owner to attend the meeting, but she wasn't present, so he recommended that the item be continued later in the meeting or to the next meeting.

*Ms. Ruedig made a motion to **postpone** the application to the February 8, 2016 meeting, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous (7-0) vote.*

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. (Work Session/Public Hearing) Petition of 393 New Castle Avenue, LLC, owner, for property located at 390 New Castle Avenue, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (restore and renovate existing one story building, convert to dwelling unit, restore and renovate existing garage) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 207 as Lot 6 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

The architect Anne Whitney on behalf of the applicants was present to speak to the application. She introduced the owners Mark and Ellen Hepp. Ms. Whitney reviewed the changes, which included the windows, the cedar shingle roof, and the front door. She discussed the materials, the foundation, elevations, and the cupolas.

Ms. Ruedig asked how much of the structure would remain. Ms. Whitney said the entire structure would remain and would simply be lifted.

Mr. Ryan asked whether there would be a handrail for the stairs. Ms. Whitney replied that if there was, it would probably be an iron handrail on one side.

In answer to Mr. Shea's questions, Ms. Whitney said that the clapboards, cornerboards, fascias, and rakes would all be replaced or reproduced, and that the replacement materials would be Azek and the siding would be wood. She said the old frame would be removed so that the new construction windows could be installed with new frames. She said she would add wooden sills to the new windows and do an oak sill for the door.

Mr. Shea noted that the cupola looked different and asked about its dimensions. Ms. Whitney said she might lower the pitch slightly and would add the dimensions for the permit. Mr. Shea said he felt that most of the project was excellent but didn't like that the historic windows would be replaced because the structure would feel like a brand new building.

Mr. Rawling suggested a stipulation that the jambs on the replacement windows be light colored to match the trim.

Ms. Whitney handed out copies of the shutter to the Commissioners, noting that it was a composite shutter with a fiberglass louver and would be painted to match the sash color.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested that Ms. Whitney specify a simple rail for the front door. He also suggested a wooden storm door because of the exposed oak threshold.

Ms. Whitney discussed the garage, saying that it would have a wood roof and that the single door would be replaced. She said the windows would stay but that she might replace the trim.

Ms. Whitney stated that she wished to install full screens on the little house because it was such a small structure. Ms. Ruedig said she felt it was a lot of screening and suggested wooden-frame screens. It was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was willing to compromise on the screens because the applicant had done most of the Commission's recommendations.

Mr. Rawling stated that the synthetic replacement materials gave him pause but liked the extent that the building's original appearance was being restored. Mr. Shea said he felt that clad windows didn't have an authentic look because the plastic or aluminum faded after a while. They further discussed it. Chairman Lombardi said he didn't like losing original windows but was okay with it in that case because the applicant was doing good things with the building.

There was no public comment.

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous (7-0) vote to go into a public hearing.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The architect Anne Whitney on behalf of the applicant reviewed the changes. She stated that the building would be lifted and a brick foundation would be added. She noted that the windows, trim, siding, fascia and roof would be replaced. She said the siding would be a combination of cedar clapboards, the trim would be composite material painted to match existing, and the windows would be Marvin Next Generation. She said the front door would be switched to a 4-panel one, the stairs would be removed, the front fencing would be moved, and a picket fence would be installed on top of the brick wall. She said the decorative piece would be moved, the cupolas would be rebuilt, and the central cupola would have fixed windows instead of louvers. She said the access door to the basement on the rear elevation would be removed and that the double-hung windows would be shifted.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether Ms. Whitney had historic photos of the other side of the house. Mr. Hepp gave her a historic postcard showing it.

Chairman Lombardi reminded Ms. Whitney of some conditions that were added. Ms. Whitney said she added the sheet on the shutters and that there would be an iron handrail.

Mr. Shea asked what she would use for the drip edge. Ms. Whitney said she would probably do a double course of wood shingles. Mr. Shea asked that it be stipulated that the window sill match the existing profile.

The Commission reviewed and summarized all the stipulations. Ms. Ruedig asked that the full screen have the most transparent screen.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, with the following stipulations:*

- 1) If needed, an iron hand rail may be used on the main entrance.*
- 2) The cupola and finials shall be dimensioned on the elevations to match the submitted historic photo.*
- 3) The window sills shall match the existing profile.*
- 4) A double course of shingles shall be used as a drip edge.*
- 5) The window sashes shall be painted a dark color and jambs a lighter color.*
- 6) The entryway sills shall be oak wood.*
- 7) The Azek shall be field-painted.*
- 8) Full screens may be used and shall be as transparent as possible.*

Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff stated that the project would preserve the integrity of the District and maintain its special character. He said that a fine assessment had been done of the historical significance of the building and that he wished everyone would do their homework like the applicant had done. He stated that property values would be conserved, and that the project would promote the education, pleasure and welfare of the District when the story of the restoration got out a bit more. He said the project was consistent with the defining characteristics of surrounding properties and architectural value of existing structures and that it had a compatible design and innovative technology. He said the project hit a home run.

Ms. Ruedig stated that it was a wonderful little project and thought the applicants did their research as well as a great job in choosing great details and working hard to make it a real restoration project. She said both of the little buildings were special and that she couldn't wait to see all the details restored. She thanked the applicant for bringing the little corner back to life.

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

At that point, the applicant for Administrative Approval Item # 3, 105 Daniel Street, appeared, and the Commission addressed it.

Mr. Cracknell reviewed the item, stating that the third-floor windows were inconsistent with the original approval and that there was a full screen instead of a half screen.

The owner Karen Wiese stated that she mistakenly installed 6/6 windows instead of 3/3 ones.

Ms. Ruedig said she realized that the windows were in terrible condition but felt that, since the window sashes were dark, the difference wouldn't be that noticeable. Mr. Shea agreed. He asked the applicant whether she would reinstall the screens or leave them off. Ms. Wiese said she would do half-screens.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application but noted that it wasn't what the Commission wanted to see. However, due to the conditions of the windows, he said they would allow it.*

He then stipulated that the applicant remove the screens from the front as much as possible or install a half-screen.

Mr. Shea seconded the motion.

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

2. Petition of **Stephen J. Boyle, owner**, for property located at **437 Marcy Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (remove shed, remove and replace fencing) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct third floor dormer on rear façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 36 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The architect Shannon Alther of TMS Architects on behalf of the applicant was present to speak to the petition. He introduced the landscaper Robbi Woodburn of Woodburn and Company and said she would address the landscaping.

Ms. Woodburn stated that the driveway was difficult to access, so they wanted to remove the shed, replace the picket fence along Marcy Street, remove the cobble driveway, and cut back the retaining wall. She said they would add a new fence as well as a walkway entrance and stairway access, and would re-use the existing cobblestones. She showed photos of the property.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that replacing the fencing in kind and doing a lot of changes were good things that he agreed with, as long as it wasn't offensive to someone who lived next door. He said he felt that the shed needed to be paid more respect and that the Commission needed documentation and photos of it. He noted that if the shed was over 50 years old, the new demolition ordinance would apply. They further discussed it. Ms. Woodburn said she found nothing pertaining to the shed and felt that it didn't have any visual merit. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said someone could determine the age by the construction techniques and then document it with photos. Mr. Alther said he would make that a condition and report back to Mr. Cracknell.

Mr. Shea said he thought the plan was good and asked whether there was site lighting as part of the design. Ms. Woodburn said there wasn't as yet. Mr. Shea asked for clarification on whether the Commission had purview over anything 18" or taller out of the ground, referencing the retaining wall. Mr. Cracknell said the Commission had used the 18" rule in the past but thought it could be an interpretation based on other parts of the zoning code. He said he also wanted to make sure that the request was amended to include the rear stairs. He said the second stairway off the porch was new and that it wasn't on the application. He also noted that the replacement of the window with the door and the balcony needed to be added to the request.

Mr. Alther stated that they wanted to replicate the stair on the back side and replace the metal rail with wood. He referred to the second-floor elevation and the triple-hung window and said they wanted to create a door that mimicked that pattern.

Mr. Alther said the applicant wanted to add either a tower (Option A) or a shed dormer (Option B) to the east side of the house. He noted that the new windows would be 2/1. The Commission discussed the two options. Mr. Rawling said he preferred Option A, the tower concept, and felt it was refreshing to see something other than shed dormers.

Ms. Ruedig said it was a big addition and suggested that it be pulled out for review and perhaps a work session. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed.

*Mr. Mayer made a motion to **remove** the dormer section for a work session and a site visit at a later date. Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded the motion.*

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

Mr. Mayer asked whether the doorway on the second floor was the only access to the porch, and Mr. Alther agreed. Mr. Mayer asked whether it was possible to restore the original system to maintain the design element. It was further discussed.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed, saying that the window was a rare and original feature of the Queen Anne building that could be restored and that he would not be in favor of removing it. Ms. Ruedig agreed, noting that it was a special if quirky part of the house. She said that if a door was installed, she would want to see something that looked like the window configuration as much as possible but thought it would be difficult to do. Mr. Shea said he felt that the door was almost like a change in use and that he would not be in favor of it. Mr. Rawling said it was a significant original feature of the house and should be preserved.

Chairman Lombardi asked whether the item would be addressed in a future work session. Mr. Cracknell said it was submitted as an addendum and could be noted that the balcony window would be retained.

Mr. Rawling said that the original steps had a scrolled newel post, and that the proposed post and railing sat in front of the new stairs. He suggested that the stair be wider and the top rail intersect with the newel post so that some of its distinguishing features could be retained. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and said there was enough height in the newel to accept the rail. Ms. Ruedig said she was in favor of the way it was presented because it seemed clear that the handrail and post were added and the original design was to not have a railing, even though the newel post was there. It was further discussed. Mr. Shea asked whether the code required a railing on both sides, and Mr. Alther said it did not, so they wanted to keep one rail on each stair. Mr. Shea suggested that the railing be on the opposite side, and they further discussed preserving the decorative element.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested moving the application into a work session, with the exception of the landscaping portion, because there was too much discussion.

The tower was then discussed. Mr. Shea said it seemed overpowering for the structure and that he preferred the shed dormer. Mr. Mayer suggested pulling the tower back from the wall to make it smaller. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed, saying that the tower was overwhelming and that the shed dormer would work better. Ms. Ruedig also agreed and said the tower should be made to fit in better in terms of size and window configuration. She also suggested a site walk. Mr. Ryan said he supported the tower and thought the dormers were more awkward-looking.

Mr. Rawling said the tower would be appropriate because it was set back in the ell of the house, which reduced its size. Chairman Lombardi said he preferred the tower but thought that the drawings made it confusing because it was difficult to imagine how the roofline interacted with the rest of the house. He said he wasn't a fan of the windows and thought that the dormers would create a lot of awkward angles and were more massive than the tower.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Mary Anchor of 34 Salter Street said she was concerned for the integrity and character of the neighborhood and felt that the rear addition was massive and out of context with the existing structure as well as the other homes in the neighborhood. She said the shed dormer looked more like a shed and that the five windows on the back seemed top heavy. She asked the Commission to consider the project's mass, scale and design.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff made a motion to **approve** the application as presented, with the following stipulation:*

- 1) *The rear stairs and railings, the dormer tower and the second floor balcony window shall be excluded from this approval and reviewed at a work session at the March 2017 meeting.*

Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff stated that the landscaping features were consistent with the special and defining characteristics of surrounding properties and related to the historic and architectural value of existing structures. He said the fencing was something often seen in the District and that he liked cobblestones.

Ms. Ruedig stated that everything was very appropriate and an improvement to the property.

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

3. Petition of **Piscataqua Savings Bank, owner**, for property located at **15 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct glass conservatory on top of rear addition, add guardrail to rear of building, add windows to rear addition, relocate existing rear window/add two new doors) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (add new storm windows, restore existing canopy, add downspouts, add new roof vent and window grill) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lots 32, 33, & 34) and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Ryan recused himself from the petition.

Joe Almeida of DeStefano Architects was present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. He distributed copies of the new document and said they worked hard to place the elevator and hide the mechanicals. He reviewed the packet and emphasized that the rear entrance would be embellished by adding a glass roof to bring the garden experience into the building. He discussed the venting requirements and how they would be hidden. He said the drop box would be removed and a new one installed inside the conservatory. He reviewed the downspout, gutters, skylight locations, windows, and rail.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether the fire escape would be replaced. Mr. Almeida said it would not.

Mr. Almeida stated that the atrium was custom-made and that the new windows would replicate the existing ones.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the windows in the new entry would be the same as the front windows. Mr. Almeida agreed.

Ms. Ruedig asked for details on the metal for the glass roof because it seemed to have a shiny gold finish. Mr. Almeida showed the detail sheet and said it was a dull satin finish. Ms. Ruedig

asked what color the satin paint was. Mr. Almeida said it was not a metal color and would match perfectly with the rest of the structure.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether there would be custom storms, and Mr. Almeida agreed.

Mr. Shea asked whether more windows would be added to the brick wall under the glass roof and would have the same detail, and Mr. Almeida agreed. Mr. Shea asked whether ventilation was required in the conservatory, and Mr. Almeida said it would be within the high wall.

Mr. Mayer asked whether the added railing was for code reasons, and Mr. Almeida agreed. He asked whether it could be stepped back from the roofline. Mr. Almeida said it could, and it was discussed further.

Mr. Mayer said he didn't like the glass addition because it felt out of context with the building. Mr. Almeida said the design was subtle and felt that it would have a positive impact.

Mr. Rawling said that when he looked at the elevation, the glass seemed to overhang all the edges, but the detail showed that the glass would actually be set back. Mr. Almeida agreed.

City Council Representative Pearson said the conservatory was elegant and appropriate, due to the gardens. Ms. Bolster asked when the vestibule was added, and Mr. Almeida said it was added in the late 1970s. Ms. Ruedig said that, because the addition was modern, she wouldn't be concerned with keeping everything pristine. Mr. Shea said the conservatory helped activate the space and take away the back-door feel and felt that it was a positive change.

Chairman Lombardi asked whether the pediment was glass. Mr. Almeida said it was. Chairman Lombardi said the photo made it look like it was overhanging, but he said it was a great addition. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed that it was a positive addition on the back of the building.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, and City Council Representative Pearson seconded.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff stated that the project preserved the integrity of the District and maintained its special character, and it complemented and enhanced the architectural and historical character of the District and maintained property values. He said the project maintained the historic and architectural value of the existing structure by the interior improvements, like the elevator, which he thought was amazing.

Ms. Ruedig thanked the applicant for the well thought-out project. City Council Representative Pearson commented that when the City lost a greenhouse, it gained a conservatory.

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

IV. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **Unitarian Universalist Church, owner**, for property located at **206 Court Street**, wherein permission is 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.

*It was moved, seconded and **passed** unanimously (7-0) to postpone the application to the March 2017 meeting.*

B. Work Session requested by **Ten Walker Street Realty, LLC, owner**, for property located at **73 Prospect Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish porch and shed structures) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct two additions, reconstruct exterior chimney) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 142 as Lot 28 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic Districts.

Mr. Ryan resumed his voting seat.

Steve McHenry of McHenry Architecture on behalf of the applicant was present to speak to the petition. He introduced Jeremiah Johnson of McHenry Architecture and the owner Glen Walker.

Mr. McHenry stated that the main issue was to review the massing alternatives for the property. He encouraged a site visit. He said the parcel was quite unusual, and he discussed the locus, the elevations, the window configurations, and the streetscape views. Mr. McHenry said the basic house form was the anchor of the design and that he wanted to bring it back to life. He discussed putting back a chimney form, building additions and replacing the shed structures. He noted that more research about the property's history would be done.

Ms. McHenry showed and discussed a few options for massing. Mr. Rawling said that Option B was fine and thought the separate entrances were handled well. Ms. Ruedig agreed that the massing models were appropriate to bring back the original house. She thought it was unfortunate that the outbuildings were in such bad condition. She asked whether the porch could be retained, and it was further discussed.

Mr. Shea said he felt that the massing was appropriate and simple in form. He asked whether the structure would be taken down to the frame, and Mr. Walker said it would. The chimney was discussed.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*The applicant indicated that he would **continue** the work session to the March meeting.*

It was agreed that the site visit would be coordinated.

Mr. Cracknell told the Commission that he had the drawing for the 172 Hanover Street Administrative Approval petition. He said the proposal was to install a fixed window system into the opening. The Commission discussed the panel under the awning and whether the opening would be widened.

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

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded the motion. The motion **passed** by unanimous (7-0) vote.*

V. ADJOURNMENT

*At 10:30 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 March 8, 2017.