

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

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**6:30 p.m.**

**January 10, 2018  
reconvened from January 3, 2018**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice Chairman Jon Wyckoff; City Council Representative Doug Roberts; Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig, Martin Ryan; and Alternates Molly Bolster, Cyrus Beer

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Richard Shea

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

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Chairman Lombardi stated that Work Session B, 278 State Street, was postponed.

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

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS**

**1. 280 Marcy Street**

Ms. Ruedig recused herself from the vote.

Mr. Cracknell stated that the handicap ramp would be moved to the rear of the meeting house and that the existing ramp would be removed.

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed (7-0) to **grant** the Administrative Approval.*

**2. 142 State Street**

Ms. Ruedig resumed her voting seat.

Mr. Cracknell stated that it was a multiple chimney replacement in kind and that the issue was whether the mortar should be bright white or dyed. The Commission discussed it and agreed to do the treatment option to match the existing condition.

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

*That it be treated to match the existing color of the building.*

## II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS - CONTINUED)

The Commission decided to have a work session before the public hearing.

1. Petition of **Simchik-McGovern III, LLC, owner**, for property located at **8 Bow Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replacement/addition of skylights, addition of third floor window, addition of mechanical units) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 22 and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

### WORK SESSION

The project architects Jeremiah Johnson and Steve McHenry of McHenry Architecture were present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. Mr. Johnson reviewed the petition and pointed out a few changes, including that the trim pieces to the skylights matched the roof color and that mechanical units were added in the back alley. He said that a few condensers would be removed, that five units would be wall-mounted in yet-to-be-determined locations, and that a square condenser and possibly the fire escape would be removed.

The additional third-floor window was discussed. Mr. Rawling read an excerpt from the HDC's preservation standards, noting that the historic design, placement, and arrangement of the windows should be maintained and preserved. He remarked that the Commission had allowed quite a few reconfigurations of the building and that they also approved a window on another prominent façade. He said the façade in question was a very prominent one and felt that the additional window should not be approved. Mr. Ryan said he didn't have a problem approving the window, considering that the Commission had approved the other one, and that he didn't see much of a difference in that location. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed with Mr. Ryan and said he felt that the window was placed in a proper location and would be a positive addition that wouldn't really affect the historical nature of the building, the intersection, or the nearby buildings. Ms. Ruedig agreed that the window was perfectly designed to match the other windows and would fit in nicely, but she noted that the preservation standards did indicate that the building should be treated differently. She said she felt that the skylights were appropriate, however, and noted that they were reversible. Chairman Lombardi agreed that the window addition would not meet the preservation guidelines. It was further discussed.

There was no public comment.

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously **approved** (7-0) to close the work session and go into the public hearing.*

Chairman Lombardi read the petition into the record.

### SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Johnson briefly reviewed the petition. He asked the Commission to bifurcate the vote.

Mr. Rawling said he supported the skylights and HVAC units, but not the additional window.

### **SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

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

### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **bifurcate** Items 2 and 3, the skylights and condensers, and to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for those items. Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded.*

Ms. Ruedig stated that the skylights and condensers were consistent with the design of the building and that the mechanical units were consistent with what was already in the alley.

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

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for Item 1, the additional third-floor window, and Mr. Ryan seconded.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he felt that the window was appropriate for the building, was an appropriate style, and was properly located directly above the second-story windows.

*The motion **failed** by a vote of 4-3, with Chairman Lombardi, Mr. Rawling, Ms. Ruedig, and Ms. Bolster voting in opposition.*

### **III. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)**

A. 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 continued at the December 13, 2017 meeting to the January 10, 2018 meeting.)*

The project architects Jeremiah Johnson and Steve McHenry of McHenry Architects were present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. Mr. McHenry reviewed the petition, noting that the abutter offered to tie her property into the project. He said they would create a renovation similar to the rest of the block. He reviewed some massing studies and noted that there was general support for Scheme A at the previous work session. He discussed the Pleasant Street façade. Ms. Ruedig asked whether the main entrance would service all the units, and Mr. McHenry agreed. He said that the non-compliant staircase on the center unit would be removed.

The Church Street façade was discussed. Mr. McHenry said he incorporated the abutter's suggestion about creating a mirror image of the building next to it. Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that the pediment above the door was left off the new entry to the upstairs and thought it would

make a big difference in preventing snow and rain from dripping onto someone. Mr. McHenry said the door was recessed and that the pediment was probably just a trim pediment.

Mr. Rawling said the improvements to the building were good but felt that there were a lot of extra, unnecessary things going on with the storefront and suggested that the storefront be simplified by modeling it more on the green storefront to the left of it. He also suggested matching the transom to the larger transom. It was further discussed. Mr. Ryan suggested that the trim turn the corner slightly by the end door. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and said he was satisfied with the storefront configuration but felt that the gray panel detracted from it and suggested that a solid color would blend in better. Chairman Lombardi said the end door looked flat and needed something.

Mr. McHenry showed massing views and treatments of the Church Street façade. Ms. Ruedig said she could not support the Greek revival option (Version A) because it looked very out of place and out of character in that location and felt that the flat roof version was more appropriate. She said that replicating a historic style wasn't appropriate for a new building, and she encouraged something simpler. Mr. Rawling said he favored the gable roof approach because the structure was an independent one that didn't have to relate to the existing structure. He said that it didn't need to be subordinate in height to the existing building and was concerned about introducing a boarding house look. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and said he preferred the low-pitched roofs. The ventilation equipment was discussed. Mr. McHenry said the equipment would not interfere with the residential units above them but would be installed on the roof.

Mr. Ryan said he liked the dormers and didn't think the building had to be an exact image of what was on the corner of Pleasant and Court Streets. He said he didn't care much for the pediments and felt that the dormers seemed more traditional to what would have existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It was further discussed. Chairman Lombardi said he liked several options, including the flat roof and the box, and that he wasn't a fan of pediments. The flat roof approach was further discussed. Ms. Ruedig said she preferred the 21<sup>st</sup> Century look.

### **Public Comment**

James Woodhouse said he was the owner of Louie's Restaurant and that he and his business associates were anxious to get the restaurant running again. He said the proposed plans were slightly different than what was in their lease and that he would be happy to discuss it.

Paige Trace of 27 Hancock Street said it seemed that the pitched roofline allowed the project to go ahead independently of the second party. She encouraged the project to let Louie's re-open instead of waiting forever. She noted that some greenspace would disappear if the building was mirrored to the one next to it and that the massing the abutter might propose could create a big wall on Court Street. She asked that the project not look at the second section until the abutter made a decision.

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 (7-0) to **continue** to work session to the February meeting.*

B. 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. *(This item was continued at the December 13, 2017 meeting to the January 10, 2018 meeting.)*

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

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

#### **IV. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS - CONTINUED)**

C. Work Session requested by **James C. Lucy Revocable Living Trust, James C. and Kimberley A. Lucy, trustees and owners**, for property located at **127 & 137 High Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct rear additions to both structures) and allow a new free standing structure (construct single family dwelling at rear of #137) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations to both structures) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lots 20 and 21 and lies within the CD 4-L1, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

The designer Brendan McNamara and the owner James Lucy were present to speak to the petition. Mr. McNamara reviewed the petition, noting that it was a redevelopment proposal but less voluminous than the previous one and still built around the restoration of the red house. He said the two lots would be joined together and that the new house at the rear would assume the identity of a converted stable.

Mr. McNamara discussed the 137 High Street renovations in detail, including the number of units, the rear building, and the demolition of the existing rear addition on the red house. He noted that the second-floor roofline was minimized. Ms. Ruedig said she appreciated the roofline and the massing. Mr. Rawling said he was uncomfortable with the shed dormers, and it was further discussed, as well as whether or not to put an addition on the red building.

Mr. McNamara said the main building was formalized and that the rear building concept was not in competition with anything else. Mr. Ryan said he felt it was competing because it was distinct and looked like a separately-owned piece of property. Mr. Rawling said the carriage house was a stylistic take-off from the main residence, noting that it didn't have overhangs and the roof form was different in appearance. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was happy with the massing but thought that it felt a bit long and suggested moving toward a more traditional English barn shape

with a central door instead of an 1890s stable. Ms. Ruedig remarked that the coach house and the stable were creating a history to the property that didn't exist. She said the building's height still seemed high and asked if it were possible to use the grade to make the building go down in height. Mr. McNamara said that it could be cut back to a more traditional grade.

Chairman Lombardi said it was a residence and not a carriage house. The design was discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he wouldn't support a contemporary building in that location. Mr. McNamara said the project could remove the look of a stable and go to a more residential look. Mr. Rawling said he liked the concept of the carriage house form in the neighborhood. Mr. Ryan said he commended the project and thought the typology was perfect and that the main house and the subservient structures made sense.

Mr. McNamara reviewed the 127 High Street proposal and discussed the window configuration in detail. Mr. Rawling said he thought the additional windows were fine but thought it could read better as a porch addition. Ms. Ruedig said she appreciated that there was a decent number of windows rather than just a big wall.

### **Public Comment**

Paige Trace of 27 Hancock Street said she was a member of the NH Colonial Dames and oversaw the Moffett Ladd House and Gardens. She said the two lots would be made into a new property when they were co-joined and would be subject to current zoning laws. She said the project previously went before the Board of Adjustment (BOA) and that there was a density issue due to the number of units, and that the new density would be even greater. She suggested that the Legal Department consider whether the properties had to be joined before the project was approved. She said the small driveway would make it difficult for emergency access and pointed out that there was no other single parcel in the area with three residential structures on it.

Barbara Ward of 16 Nixon Park said she was the Director and Curator of the Moffett Ladd House and that she thought it had been established that 127 High Street was historic. She said there had never been anything on the back of the two properties other than a privy. She also noted the importance of not disturbing the property's archaeological significance. She read excerpts from a letter by Peter Michaud and concluded that the project needed a variance.

Richard Candee of the Portsmouth Historical Society said that the methodology of the carriage house was wrong because historic carriage houses were for the homes of the elite on huge properties. He said that 137 High Street might have had a back building but it would have been of a much lesser scale, and he thought it might be better to just make it look like a house. He said that the two windows on the driveway side of 127 High Street were inappropriate and that there would historically be chimneys up the back wall.

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said there was a process that had to be followed and that the HDC guidelines referred to it. He noted that the Commission received three handouts that evening that should have been submitted 17 days prior to the meeting, and that no one watching at home could see them. He said it wasn't fair to the public or to the other boards.

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

Mr. McNamara said he wouldn't be at the meeting if he thought he couldn't get approval from the BOA. He said he believed that the only issue was the narrow space between the buildings.

Chairman Lombardi noted that the Commission received an overwhelming amount of documentation that wasn't available for review beforehand and said it was difficult to absorb and was also confusing. Mr. Cracknell stated that work sessions required documentation a week in advance, not 17 days, but agreed that there was a higher amount of documentation presented at the work session than normal. Relating to the zoning compliance issues, he said he would look at the data and discuss the merger issue with the Legal department. He said the driveway might be a non-issue as far as zoning. He encouraged the applicant to communicate with his abutters before the next meeting so that they had a better understanding of the issues.

## **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

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

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

*At 9:40 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 Feb. 14, 2018.