

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6:30 p.m.

**December 13, 2017
reconvened from December 6, 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice Chairman Jon Wyckoff; City Council Representative Nancy Pearson; Reagan Ruedig, Richard Shea, Martin Ryan; and alternates Molly Bolster, Cyrus Beer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dan Rawling

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner



I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

Mr. Cracknell reviewed the administrative approval items and asked that Item #3 be removed for separate discussion. There were no comments or questions on the other items.

1. 177 Mechanic Street
2. 40 Pleasant Street
4. 30 Maplewood Avenue
5. 33 Holmes Court
6. 401 State Street
7. 540 Marcy Street

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to **approve** Items 1 2, and 4 through 7.*

3. 65 Bow Street

Mr. Cracknell stated that the applicant wanted to change the 12-ft pathway between his business and abutters to 8 feet. The Commission discussed it. Mr. Shea noted that the applicant wanted to do a solid 4-ft wall to enclose the walkway but felt that it should be kept open and light. He said the transparency was probably 40% open. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and said the 8-ft width made sense because 6 feet was too small. Mr. Cracknell said he would stipulate that the fence be painted wood but would be open. The rest of the Commission agreed.

*Mr. Shea moved to **approve** the item with the following stipulations:*

- 1) The proposed fence shall be constructed of wood, be field painted and be at least 40% transparent.*
- 2) The existing pedestrian passageway shall be at least eight (8) feet in width.*

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

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS - CONTINUED)

C. (Work Session/Public Hearing) Petition of **Islington Common, LLC, owner**, for property located at **410-430 Islington Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish misc. additions) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct four free standing duplexes), construct misc. additions to existing structures) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (renovations to three existing buildings, total number of units ~~12~~) 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 CD4-L2 and Historic Districts. *This item was continued at the November 8, 2017 meeting to the December 13, 2017 meeting.*

Chairman Lombardi read the two postponed petitions of the night into the record, which also included Item F, Portsmouth Savings Bank.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to postpone Item C, 410-430 Islington Street work session/public hearing to the January meeting.

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to postpone Item F, Portsmouth Savings Bank, indefinitely.

III. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS - CONTINUED)

B. 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 November 8, 2017 meeting to the December 13, 2017 meeting.)*

Councilor Pearson recused herself from the work session.

The project architects Tracy Kozak and Mark Mueller were present on behalf of the applicant to discuss the petition. Ms. Kozak reviewed the packet in detail.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he wasn't 100% sold on the width of the sidewalks because of the nano walls and the planting strip. It was further discussed.

Ms. Kozak noted some changes, including that the upper-story windows had horizontal mullions and the double hung windows were changed to fixed awning windows. She said the metal grills

were detailed more, the width of the upper soffit ledge was reduced, and the bottom sashes were tilt-out awnings while the upper sashes were fixed.

Mr. Shea asked whether the roof height was 49' 10" above grade plane, and Ms. Kozak agreed, noting that 50 feet was allowed for the site.

Ms. Kozak discussed the north elevation and pointed out the metal grillwork at the bottom, the mechanical enclosure at the top, and the stairwell for roof access and maintenance. Mr. Shea asked how the floor related to the tall vertical windows in the middle. Ms. Kozak said it was a split level, and it was further discussed. Ms. Kozak discussed the other elevations. Mr. Shea asked whether there was a rustication stone on the building. Mr. Mueller said it was more of a massing issue than fenestration. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was important to see how that related to the other two buildings. He said he thought it was a large building. The mass of the buildings was further discussed. Mr. Shea asked if the canopies would be solid. Ms. Kozak said they would be solid material but translucent. Mr. Mueller said the bottom of the windows would be hinged and would swing out. Mr. Shea said he thought it was a good solution.

Three window samples were shown to the Commission. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was okay with whatever window had the best performance, but said the muntins made a big difference and shouldn't look applied or fake. Mr. Shea asked whether the windows, where the top half was fixed and the bottom half was one awning, could be ordered together. He also thought the frames seemed very different. It was further discussed. Ms. Ruedig said she would be fine with whatever window was least likely to fail soonest. Mr. Shea said he preferred the smaller frame because it was a cleaner look and a more contemporary feel.

Ms. Kozak noted that she had a letter from the absent Commissioner Mr. Rawling and would try to comply with his request to not make the metal look like masonry.

The Commissioners commented on the changes. Mr. Shea said he thought the building was successful and said he liked the industrial windows. He thought the building was the right height for the location and liked the design's simplicity and the pedestrian friendliness of the canopies on the sidewalk. He noted that the metal on the fourth floor wouldn't really be seen and thought the different window proportions around the sides gave the building a lot of interest. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed, saying that he liked the horizontal line at the top and thought the metal was important. Ms. Ruedig said it was a very successful building and a good example of using historic language and traditional materials as well as blending contemporary materials to have a mix of the old and the new. Mr. Ryan said he thought the building was terrific. He asked whether the recessed panels for future art were brickwork and whether the art would be changed from time to time. Ms. Kozak said it could be anything and that they would leave it open.

Public Comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said he thought the mass, scale, and size were respectful to the zoning and that building was unique but also meshed with some of the old Portsmouth. He questioned whether the tilting awning windows would have outside screens and, if so, whether they would be a problem. Ms. Kozak said there would be no screen at all on the Pella tilt-out

window and that the screen on the other window would only be on the lower awning part. Chairman Lombardi and Mr. Shea agreed with Mr. Becksted that the screens on the tilting awning windows would be a problem.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and **approved** unanimously to **close** the work session.*

*Ms. Kozak indicated that she would enter into a **public hearing** at the January meeting.*

C. 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 November 8, 2017 meeting to the December 13, 2017 meeting.)*

Councilor Pearson recused herself from the work session.

The project architects Tracy Kozak and Mark Mueller of JSA Architects were present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. Ms. Kozak reviewed the packet. She noted that there was one correction, which was a cutback on the top floor for a deeper balcony. She reviewed several massing changes, noting that the Deer Street façade's third floor was pushed back and a cornice was lowered to four stories, the cornice on Maplewood Avenue was raised to four stories, a bump-out was eliminated on the back façade, and box bays and cut breaks were added into a 4th-floor cornice.

Ms. Kozak reviewed the floor and roof plans, elevation plans, window proportions, masonry and metal. She said the tower was lowered and the metal mesh was changed to a single steel lintel. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the composite metal looked like masonry. Mr. Mueller showed a sample of the system, and it was further discussed.

Ms. Kozak showed some window samples. Mr. Shea asked whether the windows were residential or commercial looking. The applicant said the building had a different aesthetic than Building 4 and would look better with residential windows, and that the windows were considerably smaller than Building 4 because it was mostly an apartment building.

In response to questions from Vice-Chair Wyckoff, Ms. Kozak said precast was used on the taller section on the VFW corner. Mr. Mueller said the maximum dimension of the block was 24 linear inches, that the tower portion would have vertical blocks, and that the rustication would be kept at the lower stories. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the stone was odd and suggested giving the corner a 1920s style look and continuing it up to make the building look like it was important. He said the composite could look like granite blocks. It was further discussed.

Mr. Ryan said he liked the massing and thought the building was artful and more traditional. He thought the tower didn't really do much and suggested putting some of the heavy steel and the canopy steel at the top. Ms. Ruedig agreed. She said the massing improved and thought the pushback of the fifth floor helped. She said the all-around simplicity was a big improvement but thought the building had further to go. She agreed that the tower was weak and should be more of a cornerstone. Mr. Shea said he appreciated that the fifth floor was pushed back but felt that five stories was too tall for that particular spot. He said the elevations were similar in height and style but boring. He said the entrance didn't look any different on the corner tower and needed to draw people in more, and he suggested a stronger canopy. He said he preferred the previous design with all the different window proportions. He suggested joining two floors or detail between window heights to break it up a little. He said he wished it was a 4-story building so that there wasn't a large wall created on the railroad side but appreciated that the building was made to appear shorter. Ms. Bolster said the tower was improved. Mr. Beer said he liked the cast stone on the first floor and liked the fifth floor held back. He questioned the lintels over the windows and said he didn't like the vertical brick below the precast at the top, suggesting that maybe something more interesting could be done, like corbeling.

Ms. Ruedig said that the section where the cornice line was broken looked like townhouses, and it was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it made sense to have the cornice continue. He said that wrapping the 4th-story cornice onto the tower and then going up another story almost made it look like there was an interjection placed on top of the tower and ruined the look of it. He agreed about the corbeling. Chairman Lombardi said the back bays looked like they were floating or just stuck on. He said the tower needed work and wasn't sure if the 4th-floor cornice was the problem. He said he liked the cornice being broken but preferred to see actual roof variation from the fourth floor.

Public Comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said that the mass and scale exceeded what was allowed. He said the building was still too tall and looked like a wall and felt that the same mistakes kept being repeated. He said the building needed to be respectful of its surroundings.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously **approved** to **close** the work session.*

*The applicant indicated that she would return for a **work session/public hearing** at the February meeting.*

D. Work Session requested by **KC Realty Trust, owner**, for property located at **84 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing cinder block rear addition) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new rear addition, renovate storefront) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 77 and lies within the CD 4,

Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the November 8, 2017 meeting to the December 13, 2017 meeting.)*

Councilor Pearson resumed her voting seat.

Jeremiah Johnson and Mark Gianniny of McHenry Architecture were present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. The owner of KC Realty Trust Keith Malinowski was also present. Mr. Johnson reviewed the property's history. He discussed the front façade, noting that a few refinements were made to the storefront's sign band and awning, that there would be two separate entries to the front façade, and that there was more detailing done around the doors. He discussed the structure at the Court Street and Church Street intersection. He noted that the single-story slope roof was the abutter's property and that he had to find out exactly where the property line fell but thought it was in the middle of the existing block wall. He discussed the gabled roofs and the recessed porch areas. He said the connection between the new building and the existing was made lighter and that the roof was lowered and noted that the elevation connected to the property line wouldn't have windows.

Mr. Cracknell suggested getting an easement from the abutter, and it was further discussed. Ms. Ruedig said she was okay with the front of the building and the storefronts but thought the rear addition was too much. She said she couldn't accept the roofline being taller or the same height as the front building. She said the rear addition looked like an urban village townhouse and suggested simplifying it. She said the structure shouldn't compete with the front of the building, especially in that location and that it also shouldn't compete with the South Church. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he disagreed and felt that the Greek revival style and rationale for the two roofs made sense. He thought that a few balconies or decks overlooking the South Church grounds would be wonderful. He said he didn't think the back portion competed with the front because it didn't read as an addition. He said the storefront seemed like a genetic one and thought the shape of the awning was awkward.

Mr. Shea said he liked the Pleasant Street façade and appreciated the entrance to the right because it reflected historically what was there before and he liked that it was recessed. He suggested bringing the glass line up on the storefront so that there wasn't so much banding. He thought snow could fall from the curved canopy and recommended a simpler one. He said the massing on a back was busy and the roof was complicated. He noted that all the surrounding buildings were simple massing and suggested simplifying the massing.

Ms. Bolster said the back of the building seemed more like the front of the building and that the shape of the roof and the balconies didn't feel right. She said the front facade canopy didn't seem right. Mr. Ryan agreed that the canopy wasn't right and suggested a more traditional one. He questioned why there wasn't a pediment over the restaurant entrance to match the other three. He said the back façade seemed fussy and formal and thought it could be more abstract. Mr. Beer and Councilor Pearson agreed. Ms. Ruedig said the concept of the back addition standing out would be a good one if there was a sidewalk and pedestrian presence on the street. Mr. Cracknell suggested some separation between the structures and a co-mingling of the 10-ft gap, which would leave the option to have windows for both owners. It was further discussed. Chairman Lombardi said he agreed with a lot of the comments and thought the addition had to be subsidiary to the front building and that the rooflines were awkward.

Public comment

Barbara Jenny said she and her husband owned the adjacent building, 92-94 Pleasant Street, and that they would eventually build something. She said they were fond of the original building and would work cooperatively with the applicant to coordinate the exterior. She submitted a design sketch to the Commission and said they would perhaps repeat the existing building.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and **approved** unanimously to **close** the work session.*

*The applicant indicated that they would **continue** the work session at the January 2018 meeting.*

E. Work Session requested by **James C. and Amy M. Baker, owners**, for property located at **75 Humphrey's Court**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish rear addition) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new rear addition, replace/relocate misc. doors and windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 37 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the November 8, 2017 meeting to the December 13, 2017 meeting.)*

Ms. Ruedig recused herself from the work session.

The project consultant Jennifer Ramsey was present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. She said the main issue was the metal roof, and she noted that all the abutters were in favor of it. She showed photos of neighborhood homes and mixed styles and said the metal roof was appropriate because the house was being modernized. She said they would match the roof to the garage roof. She reviewed the rest of the petition.

Mr. Shea said he liked metal roofs on certain homes but noted that the 1955 home would one day be an antique house and wouldn't represent 1955 if it had a metal roof on it. He also noted that the said the roof's color would change and would be harmed by hail storms. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the house was in an eclectic neighborhood and not really representative of the era, and the neighbors approved of the metal roof. Mr. Ryan said the metal roof was reversible, so he could support it. Councilor Pearson and Mr. Beer agreed. Ms. Bolster said she could see a metal roof on the garage but not on the house and thought it could set a precedent.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Ramsey briefly reviewed the rest of the petition. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he thought the front façade was successful. Mr. Shea said all the changes made it look like a coastal waterfront cottage instead of a 1950 Cape. He said the metal roof would probably look appropriate on the home but that the 1950s look would not be preserved.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously **approved** to **close** the work session.*

*The applicant indicated that she would **return** for a public hearing at the February 2018 meeting.*

F. Work Session requested by **Portsmouth Savings Bank/Bank of NH (TD Bank), owner**, for property located at **333 and 340 State Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lots 5 & 10 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This application was postponed at the November 8, 2017 meeting to the December 13, 2017 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously **passed** to **postpone** the work session indefinitely.*

IV. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS - CONTINUED)

Ms. Ruedig resumed her voting seat.

2. Work Session requested by **PNF Trust of 2013, Peter N. Floros, trustee and owner**, for property located at **278 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovation of an existing structure (to discuss rehabilitation options for 278 State Street and its relationship to future reconstruction of 266 & 270 State Street) 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.

Alice Montesaro and Walter Cheney were present to speak to the petition on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Cracknell briefly summarized that the BOA reached a compromise that the two street-facing facades be preserved and that the rest of the building could be demolished. He said that he felt there wasn't much point in removing the other two sides, so he met with the City Building Inspector and the Fire Department to discuss code requirements. He said Mr. Cheney took the feedback and developed floor plan options, one for two independent buildings and one that co-mingled the egress of stairwells and the elevator between the two buildings. Mr. Cracknell said he felt that the second option was the better solution for the code requirements. He said the new 4-story building's top floor would be compressed and that it had to be decided what type of roof it would have and how it would integrate with the existing 5-story building. He said the applicant needed reassurance that a 4-story form was acceptable. He said Mr. Cheney preferred to do a reconstruction of the 1900s building, including the storefront, but adding an extra story instead of a new design.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the new building might be able to get in at 45 feet. He said he was willing to preserve the façade of the brick building and bring back the original front façade without the dining room and use the arched windows as a compromise on the other building. He

said it was a great idea to co-mingle the exits, stairs, and elevator to accommodate the different floor heights. Ms. Ruedig said it would be acceptable to do several different options to recapture the original historic mass. She said they could do dormers or make a totally new-looking structure. Mr. Ryan agreed and said he thought two means of egress would have to have a certain distance. It was further discussed. Mr. Shea said he liked the idea of trying to reproduce what was there and adding another floor to it. He said he preferred to see the Italianate details and the storefront brought back into the new building rather than a modern building, should the corner be reproduced. Chairman Lombardi agreed. He said the window patterns were important and hoped the top-level windows were retained and that the first floor had a high ceiling.

Mr. Cheney said he thought they could accomplish that the Commission wanted if they could come back with something in the 50-ft height range. Chairman Lombardi said that part of the defining aspects of the corner was the tall building and shorter building. Mr. Cracknell noted that the Provident Bank did a 4-story building that was 45 feet in height. He said that going to 50 feet would be premature for the Board, knowing that 45 feet could support a new construction building at four stories. He said the ridge of the hip roof might be 50 feet but that it was 30 feet from the windows, so the windows could probably survive. It was further discussed.

Mr. Cheney said it was possible to keep the windows and still go up or recess. He said the floor levels almost went through the windows and didn't meet code. He asked whether there could be a way to keep the existing building and adjust the floors so that there could still be five floors that didn't go through the middle of the window. Mr. Cracknell said the windows wouldn't move and the floors would remain where they were, and that the Commission and the applicant would all work together to connect the two buildings. He said the outer skin of the existing building would stay the same, repaired but not altered.

Public comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street thanked the applicant for working with the City, the Commission and the Planning Department and that he looked forward to seeing what they would create. He said the community was behind them 100 percent.

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

Mr. Cracknell recommended that the Commission support that the buildings be co-mingled to meet the code requirements to restore the Times building with all four walls and that the new building go to four stories as allowed under the new zoning. He said the roof style could be any number of styles and the building style could be traditional or modern but it was preferred that it be a reconstruction. He said the massing concerns should be dealt with sensitively, with respect to the upper floor of the Times Building and how it interfaced with the new building.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to have a resolution of support with the following stipulations:

- 1. Both the destroyed building located at 266 and 270 State Street and the fire-damaged, historically-significant structure located at 278 State Street should be considered and*

designed as part of an integrated development that shares or pools egress and other fire protection or life safety requirements in order to minimize cost as well as maximize efficiency and the volume of storefront space along the sidewalks;

2. *It is both expected and supported that the height of the proposed new building at 266 and 270 State Street will be increased to 4 stories as part of the need to maintain a similar gross floor area of the buildings previously destroyed or damaged by the April 2017 fire event as well as be generally consistent with the allowed building height under the recently-adopted character-based zoning for this property;*
3. *The roof style for the proposed new building at 266 and 270 State Street may be flat, a shallow hip, or a mansard roof in order to address the massing issues with the abutting structures adjacent the upper, 4th story;*
4. *The HDC supports the Applicant's desire to reconstruct the destroyed Italianate-style building (c. 1870) at 266 and 270 State Street with an added 4th story. Importantly, the HDC supports the reconstruction of the storefronts to be consistent with the original building design; and*
5. *The massing of the proposed new building at 266 and 270 State Street shall be carefully designed to address the massing and scale issues associated with the interface of the proposed new building and its roofline with the taller Times Building as well as the roofline on the adjacent, historically-significant, structure located at 84 Pleasant Street.*

*Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

Mr. Cheney said he would consider the Commission's recommendations.

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0) to **continue** the work session to the January meeting.*

V. ADJOURNMENT

*At 10:30 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on January 3, 2018.