Mr. Cracknell reviewed two Administrative Approval items that were not on the agenda.

1. 77 State Street
2. 137 New Castle Avenue

Mr. Shea asked that 137 New Castle Avenue stipulate that the chimney be flashed into the roofing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice-Chair Wyckoff made a motion to grant the Certificate of Approval for the two applications as presented, with the following stipulation for 137 New Castle Avenue:

- That the chimney be flashed into the roofing.

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

Chairman Lombardi announced that there were multiple postponements and withdrawals, and he read them into the record.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to postpone all postponed items to the July 5, 2017 meeting.

I. PUBLIC HEARING (CONTINUED)
1. Petition of 82 Court Street, LLC, owner, for property located at 82 Court Street, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace seven windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 48 and lies within the CD4-L1 and Historic District. (This item was postponed at the June 7, 2017 meeting to the June 14, 2017 meeting.)

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to postpone the petition to the July 2017 meeting.

II. WORK SESSIONS (CONTINUED)

B. Work Session requested by Swirly Girl II, LLC, owner, for property located at 244 South Street, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct rear addition, construct new chimney) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace windows, doors, siding and trim) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 111 as Lot 3 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic Districts. (This item was continued at the May 3, 2017 meeting to the June meeting.)

The project architect Anne Whitney was present on behalf of the applicant Laurie Kennedy, whom she introduced. Ms. Whitney reviewed the petition and said there were a few major changes from the previous work session regarding windows, which she described.

Ms. Whitney said the surround would be simple. Vice-Chair Wyckoff explained why the entablature going up to the molding wasn’t the proper application. Mr. Rawling agreed and said the molding seemed undersized. It was further discussed.

Mr. Ryan asked whether the existing doorframe had a bracketed roof. Ms. Whitney said it was just pieced together. Mr. Mayer asked whether the original chimney would be returned. Ms. Whitney said she didn’t like to put faux chimneys when they weren’t required. Ms. Rue dig said that the chimney as drawn seemed slimmer than the original. Ms. Whitney said the width was about the same and that the depth was a little less, and that she would carve it out some.

Ms. Whitney said she kept the footprint the same in the addition and got rid of the upper level, resulting in a garage level that was half a level below the existing house. She proposed 9/6 windows for egress for the upstairs bedrooms, even though the historic photos showed 4/4s. Mr. Cracknell asked whether the rear room could be placed on the rear wall so that there weren’t two casement windows. Ms. Whitney said she wanted the windows on that elevation to match. It was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he agreed that two egress windows made sense.

Ms. Whitney said there would be a door to the deck, a roof over the deck, and two simple carriage-style doors with no lights. She said she simplified the windows on that elevation down
to one window and added a cupola to break up the length. Ms. Ruedig said it made it look like a farm addition on the back and felt that it wasn’t appropriate for a Colonial home.

Ms. Whitney said they were considering ebony windows on the old house with black sash and wineberry frames. Mr. Rawling said the jambs should match the trim color and should not be black. It was further discussed.

Mr. Rawling said the addition fit more comfortably than the previous one and suggested that the garage door treatment be simplified further. He said the crown head dressed it up too much, as well as the panelized treatment of the doors. Ms. Whitney asked about flat panel doors. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he thought the doors were fine.

Ms. Whitney said the body of the main house would be red with the black and that she considered wood shingles with red trim and all red windows to differentiate the old to the new and make the house stand out. It was further discussed.

Mr. Mayer said that the gable end for the original house showed two lights on either side but that the gable end on the new addition had a 4-light window. He suggested adding another pair to restore that façade. Ms. Kennedy agreed that it was a good idea.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said there could be a wider, thicker top casing if the crown and head over the garage doors were eliminated, making for a ‘country’ look’. It was further discussed.

Ms. Whitney discussed the rear elevation and the porch. She said she kept the triple windows because they let the main light come in and opened everything up. Ms. Ruedig noted that there were already two windows in that location. Ms. Whitney said they would be individual windows with trim in between. Mr. Ryan asked if the foundation was stone. Ms. Whitney said it was, with some brick in the back.

The windows were further discussed. In response to Chairman Lombardi’s questions, Ms. Whitney said none of the windows were for bedrooms and that there was an egress window. Ms. Ruedig said that, as a tradeoff for simplicity on the other more visible elevations, she preferred to see more windows on the back side. Mr. Rawling said he supported more windows on the back side but not paired windows on the new addition. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he supported the windows as drawn.

Ms. Whitney said she reduced the addition a bit, and she discussed the window dimensions. Mr. Rawling said he didn’t support for the casements on the right-hand side. He asked whether awning windows like the ones near the porch could be repeated. Ms. Whitney said they would be high and difficult to see out of, but said she could make them 9-lights and the same width and proportion. Mr. Rawling said the triple casements in the kitchen area would be visible from South Street and felt that the contemporary window treatment did not fit with the house. It was further discussed. Chairman Lombardi asked what the rear elevation window was. Ms. Whitney said it was the bathroom window and couldn’t be the egress window. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the bedroom window could be an egress one. Chairman Lombardi said it was very visible. He also didn’t care for the casements in the kitchen window. Ms. Whitney said she got
approval from the Board of Adjustment to push one window out so that the eave trim of the
gutter wouldn’t be seen.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked about the post. Ms. Whitney said she would do something simple,
and it was further discussed.

Mr. Mayer asked how far the porch was offset from the original façade of the house. Ms.
Whitney said it was about eight inches. Mr. Mayer suggested that it be exaggerated more
to offset it further away from the façade.

The cupola was briefly discussed. Mr. Ryan asked what the porch rail and picket materials
would be. Ms. Whitney said they would be all wood and that there would be no lattice.

There was no public comment.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISION**

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to end the work session.*

Ms. Whitney indicated that she would return for a public hearing at the July 2017 meeting.

C. Work Session requested by **Steven J. Craige, owner**, for property located at **10
Humphreys Court**, wherein permission was requested to allow an amendment to a previously
approved design (modify addition from one car to two car garage, modifications to dormer
above, change door and window styles) 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 Districts.

Jennifer Ramsey of SOMMA Studios was present on behalf of the applicant. She reviewed the
petition, noting that there would be a large garage and some site work to separate it from the
street and yard, a stone retaining wall with a fence on top, and a new entrance to the front door
for easier access. She said the two doghouse dormers on the main house would be replaced with
a shed dormer, that the first-floor windows would be taller, and that there would be a new entry
stoop with a cover. The garage dormers would stay the same, and there would be a single
window in the garage’s gable end. She discussed the back elevation, saying that the door and
window were flipped, the windows on the right were changed due to interior renovations, and the
bathroom window was smaller. She said the bay window on the Marcy Street side was omitted
and new windows were put in.

Ms. Ruedig said she was concerned about the shed dormer and all the changes in the main part of
the house because it transformed the quaint 1960s Cape into a more contemporary cottage on a
very historic street. Ms. Ramsey said they were using existing elements and pointed out that
there was already a shed dormer. Mr. Rawlings said it was a cohesive design and suggested
changing the grill pattern to a 6-light on the back dormer windows to be more compatible. Vice-
Chair Wyckoff said he was in favor of the shed dormer on the front because it looked cleaner but was concerned with the front door’s cover. Ms. Ramsey said they could eliminate it.

Mr. Shea said removing the doghouse formers was an improvement because they were out of but noted that he would have done a shed dormer on the front. He said the design made the house blend in more with the neighborhood and liked that the lawn would be brought up by adding some concrete. He asked whether there would be a fence in that location, and Ms. Ramsey said there would. He said there were a lot of windows on the back of the house, and it was further discussed. Ms. Ruedig said there wasn’t a lot of the original house left, even though it was an improvement. She suggested simplifying some details so that the design didn’t move into an arts-and-crafts style. It was further discussed.

Mr. Rawling noted that there was a lot more space between the main ridgeline and where the garage dormers tied into it giving the main house less space. He suggested matching the garage dormers to the main house. It was further discussed. Mr. Rawling asked about window finishes and colors. Ms. Ramsey said she proposed SDL, white clad windows with white trim and jambs.

Mr. Shea suggested minimizing the garage dormer to make the main part of the house more important and not draw so much importance to the dormer over the two doors.

Chairman Lombardo said the covered entry seemed a little weird. Councilor Pearson said she liked it because it made the house feel like it had been added onto over the years. Mr. Rawling said it gave it a ‘cottage’ look in a good way.

Mr. Shea asked whether Ms. Ramsey considered a hood over the French doors. Ms. Ramsey said that the owner didn’t care for the idea.

There was no public comment.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to end the work session.*

Ms. Ramsey indicated that she would return for a public hearing at the July 2017 meeting.

D. 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.

This item was withdrawn from further consideration by the applicant.

E. Work Session requested by **Deer Street Associates, owner**, for property located at **163 Deer Street (Lot 4)**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of existing structure...
(demolish structure) and allow new free standing structure (construct new mixed use building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lots 17-2 and 17-3 and lies within CD 5, Historic District, and Downtown Overlay Districts. (This item was continued at the May 10, 2017 meeting to the June meeting.)

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to postpone the petition to the July 2017 meeting.

F. Work Session requested by Deer Street Associates, owner, for property located at 157, 159, 161 Deer Street (Lot 5), wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of existing structure (demolish structure) and allow new free standing structure (construct new mixed use building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lots 17-2 and 17-3 and lies within CD 5, Historic District, and Downtown Overlay Districts. (This item was continued at the May 10, 2017 meeting to the June meeting.)

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to postpone the petition to the July 2017 meeting.

G. Work Session requested by Islington Commons, LLC, owner, for property located at 410-430 Islington Street, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (demolition of misc. additions, construction of new additions, other misc. renovations to existing buildings, for a total of five units) and allow new free standing structures (construct two, four unit townhouses at rear of lots, for a total of eight additional units) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 145 as Lots 34, 35, and 36 and lies within the CD 4-L2 and Historic Districts. (This item was continued at the May 10, 2017 meeting to the June meeting.)

The project architect Rob Harbeson on behalf of the application was present to speak to the petition and introduced his associate and the Islington Commons representative. Mr. Harbeson discussed the site plan and massing models. He reviewed the existing structures and said that the front block of 410 Islington Street would remain and that the addition behind it would be replaced. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the interiors would be renovated, and Mr. Harbeson said they would. It was further discussed.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he hoped that a lot of care would be taken with historic details. Mr. Mayer agreed, noting that several projects on Islington Street had done significant damage to historic buildings. It was further discussed. Mr. Harbeson said he didn’t foresee a lot of infrastructure changes in the front three buildings and would be amenable to modifying exterior details on them if they could have flexibility on the new back additions.
Mr. Rawling said he had observed modifications on the buildings that had not been approved by the HDC, like AZEK materials and trim elements. Mr. Harbeson said the applicant recently took ownership and didn’t believe that he was responsible. He said he wasn’t sure what the legal parameters would be for the new owners.

Ms. Ruedig emphasized that the restoration of buildings along Islington Street was an important part of the project that would be seen from the District corridor and encouraged the applicant to make the buildings shine. She said the proposed new buildings in the center of the block had to have appropriate massing style and materials, but it was important that those not be made the focal point instead of the front buildings. She said she would like to see photos of what the new construction would look like from Islington Street to get an idea of their visibility.

Mr. Harbeson asked for comments on 410 Islington Street. Mr. Rawling said he thought the idea of adding a garage carriage house would complement the building. He said it appeared that there was a general siding job on the building with no window trim and was not in keeping with the original style of the house. Mr. Mayer recommended that the applicant commit to resurrecting the original qualities and accept stewardship of the property by recovering and incorporating some of the historic details. Mr. Ryan said that each house seemed like an application by itself. The Commission then discussed 420 Islington Street. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the vinyl windows crimped the window tremendously and felt that they should be replaced. He said he preferred that the project stay with wood siding and hoped that the fenestration on the addition matched the old structure. Mr. Harbeson said they would carry the same language from the front to the addition. Mr. Mayer asked whether the first-floor window on the south elevation was a new location and was told that it was not. He said it felt tight to that corner and was told that it was due to an existing chimney.

The Commission discussed whether the trim details from the original house should be continued. Mr. Harbeson said they would carry the trim details through. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that the addition would be more successful if it was more compressed and wasn’t so close to either corner of the house. Mr. Rawling suggested that the addition relate more to the proportions and elements of the existing house, particularly on the south elevation. He said it looked like something was just added on and that the width, height, window sizes, and roof pitches were off. Mr. Harbeson said he would make adjustments. Ms. Ruedig said that removing the vinyl siding would reveal trim and molding details that could be carried to the new buildings. Vice-Chair Wyckoff verified whether removing vinyl siding from the District was allowable when there were clapboards underneath and suggested that the applicant obtain a permit to remove the siding to get a better idea of what they could do.

430 Islington Street, the largest building, was discussed. Mr. Harbeson said it had the most non-historic work done to it and that the addition had multiple units. He said they wanted to restore historic details but had trouble with existing components, like the side entry doors. Mr. Shea recommended that the applicant look at historic photos at the Portsmouth Athenaeum. He said he remembered when the house was an intact Colonial structure, with wood claps and a different pediment. He suggested restoring the front of it by eliminating the vinyl windows and putting in
more traditional details. Vice-Chair Wyckoff also suggested traditional corner boards and window trim. Mr. Rawling said he thought it looked like a new building and thought it should be detailed with appropriate historic details, especially the entry. It was further discussed.

Mr. Rawling said he supported the simplistic addition of the back as an annex piece to the property and felt no need to embellish it, but wasn’t ready to comment on how it worked with everything else. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked how the roof drained. Mr. Harbeson said it ran down the siding and that they would improve it when they did the deck and railing.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he thought the front elevation was successful and liked the simple duplex look. Mr. Shea asked about the front entrances, and they were further discussed. He asked whether there would be brick on the concrete foundations and was told that there would. He said the garage doors seemed a bit lost and suggested carrying a hood across the doors from corner to corner to break up the height.

Mr. Rawling said the buildings were much too wide, with no context of the surrounding neighborhood. He said that the buildings needed to have a similar relationship with the other buildings in the neighborhood. Mr. Harbeson said they would maintain what existed and what was permitted by zoning. They would buffer the adjacent properties and take care of the issues like stormwater drainage and utilities. He said the project was landlocked and that they wanted to cluster the new construction in its own courtyard to act as its own mini-neighborhood. Chairman Lombardi said he recalled previous discussion of massing but didn’t feel that it was completely flushed out and thought it would have to be looked at more before getting into the finer details.

Mr. Harbeson referenced previous comments made by the Commission about creating variety and using traditional massing elements for the additions. He said they attempted to lay on traditional bays, dormers, porches and entries in a variety of traditional forms to create variety in the additions, as well as material changes and color differences to make two sets of additions. He asked for specific comments on massing strategies.

Mr. Shea said he thought the north and west elevations of D1 and D2 were okay. He said that the foundations on the west elevation were broken out of the wall and didn’t feel extra wide to him. He said that the side elevations of D3 and D4 looked wide because there was no fenestration. He said the foundation wasn’t a full one and that what felt like a Cape now felt too wide. He said it was a matter of changing the side elevations. He said the window spacing was not traditional on the third floor and asked why the brick stopped at a certain location. He suggested refining those elements.

Chairman Lombard said he recalled a comment about having buildings of different designs, two and two, but thought that having two of the same may not be as good as having four different ones. Mr. Harbeson said he liked the sister building approach as they faced the Islington Street buildings and that they tried to alter the materials from one to the other, e.g., one with clapboard siding and one with shakes, with color as a variant. He said they would be open to putting another layer of variety between them.
Ms. Ruedig said they were new buildings and reminded her of 275 Islington Street, where those buildings took cues from historic styles but were new buildings and not replicas. She said it was done successfully. She said she wouldn’t mind the massing shrunk slightly so that the buildings didn’t seem so massive as a whole, noting that they were the interior block. She said the site plan had an interesting grading and topography and perhaps increased the complexity of the driveways and so on, but she thought that staggering the buildings slightly so that they weren’t boxed together might add some interest and give each building more air and space. She said the northeast building could be moved slightly to the north to give it more relief.

Mr. Rawling asked why the applicant was doing a Cape with dormers as an addition to a Colonial, noting that more traditional forms were needed, not more layering of elements. Vice-Chair Wyckoff disagreed, saying that the Cape form made sense in that location.

Mr. Ryan asked the applicant to bring conceptual elevations for the buildings to the next meeting.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to end the work session.

The applicant indicated that they would return for another work session at a future meeting.

H. Work Session requested by Flintatta, LLC, owner, and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Portsmouth, NH, applicant, for property located at 73 Court Street, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct addition to house a lift for access to upper level) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 19 and lies with the Mixed CD4-L1, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

The project architect Alyssa Murphy of Manypenny Murphy Architecture was present on behalf of the applicant. She reviewed the site plan. She said the interior was beautifully restored, that the stairs on both sides would be kept, and that a new egress was needed as well as access to the second story. She said the existing building would have nothing done to it except for doors with more glass. Ms. Murphy reviewed the addition, saying that they would limit the details of the building in terms of the wood clapboard, corner boards, and eave detail. She said they needed a shorter connecting piece and that there would be no driveway due to the tight property line.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that a lot of buildings in general that had only a wall showing had indentations representing windows, or closed shutters, and suggested a faux window on the front. Mr. Shea said he liked the overall concept because it was subordinate, contemporary, and classic. He agreed that the faux window would be a nice touch. He said he liked the massing because it didn’t detract from the church. He recommended that the applicant find a solution for the rain and snow coming off the roof near the entrance.
Ms. Ruedig said the project was simple and didn’t do permanent damage to the building. Mr. Mayer asked if width of the elevator tower could be reduced to take advantage of the jog on the rear elevation. Ms. Murphy said it would be reduced in some way.

Mr. Rawling said he liked the design but thought that it felt a little too detached from the church and could be better. He said that bringing some of the front elevation pattern from the other windows would have more of a connection with the church. He also recommended bringing some of the church’s fenestration pattern to tie it in. Mr. Ryan said he liked the front door and asked if there was a pitch cap and if the front door would be wood paneled. Ms. Murphy said there was no pitch cap and that the door would be wood.

Ms. Ruedig said she liked the idea of using the long wall for signage. Chairman Lombardi said it would be a nice location for a piece of modern art.

There was no public comment.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to end the work session.*

The applicant indicated that she would return for a public hearing at the July 2017 meeting.

I. **Work Session requested by The Provident Bank, owner, for property located at 25 Maplewood Avenue, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing building) and allow a new free standing structure (construct a three story mixed use building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 2 and lies within the CD5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.**

The architect Lisa DeStefano of DeStefano Architects was present on behalf of the applicant as was Joe Almeida of DeStefano Architects. Ms. DeStefano said they would review the site plan and the design of the new building.

Mr. Almeida said that they viewed demolition seriously and referred to his letter that referenced the original building’s architect. He said the building itself was considered a non-contributing building, that it did not comply with zoning, and that the 1970’s design was not complementary to the City. He said the activity planned around the site was significant, and he showed images of the lot prior to construction of the existing building as well as several context images. Ms. DeStefano said the building had served its purpose for a long time. She read a letter from a former occupant of the building in support of the project.

Mr. Ryan said he agreed that the existing building didn’t respond to its context. Ms. Ruedig said there was a small amount of mid-century buildings Downtown that added to its architectural language and thought the building’s architecture would be appreciated in a few years. She said if the building were a more stellar example, she would feel more strongly about saving it, but she
thought it was too vehicle-related, with its open parking beneath it, especially on that site, and that it didn’t have a pedestrian-friendly character. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it had a suburban office park feel to it and a lot of disrepair and thought it would be a good tradeoff for the type of building the Commission wished for the site. He also suggested that the applicant present more documentation of the existing building.

Mr. Mayer said he was sorry to see a 1970’s building demolished and preferred to see something contemporary that paid tribute to it rather than another HarborCorp type of building. City Counselor Pearson said she liked the building and was sad to see it go. Mr. Rawling said he found the existing building contrary to what the Commission was trying to do with the area as far as urban planning. He said that type of building was known as a ‘dingbat’ that decreased surrounding property values, so he supported its demolition. Mr. Shea said he liked the building because it was sculptural and could be seen through the greenspace around it and wasn’t up tight to the sidewalk, qualities that he wished to see echoed in the new project.

Chairman Lombardi said he was concerned that it would be more of Harborcorp and wished to see a piece of modern architecture, something dramatically different, rather than a box built to the maximum and up to the sidewalk. Mr. Almeida said the project team was tired of it as well. He showed the proposed site plan, noting that they held back significantly from the property line and had great variation on the primary pedestrian side and opportunities for plantings and so on. He said it was an island seen from all four sides and that the new building would have multiple entrances and not be a cookie-cutter one.

Ms. Ruedig asked why about massing and volume, and Mr. Almeida said he would address it. Mr. Mayer said that sitting back from the property line wasn’t the same thing as creating a pedestrian experience. Mr. Almeida said they would complement what was happening around the building. Mr. Rawling noted that the 3D massing model on the corner made the building look diminutive in respect to the neighboring buildings. Ms. DeStefano said it met all the zoning requirements. Chairman Lombardi said the building read as a four-story one. It was further discussed. Ms. DeStefano said they had a strong retail base and that they wanted to get away from flat buildings. She pointed out that the eave line was continuous around the building except for the center bay.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was a contemporary style and was within the HDC’s context of 2017. He said the massing was good and thought the project was going in the right direction. Mr. Shea said the massing and height were good and that he was glad the building was stepped down toward the old part of the City. He thanked the applicant for not designing another box and felt that the building had classic elements with contemporary forms. He suggested that it have some green and cutaways and felt that it was too close to the sidewalk. He said he liked the bays and the contemporary windows. He said it looked like a 3-story building from the parking lot because the garage was recessed on that side but thought it might be a bit busy. He said it would be discussed more as the elevations developed.

Mr. Ryan said he thought the massing was two to one but could be one to one. He said the loss of the 1970’s building’s transparency would give the developer license to introduce more of that into the new building. He suggested carrying the transparency from the corner with the canopy
much further throughout. He said the Commission could support a more abstract look as long as it was done well and felt that the project was on the right track relative to height and massing.

Ms. Ruedig said she was a bit overwhelmed from all the information being presented at once. She said the massing was okay but preferred to see the top attic form pulled back in and softened. She suggested stepping down toward the Worth Lot more for a gradual steeping down to the City. She said it was a challenging location and the project ran the risk of doing something that would seem more monumental than it should because it would be very visible. She said the building could be simpler and more elegant and that it shouldn’t be just a formulaic output of zoning and guideline requirements. She said the outside seemed busy and more of a continuation of Hanover Street, with continuous bays popping out and generalized brick and cast stone façade. She said the project had to figure out how it fit into Downtown’s context and didn’t feel that different modern materials should be used. She said she could see more of a contemporary expression and that there had to be a way to relieve the mass. She said a long line of the bays could get very repetitive. Mr. Almeida said their goal was to avoid that very thing and found it difficult to hear someone say that the building was boxlike. He said they focused on the details on the corner sides, bays, and so on.

Mr. Mayer said that the massing couldn’t be more different from the 1970’s building and that the project had done nothing less than what they were allowed to do by going up as high as they could with a new commercial building. He said the skylight could be an atypical feature with an inviting atrium but felt that all the other features were almost like a cliché. He said he didn’t feel that the building brought something to that corner that was new and refreshing.

Mr. Rawling said he liked the site plan and the retail stores and felt that the bank entrance with parking tucked underneath it was treated well and that developing the concept around those starting points was on the right track. He said he felt comfortable in general with the second and third levels and that the bays were clean in detail. He was glad to see railings with a design. He said he was not comfortable with the dormer roofs and bays and suggested that a wide flat arch would work better. He said the roofline needed work. He said the storefronts were fine in concept but came across as harsh and unfriendly. Mr. Almeida said they had to meet a glass requirement of 70%, which drove the amount of storefront glass, and that they would do a mahogany-type of storefront instead of a typical commercial one.

Mr. Rawling agreed that the façade with suggested artwork would make it an identifying element and give it a unique character. He said the street-level storefront including the parking area was unattractive and needed more detail. He said the corner element for the bank entrance seemed wide and overly prominent compared to the building’s scale.

Chairman Lombardi said he thought the mass was good, in spite of his challenging the fourth floor. He agreed that the squared bays seemed to get repeated over and over in the City on less interesting buildings. He said he would be happy to push the modern aspect more, as Ms. Ruedig suggested, for something more dramatic. Councilor Pearson said what was gained from the attention to character-based zoning was what was missing from the 1970’s building but felt that the individuality was lost.
Public Comment

Rick Beckstead of 1395 Islington Street said that the steeple of the North Church would not be seen from that location when the new building was in place and would be part of closing off significant views of Downtown. He said he didn’t care for the height and that the Commission did not have to strictly follow the character-based zoning because it was more of a starting point for designers. He said he was surprised by the demolition discussion because of how diligently the Commission fought in the past to preserve architecture from the 1960’s and 1980’s.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to end the work session.

The applicant indicated that they would return for another work session in the future.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on July 5, 2017.