

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6:30 p.m.

**July 12, 2017
reconvened from July 5, 2017**

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: City Council Representative Nancy Pearson

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

A. 20 Mast Lane – Strawberry Banke (*This item was postponed at the July 5, 2017 meeting.*)

John Schnitzler of Strawberry Banke was present to answer the Commission’s question of why the date 1880 was used for an older building. He explained that the building was built in 1803 but listed as an 1880 building because most of the upgrades took place around 1880 and were a more accurate interpretation of that era.

Ms. Ruedig asked why the front steps came up to a turn. Mr. Schnitzler said an archaeologist discovered that there were period artifacts throughout the surround of the foundation and that the turn had always been there.

B. 77 State Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to install two condensers at the rear of the building for future commercial units and noted that one of the two might be relocated inside the building.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to approve both Administrative Approvals, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous (7) vote.*

II. PUBLIC HEARING (OLD BUSINESS)

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 116-091-48 and lies within the CD4-L1 and Historic District. (*At the*

Request To Postpone

applicant's request, this item was postponed at the July 5, 2017 meeting to the July 12, 2017 meeting.)

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded and approved unanimously(7-0) to **postpone** the petition to the August 2, 2017 meeting.*

III. WORK SESSIONS

Mr. Mayer asked that Work Session B be heard before Work Session A so that Lot 5 could be considered first as an easier progression.

*Mr. Mayer moved that Work Session B be heard first, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous (7-0) vote.*

(Please see Work Session B).

A. Work Session requested by **Deer Street Associates, owner**, for property located at **163 Deer Street (Lot 4)**, wherein permission was 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 postponed at the June 14, 2017 meeting to the July 12, 2017 meeting.)*

The architect Tracy Kozak of JSA Architects was present to speak to the petition on behalf of the applicant, along with architect Mark Moeller. Ms. Kozak reviewed the changes from the previous work session, noting that they were pushing the upper floor back and enhancing the detail and articulation of materials. She said they wanted to install a fence to screen two transformers in the back. She reviewed the neighborhood context and said its industrial nature was the inspiration for the building. She discussed window sizes, art deco details, proposed materials, façade profiles and dimensions, balconies, recessed bays, and the drive-through.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the zinc material would go down the building as a dividing element, like Building 5. Ms. Kozak agreed, noting that there were bracketed cornices, metal railing and brackets. She said the brick harkened back to the industrial factory buildings. She showed street views of the building and said there would be places to set tables on the sidewalk as well as large operable glass walls to open up the restaurant to the sidewalk.

Mr. Shea said the building felt far more successful in design than Building 5, had more of the factory feel of Portsmouth, and more of a vertical element. He said he liked the contemporary cornice at the top of the third floor and suggested that it be used for Building 5. He said the building was a big box but had interesting detail and felt more like one building, and he didn't mind the zinc coming down because it was an entryway. He liked the scale and the drive-through arch. He felt that there were a lot of good elements in general. Ms. Ruedig agreed and said the design was simple, cohesive, and took details from industrial buildings in a subtle but

elegant way, using traditional language for a contemporary building that fit into the neighborhood context.

Mr. Rawling said he had concerns about the flattening of the building but felt there were many positive things. He said the conceptual drawings appeared to have a deeper recess with the link to the upper floors, which he thought was more successful than the current artificial facades built on top of a flat box. He said the upper floors originally had projecting bay units that gave the building texture and added more square footage but not the density of a solid wall. He felt that all the zinc should be removed because of its non-descriptiveness, or otherwise should be an expressive part of the building that enhanced it. Mr. Mayer said the design had a coherent feel to it and good proportions. He suggested promoting pedestrian use, like bike racks, and making it a destination where people would congregate. He said he appreciated the design because it was a contemporary project that fit into the District.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the building was much more successful than Building 5, pointing out the slight projection on the fourth floor and the covering of the standing seam roofing material. He felt that either Building 4 or Building 5 should have zinc on the fourth or fifth floor, but not both. He said he preferred not to see the buildings built by the same person because it seemed like a housing development. He said the zinc on Building 4 was more successful.

Mr. Ryan said the project was progressing nicely but that he wasn't crazy about the vertical element. He asked whether the archway was an entry was told that it was an ATM drive-through and a vehicular entrance for Lot 3. Mr. Moeller said they could put seasonal landscape elements to make the passage more inviting. Ms. Kozak noted that the brick wrapped around to the inside and that there would be decorative metal grills as interesting features.

Mr. Mayer asked how active the traffic flow would be. Mr. Moeller said it would be fairly active because it was the primary route for the hotel guests.

Ms. Ruedig said she wasn't against the buildings looking like they were built by the same person and felt that it was part of a big development. She said she did survey work for buildings of various time periods and thought it was a hallmark when the buildings were built together in the same timeframe and were cohesive.

Chairman Lombardi said he thought the building was more successful and was more like a mill building that had a metal addition put on the roof, which he said was seen on a lot of mill buildings. He said the zinc was better on that building than on Building 5.

Public Comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said the building was more appropriate and appealing in scale and mass. He said the combination of the second and third floors had architectural detail, which was admired in Portsmouth.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously (7-0) to **continue** the work session to a later date.*

Note: The Commission then addressed Work Session C.

B. Work Session requested by **Deer Street Associates, owner**, for property located at **157, 159, 161 Deer Street (Lot 5)**, wherein permission was 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 postponed at the June 14, 2017 meeting to the July 12, 2017 meeting.)*

The architect Tracy Kozak of JSA Architects was present to speak to the petition on behalf of the applicant, along with architect Mark Moeller. She explained that the Planning Department asked that the two petitions be split because they were separate properties. She said that two particular buildings were in the District but that the others were not, but they were still trying to create a cohesive neighborhood. She reviewed the packet in detail, noting that they had taken an in-depth look at detail materials, stepbacks on the upper floors, and more detailing on the pedestrian level. She reviewed the site plan in detail.

Chairman Lombardi asked whether the gates were required by the railroad. Ms. Kozak said the gates weren't from the railroad but were between the driveway and the back of the building for maintenance and fire rescue access. She said they also relocated the transformer.

Ms. Kozak said their inspiration for materials was the industrial railroad, resulting in brick, stone and metal materials. She showed samples of brick and zinc. She said the brick was the traditional red, the canopies were a mix of steel and glass, and the railings were metal mesh. She said that, in response to the Commission's comments about articulation, depth, and not having flat boxes, they had 2-1/2 feet of setback at the cornice, with a heavy shadow line, on Deer Street, and Maplewood Avenue had a stepback of 13 feet so that the top two floors wouldn't be seen by pedestrians. She discussed the elevations and the facades, and said the tower form would screen the rooftop mechanicals. She discussed the stair tower extension and the elevator overrun, recessed masonry bays on the railroad side, and courtyard.

Chairman Lombardi asked what the courtyard's dimensions were. Mr. Moeller said it was around 52 feet deep and would have shared access by the building residents.

Ms. Kozak noted that there was underground parking in the building accessed from the back. She showed various views of the building. She discussed the zinc material in detail, noting that it had tin in it and would weather so that it was not like painted metal. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked if it would help in keeping the bricks from getting mold and mildew. Ms. Kozak said the heavy cornices would keep the water from dripping down the brick. Mr. Moeller said the zinc application on Building 5 was almost like a fish scale.

Mr. Rawling said he missed the last meeting and read some of his comments that he sent to the applicant. He said he had stronger support for the earlier massing models and that his concerns remained the same. He critiqued the building in great detail. His comments included the fact that the developed context was oversimplified to mere boxes and that he was opposed to the boxed building with an overlay of veneer suggesting that the volumes were created just for scale. He said he preferred the more expressive concepts presented earlier and felt that even the broken corner concept created an interesting rhythm with traditional elements. He said the design development stripped off every supportive element from the earlier schemes, particularly the upper floors. He said the building design was taken back to the shadowy zinc that the Commission was supported to perceive as not existing on the building. He said the entire building had lost its richness, character, friendliness and dimensionality and become a brutal, stark, and unfriendly structure. He said it didn't represent anything residential because every side looked like a university research building. He didn't see how the building would enhance Portsmouth or that part of town and emphasized that it was an important critical development in the area as a corner building leading into the neighborhood. He said the architect was trying to interpret forms, volumes and scaling elements which might be appropriate in the masonry elements. He suggested that all the zinc elements be removed and that only the parts of the building representing the masonry forms be built out using an appropriate scale. He noted that there was nothing appealing about the zinc material and didn't know how the Commission could approve it anywhere because it all looked like zinc boxes.

Mr. Mayer said he thought some of the design elements were interesting but was still concerned about the pedestrian friendly concept. He said he was at a loss to see the building pushed so far out to boundaries on the lot and felt that the features served the building but not the City residents. He hoped that some of the open space would find its way to a place where the public could congregate, which he thought was a standard that should be encouraged more in City projects. He said the building was too big and too tall, especially coming down Maplewood Avenue where there were historic buildings and a historic cemetery.

Mr. Shea said the project was progressing and that he agreed with some of the comments. He said the building was shown as three stories tall on the renderings and that it had a rough texture, but the elevations felt flat and crisp. He said the cornices were interesting, and he liked that the Maplewood Avenue side was stepped back. He said the railroad elevation was interesting with the courtyard, but the five-story elevation felt boxlike and needed more detail to break it up. He said if the Commission agreed to a fifth floor, it had to step back like the Maplewood side. He said he would like to see the roof broken so that it was not a straight line, and he suggested more parapets to break it up. He said he would like to see more of the glass canopy that hung over the sidewalks and gave the pedestrian something interesting to look at. He thought the trees and lights would help the pedestrian feel. He concluded by saying that the roof should be broken up more, that more detail should be shown so that the building wasn't so flat, and that the detail should be contemporary. He emphasized adding interest to the building.

Ms. Ruedig said she appreciated the stepping back of the Maplewood Avenue side and the back corner and suggested stepping back the fifth floor a bit more. She said she still worried about the approach as one was driving in. She said the facades going all around had too much going on. She said it was a big building and shouldn't hide the fact, and she referred to the big historic

buildings downtown, like the Franklin Block, noting that they had more subtle details that provided interest. She said she was fine with the materials, even the zinc because it was used in the right way on the top level. She agreed that contemporary details were necessary and was concerned about the pedestrian-friendly issues that needed to be done to the building. She said the tower on the corner was not worth it, and the portion that was metal felt too stretched and wasn't in good proportion with the rest of the building. She said the general design wasn't very Portsmouth-like and didn't fit in an urban setting because it looked very suburban, almost like an office park. She suggested that the applicant play with the height of the building. She thought the tower could be refined, saying that the proportions and design were not quite right.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project should strive for the 8-ft setback that the building directly across the street had on their fifth or sixth floor. He said he was happy with the first floor and thought the cast stone gave it a friendly pedestrian experience. He said he wasn't sure that bringing the zinc down in certain areas for no reason was successful, and he wished there was more of a classical design on the fifth floor with some kind of cornice. He said he didn't like a building that went up and had no overhang, and he wasn't pleased with all the zinc running across the fifth floor and being totally flat. He said the design elements chosen were just boxes of brick in various places and thought the building had a cold, institutional look. He was pleased that there were steel lintels, which he thought was a modern element. He said he was comfortable with the corner tower and its height but felt that it had an airport control tower look.

Mr. Ryan said he thought the project had the ratio of the street to the façade right. He said the street was two to one, and anything less would look squatty. He had no problem with the height and massing and liked the art deco references to the railroad. He said the corner tower was a little dark but had the right height because of the big intersection. He thought the cornice, brackets and overhang would only add to the height. He didn't mind the zinc because it was a natural material but thought it looked severe on the upper floors. He said the windows looked ghostly. Mr. Moeller said they were still in progress and would be energy efficient aluminum clad windows and also some awning windows in the tower elements. Mr. Ryan said the building could be a little large for Portsmouth but thought it was a mid-size building in general.

Chairman Lombardi said he wanted the building to be lower from the beginning. He said he agreed with a lot of the comments and thought the materials were okay. He said the top edge of the roof with the zinc looked like a squared-off box and a bit abrupt. He thought the tower needed more work and felt that the airport control tower comment was accurate. He noted that a lot of new buildings in the City lacked entryways and were not flush to the street, and he felt that it was an inviting feature but wasn't sure that it would work with the design. Ms. Kozak said the first floor plaza was open to the sidewalk and the doors were 16 feet back from the front of the building. Chairman Lombardi noted that there were a lot of other doors on the building.

Mr. Rawling referred to the landscape buffers against the building and against the street edge and wondered whether the street edge would feel a bit safer if the buffer were increased and the one near the entry were removed. He said the wider planting strip would also benefit the trees. He said he found the detailing on the bays interesting, especially the way the elements played off of each other, and liked the use of that language with the building because it was an example of using contemporary things for texture and detailing. He said he wasn't opposed to using zinc but

didn't care for the way it was used on the building. He noted that the schematic design had something textured and dimensional at the top of the building and thought that using zinc would be appealing because it would relate to the industrial character of the railroad. He said he preferred the earlier design and felt that the building needed to be bold and expressive to stand up to the buildings next to it and the wide street. He said he didn't feel that recessing the upper floors and pushing things back was the way to do that. He concluded that the strength of the building was to stand strong and bold, and it needed an expressive upper floor.

Mr. Ryan said he thought he would have seen more of a fish scale design and less polished, like the one used on the Boston Aquarium. Mr. Moeller said it was a much different finish and that the zinc on their building would have more of a living quality to it and would patina over time.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked Ms. Kozak if she considered solar cells on top of the building. Ms. Kozak said it could probably be done.

Public Comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said he appreciated the Commission sticking to what they had said from the beginning about the project and didn't feel that the building was Portsmouth-like. He said it was too big and thought eliminating the fifth floor would be a good thing.

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

Chairman Lombardi asked Ms. Kozak what the team took away from the meeting. Ms. Kozak said they understood that the Commission wanted the building to be simpler, more detailed, and less big, and that that would move forward with those comments and would also re-consider the zinc. Mr. Moeller acknowledged that the simplicity of the fifth floor was working against the design and that they would articulate it more and add a level of detail to break up what was perceived to be very big. He said the strong horizontal line at the top of the fourth floor brought some variety and that they intentionally broke it up into pieces to bring the scale down, and he felt that bringing down that level of detail to the flat elements might appease the Commission. He said they would also look at how they could refine profiles and projections.

Chairman Lombardi added that there were multiple comments about the tower design. Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that the windows were large and square and had an institutional look that made them not look like residential windows.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously (7-0) to **continue** the work session at the August meeting.*

The Commission then addressed Petition A. (Please see Work Session A).

C. 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 June 14, 2017 meeting to the July 12 meeting.)*

The architect Rob Harbeson was present on behalf of the applicant. He reviewed the packet, noting that the front three buildings would be restored to be more in keeping with their history. He said they had removed some siding and found details of molding and trim that they would match. He reviewed the surrounding context and the layout and showed the depth of the proposed structures on the rear property and how they fit into the streetscape.

Ms. Ruedig asked about landscaping. Mr. Harbeson showed the proposed plan. Chairman Lombardi said the rear buildings looked like they were 1-1/2 stories. Mr. Harbeson said there was a significant grade change that made it necessary to enter the front half of the buildings at the second floor. He said it was a 1-1/2 story look from Islington Street only. Chairman Lombardi asked whether, from the street, it would look like the buildings appeared to be lower than the rooflines or whether it would look like the rear buildings would look very large. Mr. Harbeson said a lot of it was perception. He discussed the depth and the slope of the roof and said the Commissioners would get a sense of the depth if they saw the front corners of the stakes on the site. Mr. Harbeson noted that they added in a layer of detail information and some new photos to show what was below the siding and would either repair and retain existing or replace in kind. Mr. Rawling suggested that the improvements to the existing buildings be discussed.

Mr. Harbeson began with Building 4-10. He said the exterior was in the best condition and that they wanted to remove the storm system over the entry. Ms. Ruedig thought it was amazing that the original siding was present. Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that the asphalt corner board was under the vinyl. Mr. Rawling asked about the proposed windows. Mr. Harbeson said they would be aluminum clad and that they would either retain or replicate the exposed wood trim and use 7/8 SDLs. Mr. Shea asked if they would consider a sash replacement window, and Mr. Harbeson agreed. Mr. Rawling said they would probably be 6/6 instead of 6/1. He asked about casing and shutters, and Mr. Harbeson said they would be included. Ms. Ruedig said the smaller addition was more appropriate in size and an improvement.

Building 4-20 was then discussed. Mr. Harbeson showed existing and uncovered details, saying that he found wood siding in a red color and some original wood casings around the windows. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked if they were replacement windows, and Mr. Harbeson said they were. In response to Mr. Shea's questions, Mr. Harbeson said the front windows would be replaced, that he could do the sash replacements with the half screen, and would do 6/6 windows. Chairman Lombardi asked whether all the chimneys were intact. Mr. Harbeson said that most of them were gone but that Building 4-20 had one chimney.

Mr. Shea asked whether the front door would be left in place. Mr. Harbeson said it would, as well as the tabature. Ms. Ruedig asked whether Mr. Harbeson would consider doing a wooden door for the entries on the additions, and Mr. Harbeson said he would.

Mr. Harbeson said they squeezed the massing a bit on the back in response to the Commission's previous comments. Ms. Ruedig said the rear addition was sized appropriately.

Mr. Harbeson then discussed Building 4-30 and circulated a new package that had some changes. He pointed out interior reconfigurations that simplified the exterior stairs on the side and shielded them from view. He said the footprint was similar. He pointed out the difference in elevations and said the single garage door with the entry would be replaced by two garage doors. He said the decks would be cut down to grade and the front entry would be restored and recessed so that the stairs would fit.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff recommended not duplicating the placement of the siding within the pediment over the front door. He asked what the pediment over the side door was. Mr. Harbeson said the goal was to add a canopy with brackets. Mr. Shea asked about the window on the third floor. Mr. Harbeson said it was an existing window that would become a double hung.

Ms. Ruedig thanked Mr. Harbeson for removing the dormer and thought it was too bad that the chimney was lost. They discussed a faux chimney. Mr. Shea said that it was sometimes okay to replicate what used to be there if it was really historic. Mr. Rawling asked about the abandoned window casing. Mr. Harbeson said they could replicate the window trim. Ms. Ruedig noted that the historic photo showed the windows tucked under the eave. Mr. Shea asked if the windows would be new construction due to the old window being gone, and Mr. Harbeson agreed.

Mr. Harbeson discussed the new construction and the elevations. He said they hired someone to mill traditional brackets composed of AZEK material. Ms. Ruedig noted that it was a new building, but Mr. Harbeson said he thought it would be a detail that would add value.

Mr. Rawling said he wasn't at the point of accepting the footprints because they didn't have anything to do with the character of the neighborhood, and he felt that the massing and volume didn't as well. He said the elaborate detailed buildings did not reflect the right massing and that the profiles and forms were uncharacteristic of anything around the project. He didn't think the Cape-style buildings were appropriate nor the elevations, and said he wasn't ready to even endorse the forms yet, never mind the details. Mr. Harbeson said they wanted to relate the back buildings to the original buildings on the property but still be new. He noted that the surrounding neighborhood had significant additions on the backs of homes and felt that the project had characteristic features of the immediate neighborhood. Mr. Rawling disagreed, saying that a lot of the historic details were not appropriate to the forms of the neighborhood, especially on forms that he hadn't accepted yet as being appropriate for the neighborhood.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he thought it was important that the front have the look of Cape-style homes, and he noted that there were several Cape-style homes in the area. He said that someone would have to drive down the driveway into the development to observe the side view of the house, so even if it was 6-8 feet wider than normal, it didn't mean that the places had to be the same depth. Ms. Ruedig suggested that the project consider the proportions of original Cape houses in the neighborhood. She said the buildings still seemed chunky and thought the proportions could be cleaned up a bit. She said a lot of it had to do with the amount of trim work

shown in the drawings, especially the gable dormers, which looked heavy. She suggested lightening the dormers up to make the buildings look more elegant. Mr. Rawling said he didn't see that the Cape form fit into the neighborhood and asked why the project wouldn't just work with a 2-story form and forget the Cape and the oversized dormers. Mr. Harbeson said the building would seem too massive behind the Islington Street building.

Mr. Shea said he liked the Cape form but felt that the dormers were a bit heavy on the front. He suggested a gable dormer. He noted that there was a lot of brick above the garage doors and suggested running a deck to mask the brick. He said he thought that Buildings D1 and D2 were okay from the Islington Street view but thought the front doors could be changed to something more formal. Mr. Ryan said the two elevations gave a sense of mass production and suggested giving them some distinction. He agreed that the buildings looked bulky. Mr. Rawling said that the brick coming up the sides of Buildings D3 and D4 was inappropriate for their style and thought it should be dropped down.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether the two units in the buildings could be more distinct. Mr. Harbeson said that was why they created the stagger. Ms. Ruedig said it helped a little but the buildings still looked like a New Englander with an addition on the side. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he had more of a problem with the garage door being on the front, and it was further discussed. Mr. Rawling suggested that more stylistic consistency be used instead of the blend of historic styles. Ms. Bolster suggested something more like Greek revival and less Cape.

Chairman Lombardi said the scale was a bit big to accommodate the size of the two 1700 s.f. units. He said he found the big dormers, the brick coming up, and the amount of base brick awkward. Mr. Harbeson said they did the base brick to give it a traditional base on the front and then carried it around. Chairman Lombardi suggested some variation. He said he had trouble imagining the whole project because there was so much detail.

Public Comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said he would like to see the chimney restored because it was a signature of the house and that he appreciated the restoration of the original buildings.

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

Mr. Shea said he didn't have a problem with the project overall and felt that it was just a matter of some refinements to the design and scale. He said that, because the new buildings were in the back, he accepted that they were similar. He said they were tucked in and were not in a historical area. He suggested that the project simplify the designs and make them less bulky. Mr. Rawling said he the project still needed to be urban forms and noted that, just because the buildings were in the back didn't mean they wouldn't be seen. Chairman Lombardi agreed, saying it felt like a very suburban house in an urban setting.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously (7-0) to **continue** the work session to the August 2017 meeting.*

D. Work Session requested by **The Provident Bank, owner**, for property located at **25 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was 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. *(This item was continued at the June 14, 2017 meeting to the July 12, 2017 meeting.)*

Lisa DeStefano and Joe Almeida of DeStefano Architects were present to speak to the petition on behalf of the applicant. Ms. DeStefano introduced the CEO of Provident Bank Dave Mansfield and the contractor Steve Wilson.

Mr. Mansfield reviewed a brief history of the bank and said they wanted to build something appropriate for the community that would also fit the bank's historic nature. Mr. Wilson reviewed the history of the existing building, noting that it had significant structural and code issues and would cost too much to renovate the building.

Mr. Almeida said the project couldn't move forward without the Commission approving the demolition of the existing building. He said their team did a lot of due diligence, noting that it wasn't a significant building of its time. He said it had been categorized as a non-contributing resource by the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. Ruedig clarified that the building would be listed as non-contributing because it wasn't old enough to meet the 50-year cutoff.

The Commission discussed the demolition. Mr. Rawling said it presented a challenge because it was a moment in time. He noted that the urban renewal planning destroyed a whole cultural section of town in the name of progress, and that most of what was rebuilt at the time left a huge desolation zone that everyone avoided for years. He said the building wasn't being preserved as an intact building of urban renewal and felt that preserving it would be a huge impediment to pedestrian qualities for the streetscape. Mr. Ryan said he didn't think people would realize that something was missing if the building disappeared. Mr. Mayer said the building wasn't a stellar historic one but felt it as an important part of the urban landscape and was willing to let it go.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he had thought of giving the building a chance and wondered why a second story had not been considered on top of it. He said the flaw in the applicant's plan was that they made a good point about their offices but managed to stick a few condominiums on top. He noted that bricks were separating from the structure and that there were issues with the section built on stilts, and he was ready to lose the existing building if the new design was a quality one and something that would be different than the same old Portwalk look. Mr. Shea said he had walked by the building a lot and never really noticed it, and that once he started looking at it, he could see through the building and also saw some greenery. He said those were good qualities that he thought could be brought into the new design. He also said he would like to see the corner pulled back a bit. He concluded that he would like to see more human scale and greenery in the new plan. Ms. Bolster agreed. Ms. Ruedig agreed that they were losing a 1970s

building, with so few left. She said she wished it were a better building that she could fight to save and knew that one of its biggest hurdles was its location and pedestrian unfriendliness.

Chairman Lombardi said he had struggled with the demolition but noted the bricks falling out and the sort of scary stilted structure. He said the McIntyre Building was a better representation of that period and agreed that the building's openness was appealing and thought it could be incorporated into the new building. He thought the corner was important and could be more open. He also noted that the Worth parking lot would become more important in the future as the automobile would become less important, and he felt that the area should be activated.

Ms. DeStefano reviewed the proposed site plan and noted that the building was set back continually a minimum of four feet from property lines and had a recess at Hanover Street and Maplewood Avenue. She said the main entrance was set back substantially and that the walkway on the Worth lot was there for public use. She said a challenge was the amount of glass area on their property and thought it was important to make the area a resting spot for residents and visitors. Mr. Wilson said they discussed having sidewalks all around the building.

Ms. Ruedig said she still noticed that the Maplewood Avenue façade didn't have any main entryways other than the accessibility entrance. Ms. DeStefano said that was the residential entrance. Ms. Ruedig said she didn't think the green wall along Portwalk was successful because it was a long, dead space that people didn't walk to. She said there needed to be more activity along the project's main façade. She also said there was nothing wrong with a regular corner entry instead of a curved entrance.

Ms. DeStefano acknowledged the Commission's comments about how tired they were of boxed bays and their suggestions to consider dormers, materials, rhythms and patterns that could make something contemporary. She said they were focusing on a transitional concept. She reviewed the changes on the Hanover Street elevation. She said that, among other things, they massaged the boxed bays, detailed the angled bays, and were considering a skylight.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff verified that the bank offices took up the second floor and asked why the second floor looked the same as the third floor. Ms. DeStefano said if they banded it for use, the floors would all look different. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the building looked like a condo, not a corporate office. Mr. Shea said that the first floor looked different from the top floors, and he agreed that something different could be done on the second floor without losing the whole flavor. He asked what the green color was. Ms. DeStefano said it was a panelized system and that they would have different color options. Mr. Shea asked whether they considered a fourth floor that was stepped back and not so traditional on top. Ms. DeStefano said they would lose a lot of square footage to meet the setback ordinance. Mr. Shea said he appreciated that the building didn't look like a box and liked the play on the fenestration.

Ms. DeStefano addressed the overall design. She said the elevator form on the Maplewood Avenue elevation would have an artful elaboration on it. She said she wanted the building to feel like a unified one. Mr. Rawling said he didn't note any major alterations. He said the building should emphasize height as much as possible, especially on the corner of Maplewood Avenue and Hanover Street, which would help balance the other complexes. He said he liked the

transitional concept and suggested treating the dormers in a dark color to match the roof, developing the height in the tower more, and making the canopy over the entrance more distinctive. He said he liked the angled bays and appreciated the landscaping at the base.

Ms. Ruedig noted that the Commission got a lot of information and a fully-realized design of the overall building early in the process. She said she felt that the difference between the three building styles was not that different and thought they were very busy, especially the Hanover Street elevation. She said the applicant shouldn't be afraid to let the building be an office building and that it didn't have to look like a residential building. She suggested simplifying the second floor so that it looked less residential and less busy. She said she had a hard time with the lack of residential activity and felt that the wall on Maplewood Avenue was just a long extension that a person walked by. She said she wouldn't have put the elevator tower there.

The meaning of pedestrian friendly was discussed in detail. Ms. Ruedig said it meant not having a long wall that had no communication. Mr. Mayer suggested a place for people to park their bikes. Mr. Ryan said there were limits to what the applicant could offer the pedestrian and felt that they articulated it as best they could by providing a wall screening the parking garage. He said the tower element was beautiful and hated to see it set back. He felt that the elevator tower dominated that element and should be secondary.

Mr. Mayer said he felt that the building was more complicated than necessary. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that the tower element on the corner of Hanover Street should be more important. He noted that the contemporary design was the better design because it had similar material all the way up, with the Provident Bank on the third floor. He said the elevator tower stuck out like a sore thumb and dominated. He felt that the transitional design was too busy.

Chairman Lombardi concluded that the Commission in general had a positive feeling about the project. He noted comments about the complexity, the pedestrian experience along the long wall, and a lot of finer details that the project team would work on. He said it was a good project, with some progress made.

Public Comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said he thought the transitional design was the more respectful one, with lots of Portsmouth details. He said he liked the round dormers and the fact that the tower element looked like a chimney.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously (7-0) to **continue** the work session to the August 2017 meeting.*

At this point, Mr. Mayer left the meeting.

E. Work Session requested by **Colaco, LLC, owner**, for property located at **74 Congress Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (complete exterior renovation) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 43 and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

The architect Brendan McNamara was present on behalf of the applicant. He said they proposed to renovate and restore the front building, demolish the rear building, and build a new structure. He reviewed the renovations in detail.

Mr. Shea said it was a good concept and asked Mr. McNamara to return with more information and some photos. He said the front façade was the important piece because the rear was on an alley in the back and wouldn't be seen much. Ms. Ruedig said cleaning up the back would make it more visible. She asked whether the double French doors on the rear were necessary and thought they looked too suburban. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said they were necessary because the units needed all the light they could get. He asked whether there were egress windows. Mr. McNamara said they would sprinkle the building.

Mr. Rawling said the front elevation was nice and suggested making the storefront more traditional by bringing up the corner posts. Mr. Rawling said the rear elevation was fine but thought there was opportunity for expansion. He said he didn't think of it as the cottage style of construction because it was the back side of the alley with masonry all around. Mr. McNamara asked what an alternative material would be. Mr. Rawling said it could be masonry with a different glazing and didn't feel that it had to connect with the front elevation.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously (7-0) to **continue** the work session to the August 2017 meeting.*

F. Work Session requested by **Sundance Holdings, LLC, owner**, and **Union Pub Co., applicant**, for property located at **77 Daniel Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace windows on front façade, install make up air venting) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new compliant egress stair for upper floors on rear elevation) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 10 and lies within the CD 4 and Historic Districts.

The architect Brandon Holben was present on behalf of the applicant. He said he wanted to replace the storefront windows with folding ones and that the upper windows would be single hung. He said there would be a new egress for the back three levels of the building and a new stair concept, with the courtyard door moved slightly. He said they were working on the mechanicals and condensing units, noting that the larger units would be moved to the roof. He

said the exhaust fan would remain, that the kitchen would be made larger, and that the bathrooms would be made compliant.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the opening would be changed. Mr. Holben said it wouldn't. Ms. Ruedig said the historic windows looked like they were in good shape and that the third-floor looked like the paint had been stripped. She said she wouldn't want to see the nice detail in the brick mold lost. She suggested that the existing windows be preserved and that an interior storm be used. It was further discussed.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked if there were new sashes on the second and third floors. Mr. Holben said they were historic sashes. The glazing was further discussed. Mr. Shea said the concept was good and suggested that the windows on the second and third floors be restored. He asked whether the front door would be kept and was told that it would. Mr. Shea said he would like to see more detail on the railing.

Mr. Rawling said he wasn't fond of the windows on the first floor because they changed the character of the place and he also didn't favor the operable units because they changed the look. Mr. Holben said they seemed like the best option to maintain the storefront look. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was no problem as long as the glass size was similar.

Mr. Rawling asked whether the upper floors had a proposed casement with a divided mold center bar. Mr. Holben said it was almost a replacement in kind, a new window with a similar pattern.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously (7-0) to have a **public hearing** at a future date.*

G. Work Session requested by **Robert J. Fabbricatore Irrevocable Trust of 2012, owner**, for property located at **177 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct small addition on Penhallow Street elevation) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (restore exterior façade, lower entry access on Penhallow Street elevation) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 44 and lies within the CD 4 and Historic Districts.

Steve McHenry and Jeremiah Johnson of McHenry Architecture were present on behalf of the applicant, along with the builder Eric Hall. Mr. McHenry said they create an addition to the wing in the back of the original building that would include a new entrance to the ground-floor uses, an elevator, entry to a retail space, and a single parking garage. Mr. Johnson said the rear retail space would be lowered to be at grade and the front retail space would be accessed by a front elevator. He said the chimneys would be repaired and that the trim around the door would be restored and brought down to grade level. He reviewed the packet and summarized that two condominium units and two retail units would be the final use of the building.

Mr. Rawling said the ground floor of the retail units on the side elevation seemed to be at sidewalk level and asked if it was suitable to have the windows as high as they were. Mr. Johnson said the change of the retail floor going down to grade was brand new. He agreed that it might be worthwhile to shift the windows lower. Mr. Shea said he wasn't in support of the project because it went against his preservation principles. He said it was an original footprint and noted that when an addition was added to an old building, the Commission preferred that it could come off. He said the whole ell would be removed and none of the floor systems would work anymore once the exterior wall came out.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether it was an original addition to the house. Mr. Hall said it was a later edition, probably from the 1890s. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he had no problem with it. Mr. Shea said he meant that the building should not be altered. Ms. Ruedig said she would have to know more about the history of the building in order to approve the removal of the ell. She said if there was a good reason for it, the addition would be fine in concept but thought it would still be too close to the street. She suggested that the ell be stepped back further. Mr. Ryan suggested a site walk.

Public Comment

The owner George Dodge said that the gable end and some of the windows were not correct. He said the glass size in the windows were 11"x16" and wider than they were high. He said he was concerned about the brick sample because of how it would look on the building and suggested getting bricks from the City that were finely crafted.

Duncan Craig of 175 State Street said he was the owner of the other half of the building and was excited that the work was high quality,. He said his only concern was that the addition not be just a giant wall of brick and that it be set back enough to see a bit of the alley.

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

Chairman Lombardi said he was concerned about removing the addition.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved unanimously (7-0) to **continue** the work session to the August 2017 meeting.*

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on August 2, 2017.