

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

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**6:30 p.m.**

**August 9, 2017  
reconvened from August 2, 2017**

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

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Alternate Molly Bolster

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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**I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS**

1. 133 Islington Street
2. 369 Islington Street
3. 172 Hanover Street
4. 15 Pleasant Street
5. 93 State Street

Mr. Cracknell reviewed the Administrative Approvals. It was requested that #3, 172 Hanover Street, be pulled for discussion

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to approve Administrative Approval Items 1, 2, 4 and 5.*

Item #3, 172 Hanover Street, was then discussed. Mr. Cracknell had stated that the three 1/1 windows would be replaced in kind but thought the Commission might want the windows to revert to 6/6 ones. He noted that the second floor windows were 6/6 ones. Ms. Ruedig said she had no problem with the first floor having 1/1 windows as long as it had appropriate venting. Mr. Rawling felt that the windows should be changed to 6/6 to bring the building closer to its original configurations, and he suggested that the whole elevation could be 6/6 windows.

The project architect Joseph Almeida was present and stated that his client wanted to simply replace in kind. He reminded the Commission that the first-floor windows were approved about a year before on the other side of the building and were the same size but were fixed panels. He also said there were kitchen functions behind the windows, so it was important to be able to clean them. He said the windows had been taken apart frequently and there was no plan to put any openings back into them, so they weren't asking for any exhaust.

Mr. Rawling said he supported the new windows on the other elevation because he thought those two elevations were very visible to one another, but he felt that it was better to put 6/6 windows on that particular elevation. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and recommended that they be aluminum clad, with a color to match the upstairs windows. Mr. Shea asked what the original windows in the building were, but Mr. Almeida said he didn't know.

*It was moved, seconded and **passed** unanimously (7-0) to approve the petition, with the following stipulation:*

*1) That 8/8 windows be used and match the color and pattern of the second-floor windows, with half screens.*

## **II. PUBLIC HEARING (OLD BUSINESS)**

1. Petition of **PNF Trust of 2013, Peter N. Floros, trustee and owner**, for property located at **278 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 80 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the July 24, 2017 meeting to the August 9, 2017 meeting.)*

Mr. Cracknell said the request was to extend the review process, not the meeting. He said he received a proposal from John Wathne of Structures North, one of three companies that responded to the City's bid for structural engineering, and with extensive experience in 19<sup>th</sup> Century masonry building preservation. He said that the applicant Mr. Floros agreed to pay half of Mr. Wathne's fee, and that Structures North would do the inspection and a report in time for a special meeting with the Commission on August 28.

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously (7-0) to postpone the petition to September 13 2017 and to **continue** the request process to a special meeting on August 28, 2017.*

Chairman Lombardi read the two requests for postponement for Work Session F and G.

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously (7-0) to **postpone** the two work sessions to the September 2017 meeting.*

## **III. WORK SESSIONS (CONTINUED)**

A. 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 owner. He noted that he was only able to find photographic documentation from the 1980s. He reviewed the petition,

elevation by elevation, and discussed using wood on the front elevation with Azek panels on the bottom, using wood windows with integrated casings and sills, and doing a signboard to break up the front expanse. Mr. Shea asked whether all the windows were the same size on the front. Mr. McNamara said the three windows on the second floor were the same size and the 3<sup>rd</sup>-floor windows were narrower. Mr. Rawling said he was comfortable with the proposed changes and thought they would improve the building for future use. Councilor Pearson suggested that Mr. McNamara check the Signage Ordinance to make sure his proposed sign was the right size. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed, noting that the band seemed to be tall.

Mr. Mayer asked whether there was a trim design for the new windows. Mr. McNamara said there was no historic pattern from that era and that the trim would be flat. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the 1<sup>st</sup>-floor windows wouldn't be right if it were a period restoration, and it was discussed further. Ms. Ruedig said the Commission had no idea what the original windows were and suggested that very simple windows be installed. Chairman Lombardi said the band of the first floor seemed wide. Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested a molding or projection instead of just a piece of plywood. Mr. Shea said he'd like to see the corner boards continue from top to bottom.

Mr. McNamara discussed the side elevations and said they would have to re-clad with Hardiplank and change the windows out from 1/1 to 6/6. He said they would also need an exterior sprinkler head over the side windows and sprinklers against the adjoining windows on the neighboring property. Mr. Rawling suggested painting the sprinklers the brick color and said he didn't have a problem with the sides because they had low visibility.

Mr. McNamara discussed the rear elevation and said they wanted French doors because the back was the source of light for the building. He noted that the fire escape look was necessary for the 35-ft wide deck divided up against the three residential units. Mr. Rawling said he supported the back proposal but suggested that something more decorative be done with the railing to enhance the decks and make the units look more residential. Mr. McNamara said they wanted a commercial aspect. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed that the building needed as much light as possible, and he thought the activation with three units would make a big difference on Porter Street's walkability. Mr. Shea said he liked the design just as it was, and Mr. Mayer agreed. Chairman Lombardi said it was a simple building and should be kept simple.

There was no public comment.

## **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*The applicant indicated that he would move forward with a public hearing at the September 2017 meeting.*

B. Work Session requested by **Robert J. Fabbriatore 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 of McHenry Architects was present on behalf of the applicant. He introduced the project manager Jeremiah Johnson and the builder Eric Hall.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the packet. He said the addition was built in 1895 and would increase floor space as well as provide more usable space in the rear and at-grade accessibility to the building's commercial uses. He noted that the sill height on the 1<sup>st</sup>-floor windows were lowered in response to the Commission's previous comments.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked how wide the addition was. Mr. Johnson said it was 11-1/2 feet. Mr. Johnson said that the railing detail was new and that some elements were added to the proposed overhead door. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked how they would do a demolition considering that half the structure had a greenhouse on it. Mr. Johnson said there was a firewall.

Mr. Mayer said the back of the building was still a prominent façade on a historic street and that that the building didn't warrant that type of addition. He said the building could be restored and that a floor could be added if the addition was widened and still have a useful retail space. Mr. Johnson said that the project had deferred to a restoration mason regarding the condition of the wall and what might be used there. Mr. Mayer said rebuilding the wall was a different issue from expanding the footprint, and it was further discussed. Mr. Shea said he agreed with Mr. Mayer and preferred to see the building expanded without having to tear so much of it apart. He said the handicapped access was important but felt that there were other ways to do it without tearing down the addition, which had a lot of original fabric. He said that a new brick addition would change the feel of the street and that two original window openings would be lost because the new addition would be brought out so far. Mr. Hall said the proposed brick was a better match to the original than the existing. Mr. Shea asked whether it had a 100-year-old patina.

Mr. Rawling asked whether the masonry walls were on the addition. Mr. McHenry said the existing was masonry. Mr. Rawling noted that the brick wall was in bad shape and would be a reconstruction, so all that would come down and something would be rebuilt in its place. He said the work the applicant did on the building was extensive and thoughtful but felt that the addition could have more distinction. He said a compatible design with more interest or transparency might work better for the retail and shift it from being the literal replication of what was there before. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed. He said the possibility of a clapboarded addition made sense because it was different, and he suggested more storefront-style windows on the first floor instead of replicating the 6/6 windows on top of each other. He applauded the work done on the building so far and said he would support the details if they were a little more thought out and got past the residential fenestration. Ms. Ruedig said she agreed with Mr. Rawling that the addition was a bit too literal. She also agreed that the wall was really in bad shape and would have to be rebuilt, and that pulling it out made sense, as well as the different storefront windows. She thought the arched entryway and the door could be improved.

Mr. McHenry said their goal was to do something quiet for the addition, not to have it pop out so that it diminished the building on either end. He said they could rework the elevation on the two-story addition on the rear and tone it down. Ms. Ruedig said they were on the right track.

She said clapboard would be appropriate but felt that the brick would be less eye-catching. She said turning that corner was an important street presence that had to be paid attention to. Mr. Shea said that if the Commission was willing to demolish a part of the historic building, they should determine that it had to come down and should ask for a structural engineer to verify that it couldn't be salvaged. He felt that a big demolition on a historic building should be a last resort. Mr. Ryan acknowledged that the masonry was in very poor shape and would be difficult to restore and said he was willing to make it something other than brick. He agreed that the demolition of historic architecture was not something to be taken lightly and suggested that the transition between the larger portion of the building and the new addition respect the old wall. Mr. McHenry said it was an accessory structure. Mr. Johnson said there should be a balance between the constructural integrity and what the owner wanted to do. Ms. Ruedig said the Commission was careful to take every project on its own merit and should focus on the appropriateness of the application, and she was willing to see a new addition if it wasn't a main part of the house because the existing was historic but not a very useful space. She noted that the Commission had allowed demolition of supporting additions and structures all around the City.

The elevator was briefly discussed. Chairman Lombardi said he struggled with tearing the addition down but didn't like obscuring the rear windows of the house. He said the massing of the new addition from the front looked overpowering and out of proportion to the main building. He noted that the way the addition was shown didn't work because it obscured a large portion of the house, and the massing was significantly changed.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

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

C. Work Session requested by **Pamela Thacher, owner, and Charlie Seefried, applicant,** for property located at **180 Middle Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (convert single family home to four dwelling units and the carriage house to one dwelling unit) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 127 as Lot 8 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

The architect Steve McHenry was present on behalf of the owner, along with Jeremiah Johnson of McHenry Architects and the applicant Charlie Seefried. Mr. McHenry referred to comments he received from sources like the National Registration of Historic Places in analyzing the building and documenting its site. He said the applicant's aim was to change a single family house to four units with an additional unit in the carriage house. He said they hadn't done any additions or fenestrations yet but were analyzing what existed, and they wanted to repair and replace in kind all the windows and doorways. He showed context photographs.

Chairman Lombardi asked what was behind the bricked-in windows, and Mr. McHenry said he didn't know but thought there was a stairwell. He noted that a 1900 renovation might have included an elevator. Mr. McHenry reviewed the rest of his historic report.

Mr. Mayer said he was stunned at how little documentation the building had, and he asked whether the applicant considered supporting a historic structures report so there would be a record of the building's history. Mr. Seefried said he would need to learn more about it but was open to it. Ms. Ruedig agreed with Mr. Mayer, and it was further discussed. They noted that Jim Garvin was an appropriate resource on Portsmouth's brick building history.

Mr. Shea said the applicant was off to a great start. Mr. Rawling said the site plan seemed to be well considered for maintaining the character of the site and introducing the parking requirements and noted that it still kept the garden feeling around the house.

There was no public comment.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to **continue** the work session to the September 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 of DeStefano Architects was present on behalf of the applicant, along with Joseph Almeida. She introduced Steve Wilson President of Hampshire Development Corporation, and Dave Mansfield, President and CEO of Provident Bank.

Ms. DeStefano reviewed the petition and the changes made from the previous work session. She noted that the base of the building had additional detail including wider vertical mullions in the storefront to give the building more depth. She said the biggest change in the elevation was the corner of the building as it went up the access way, where the focus was placed on the corner tower and the Provident Bank entrance. Other changes included more detailed balcony layers and window bays, additional brick banding, a dormer system replacing the slope glazing on the roof and skylights, a simplified window pattern, and an adjusted trim. She reviewed the other elevations, which included simplified window patterns, lighter bay colors, no real back-of-the-building aspect, and more glass and less brick on various elevations.

Ms. DeStefano then reviewed the tower options. She said Option One had a roof that was a sculptural form with lots of detail, Option Two had a simple curved form with a screen system as a detail at the top, and Option Three was a simple dome shape on top of the roof.

The Commission discussed the options. Vice-Chair Wyckoff and Mr. Rawling said they preferred Option One. Mr. Mayer said he didn't like any option because he liked it simple. Ms. Ruedig agreed and noted that the overall changes didn't necessarily improve the building. She noted that the addition of the dormer and the removal of the skylight made the building less

interesting and less contemporary. She said she preferred Option Two because of the simple tower top and because it was different. Mr. Shea said he liked all the options but leaned toward Option One. He said he liked the way the classic design and contemporary features were brought in and the fact that it wasn't just a brutal square building. He said the elevator tower bothered him and suggested continuing that gray banding across the base. Mr. Rawling asked if the tower's decorative element was for mechanical screening, and it was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it made sense to extend the first-floor experience with the elevator tower. He asked about the design for the atrium skylight. Ms. DeStefano said it was just enough for a curve and to let light in and that it wouldn't be visible.

Mr. Ryan said the relationship between the tower element and the corner tower was much better. He suggested that the elevator tower might work better if it reflected the material of the vertical bays to make it look less like a dividing object. Ms. Ruedig said that Option Three reminded her of the Powder House on Islington Street and Option One looked like the dome on a Greek church, and she suggested a different curvature on the domed top. Councilor Pearson said she preferred Option One because it seemed to fit in more with the roofline. Chairman Lombardi said he liked the screening but not the flatness of Option Two, and he thought Option One worked best but could have a slightly different design. He asked what was on the top of the back side of the building. Ms. DeStefano said it was a screen system.

Chairman Lombardi noted that the Commission had previously commented that a lot of the building was office space and the balconies tended to denote residential. Ms. DeStefano said they added more glass to the office area by adding the transoms on the second floor, so the office space with the balconies would be seen as a transition. Mr. Rawling said the balconies enhanced the offices and contributed to the building's character. Mr. Shea noted that the Hanover Street elevation needed more greenery. Ms. DeStefano said they would eventually meet with the Technical Advisory Committee and the Trees and Greenery Committee. Mr. Mayer said the building treatment on Hanover Street felt continuous and didn't distinguish the storefront, and he suggested that a different material be used as a transition from the area with the first service door. Ms. DeStefano said they could put more detail on the service door.

Mr. Rawling gave several overall comments. He noted that the building (as denoted on Page 3) seemed to be more in balance and visually compatible. He said he preferred the original canopy design because it was cleaner, but he suggested more detail with the black metal work. He said he wasn't comfortable with the elevator tower because the pattern seemed too blocky. He liked the break in the two buildings rather than the change in materials. He said the width of the corner for Provident Bank seemed to be two glass panels too wide. He said the Page 5 elevation needed refinement but that he could accept that it was more of a service side. Mr. Ryan suggested a vertical green wall on that corner. Chairman Lombardi said the elevation was the least interesting façade but the roofline was the most consistent, and he suggested making the roofline more interesting by breaking up the base. Mr. Mayer said the width of the entryway on the back of the building might feel less massive if the balcony level's material was changed to plain iron work.

### **Public Comment**

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said he liked that the elevator shaft looked like a chimney. He said he didn't like the options because he liked a more simplistic look. He said the balconies were too emphasized on the driveway side, and he suggested more brick. No one else rose to speak, and Chairman Lombardi closed the public comment session.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. DeStefano said she would return for a work session/public hearing at the September 2017 meeting.*

E. 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 and said he would focus on the new back buildings. He reviewed the buildings in relation to the lot size, lot coverage, maximum building height, and open space. He said they were adding pavers to the entry space, a park-like courtyard, a brick walk, and a raingarden and vegetation for a buffer. He reviewed the site plan and emphasized that the buildings echoed the massing, volume, and architectural forms in the neighborhood. He also showed the Commission new photos of the neighborhood context. He said they hadn't added landscaping at that point but noted that there would be vegetation between the street and the new buildings.

Mr. Harbeson discussed the changes, which included placing the primary entry of one building to the side to create a long elevation. Ms. Ruedig asked what the reason for that was. Mr. Harbeson said it was to make the additions unique and get a longer elevation to work with. Ms. Ruedig said it was a challenging place for an entrance, considering the grade change. Mr. Harbeson said they could do a covered porch, and that it also gave them the gable form on the end to make it look like a carriage house conversion. He discussed the other elevations. Mr. Harbeson then discussed the other new buildings, noting that they would add detail to break up the mass on one building. He said that a few of the buildings were similar to what they showed before, and two other buildings had more variety.

Mr. Mayer said the new buildings were too big in scale and in relating to surrounding buildings. He noted that the height and the footprint were increased. Mr. Harbeson said the buildings were compatible with the neighborhood. He noted that there was a significant grade change on the site, so some homes had 2-1/2 stories on the back but were one story on the front elevation. Mr. Mayer said that people on the back would see a 3-story building. It was further discussed.

Mr. Shea said the scale was okay in general but thought the double dormer felt like a double addition, and he suggested that it be cleaned up a bit. He said the north elevation garage doors



seemed a bit lost due to all the claps above them and suggested placing an eyebrow over the top with brackets. He said the shed dormers seemed big and thought the French doors could line up with the double hung windows. He said he liked the original side-by-side Cape. He noted that the massing was broken up on the side elevations, which he thought was okay but wasn't as traditional as before. He said that the project was moving in the right direction in general.

Ms. Ruedig said she felt that the massing was fine because the buildings were far enough within the whole block and screened from the neighbors and didn't infringe upon them. She said that Design D4 was probably the weakest, but she felt overall that the designs were well developed. She said each building didn't have to tell a story and encouraged Mr. Harbeson to make each one work as its own design. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that Designs D1 and D2 had the most successful massing and that D3 and D4 were almost too vertical. He noted that the most important part of the project were the historic buildings on Islington Street and said they were successful. He said he wasn't satisfied with the 7" siding on the buildings, however.

Mr. Rawling referred to the Columbia Street building that burned down and had uncharacteristic features to the neighborhood, particularly the elevation facing the street because it was too broad. He said he saw that feature in the back buildings, especially the Capes. He said he thought the siting of the buildings was uncharacteristic of the neighborhood, and he thought the buildings were oversized in massing for the siting on the lot. Regarding the elevations, Mr. Rawling said he felt that the double windows were uncharacteristic for the style and that the pork chop returns in the gable ends were not in the HDC's code. He said some balconies needed work because the doors seemed too short compared to the windows. He said the lower levels were dull and the garage door styles didn't relate to the styles of the houses. In Design D1, he said the asymmetry of the offset bay was interesting in its irregularity and had individuality due to the entrance being shifted to the side. He said the paired windows and dormers were dull on the other buildings as well, and he noted more pork chop returns. He said that things breaking up the mass needed to be projected out in feet rather than inches.

Mr. Ryan agreed with Mr. Rawling about the architectural details but said the project relieved his concern of mass-produced housing. He noted that Mr. Harbeson hadn't thought much about how the building met the earth, especially the entrance by the steep decline, and suggested some retaining walls. He also suggested treating the small roads that serviced the residences like they were mini-streets within the community to help the project fit into the area.

Chairman Lombardi said he was concerned about the massing and the neighborhood context. Relating to the design, he said there were areas on the same building that were flat and others that were complex and didn't pull together. He said there were views with different rooflines and exposures that were small. He said the designs could be simplified and made better. He emphasized that he didn't want four cookie-cutter houses, but he also didn't want them to be different by pasting on more stuff. Mr. Mayer said he hadn't picked up on the narrow projections and agreed with Mr. Rawling that articulation should be expressed more purposely. He said the bay hugging the corner on the north elevation of D1 seemed like an awkward construction detail and that the side entrance with the little roof and corner had only 1/6" of depth.

## **Public Comment**

Rick Becksted of 1391 Islington Street said the buildings were duplexes, needed just so much square footage, and weren't on an open street, so massing would be difficult. He said they would be admired from a distance. He suggested mixing up the materials a bit by doing cedar shakes on the dormers instead of having bandings dividing floors.

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 **continue** the work session to the September 2017 meeting.*

F. 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. *(The applicant has asked to postpone to the September 2017 meeting.)*

#### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

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

G. 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. *(The applicant has asked to postpone to the September 2017 meeting.)*

#### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

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

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

*At 10:45 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting.*

Joann Breault  
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on Sept. 6, 2017.