

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

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**6:30 p.m.**

**January 02, 2019**

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

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** N/A

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department and Peter Stith, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously to **re-elect** Vincent Lombardi as Chairman and Jon Wyckoff as Vice-Chair.*

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously to **postpone** Work Sessions A and B to the February 6, 2019 meeting.*

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. December 05, 2018

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously to **approve** the December 5, 2018 minutes as amended.*

**II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS**

**A. 442 Middle Street**

The request was for a second air condenser under the rear deck, with the conduit running on the building's exterior until the siding was replaced.

**B. 24 Johnson Court**

The request was to replace the existing rear wooden deck with a pvc deck and railing system.

**C. 129 Market Street- WITHDRAWN**

**D. 501 Islington Street**

The request was to change the stucco siding on the penthouse to a metal panel finish and to change the aluminum railing to a wood one. Ms. Ruedig commented that there were no specifications or images of the proposed metal panel. Mr. Cracknell recommended that the petitioner submit photos of the panel and the railing at the January 9 meeting.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **postpone** the item to the January 9, 2019 meeting, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

#### **E. 177 State Street**

The request was to add a wood elevator door on the roof and three copper wall sconces for lighting. Architect Jeremiah Johnson was present on behalf of the applicant said the lighting would be hooked up to the gas system.

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote to **approve** Items A, B, and E.*

### **III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)**

A. *(Work Session/Public Hearing)* **Petition of Frank G. Heitker Revocable Trust Agreement, Frank G. Heitker Trustee, owner**, for property located at **37 Sheafe Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct second story addition over the existing kitchen at the rear of the structure and enlarge the existing mudroom) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 107 as Lot 19 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD 4) and Historic Districts.

#### **WORK SESSION**

The project architect Jeremiah Johnson was present on behalf of the applicant. He showed a sample of the requested window and reviewed the petition. He said the applicant did not want to center a particular door and that a box bay window was proposed. He provided more detailing on how to drain the rear second-floor patio. In response to the Commission's questions, Mr. Johnson said he had not contacted the Inspection Department about the fact that there was no landing coming off the door but would try to get permission for the existing granite step. He said the north elevation made of all wood siding would meet the City's fire code.

Ms. Ruedig said the box bay window was better than the previous oriel one but that she still had concerns because it was on the façade of the house and was a big change. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the purpose was to get seating, and Mr. Johnson said it was just a tight space. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the window's projection was too much and recommended a simpler box bay. Mr. Rawling agreed about the window's depth but said he would accept it because it was tucked back. He said the window sample was different from what was previously discussed but that he would accept it because it closely matched the other windows, even though it wasn't an appropriate window on a historic house. He said he liked the new door.

Mr. Beer said he was concerned about the water detail on the porch and potential rotting. Mr. Johnson said another downspout could be added, and it was further discussed. Mr. Ryan said the window placement on the second floor worked and that the projecting bay window would have to go at least 16-20 inches to give it some function. Chairman Lombardi said he liked all the changes except for the bay window because it was inconsistent with the simple house. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that the bay window was a design that was seen a lot in the south end and thought that it did serve a function. He said the shallower depth would allow a single angle shed-type roof over the window. He said the presented roof looked awkward and suggested minimizing the window's impact. The Commission discussed whether the window should go out eight or ten inches. Mr. Ryan suggested a shallower cap. Ms. Ruedig said the bay window had become complicated because it really didn't belong on the façade of the house. Vice-Chair Wyckoff pointed out that it was a hidden view.

There was no public comment. Chairman Lombardi closed the work session.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Mr. Johnson reviewed the petition briefly and said the box bay window could be removed and that his client could return with a different plan if desired. He also suggested a stipulation that the revised detail at the recessed back patio could return as an Administrative Approval item. He noted that a total of three windows would be added if the box bay wasn't done.

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

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

## **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application with the following stipulations:*

1. The box bay window shall be removed and the existing Double Hung window, remain.
2. The recessed deck shall be further detailed and submitted for administrative approval.
3. The windows shall use half screens.

*Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project would maintain the character of the District, complement the architectural and historic character, and conserve the property values by cleaning up the area. He said it would also relate to the historic and architectural values of existing structures.

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

## **IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)**

1. Work Session/Public Hearing 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 is 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 properties are shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lots 20 and 21 and lie within the Character District 4-L1 (CD 4-L1), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts.

## **WORK SESSION**

The project designer Brendan McNamara was present on behalf of the applicant. He noted that the project had received approval from the Board of Adjustment (BOA). He said the major change was substituting the rear addition's paneling with clapboard. He discussed the new railing system, trim details, and windows. He showed an example of the brick that would be used for the chimney and discussed the stone veneer for the foundation.

Ms. Ruedig said it was hard to imagine what the massing would look like because there were no viewpoints from a human perspective. Mr. McNamara explained how they had gone as low as they could go. Mr. Rawling said that all the pieces were smaller in scale. Mr. Ryan said he appreciated the changes to the back of the 127 High Street structure and thought it was beautifully detailed, with nice materials. He said he liked the density that the three buildings brought to the site. Chairman Lombardi said the project had improved significantly.

## **Public Comment**

Barbara Ward of 16 Nixon Park said she was the Director and Curator of the Moffett-Ladd House and was concerned about the archaeological sensitivity of the 127 High Street property. She said the driveway, patio and deck would require deep digging. She said the area was mostly ledge and that the site was important to the Black Heritage and Women's History Trails. She noted that the applicant had said that he would never do anything archaeological because of the cost.

Paige Trace of 27 Hancock Street said she thought there would be problems with storm water runoff and drainage, which could potentially be a legal issue. She said there was more structure than property and that the water would continue to go downhill if there was ledge.

Barbara Ward said the Colonial Dames had appealed to the Superior Court regarding the BOA's decision and that it went in on December 19.

Richard Shea of 19 Howard Street said he thought the massing and detail were right on the money and that the design was good, even though drainage issues needed to be worked out.

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

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to go into the public hearing.*

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

The project designer Brendan McNamara was present on behalf of the applicant and reviewed the petition. He said that he hadn't known that the project was appealed to Superior Court. He said the storm water issues would go before the Planning Board and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). He said he believed that there was ledge on the property but that a large portion of what was currently a parking lot was filled and that the digging would not go that deep. He said that his client would support archaeological studies once the project was approved.

Ms. Ruedig said the design was more appropriate than when the project began many years before. She said the current home's restoration was important and would be a huge improvement for the area, and that the new construction was smaller but the back of the building was still tall and technically smaller than the bigger building. She said she was still also concerned about the archaeological issue because the area was historically sensitive, especially due to the significance of the 127 High Street property. She said it was imperative that there be some archaeology done on the site. She noted that the driveway had been disturbed, and she thought the archaeology study might find other disturbed areas. She said the Commission had asked for archaeology studies on other projects. She proposed a stipulation that there be an archaeological study done on the site because of its significance and highly sensitive area, as well as the amount of work and digging that was necessary. She further explained what the study would involve and said it would include a Phase One survey if sensitive areas were found four inches down.

The Commission discussed whether requesting a survey was within the HDC's purview and whether the Commission should have better laws regarding archaeology. Chairman Lombardi said he was concerned about the groundwater runoff and the non-permeability of the area but trusted that TAC would address and test it. Mr. McNamara said the owner didn't want to pay for an archeological dig but would consider providing a timeframe for access to the property, like a 60-day access period. Ms. Ruedig said she still felt that a survey would be needed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the 60-day access should be discussed between the Legal Department and the applicant. Mr. Ryan said he felt uncomfortable putting the requirement on the owner and asked what the parameters would be. It was further discussed. Mr. Rawling noted that the HDC had approved many renovations and asked whether it was in their purview to single out the applicant's property for specific requirements. It was further discussed.

City Council Representative Roberts suggested a stipulation that open access be allowed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that there was a lot of interest in the property and said he supported a Phase One survey. Mr. Cracknell said he thought it was within the HDC's purview to require the study. Mr. Beer said he thought the study should be a suggestion instead of a requirement. Mr. Ryan said he wanted to be more informed about what was required and what areas of the City were sensitive if the HDC was going to force people to do an archaeological study.

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

Barbara Ward of 16 Nixon Park stated that there was enabling legislation passed by the New Hampshire House after the HarborCorp project stating that an archaeological study could be required based on the ordinances in effect. She also noted that ground penetration studies were helpful. She said the property was a nationally significant site and recommended having an archaeologist on site.

Paige Trace of 27 Hancock Street said she belonged to the Colonial Dames and believed that the owner of a historic property had a responsibility to be a good caretaker. She asked how the Commission felt voting on a house that was kind of two halves that straddled two separate lots. She said the third structure was very close to what was likely a granite ledge, very tall and out of proportion. Mr. Cracknell said it was usually approved with a stipulation and would be contingent on a lot merger after being approved by the appropriate party.

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

## **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Cracknell read the stipulations.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application with the following stipulations:*

1. A phase 1 archaeological survey shall be prepared by a certified archeologist and it shall be submitted for administrative approval prior to construction. At that time, the Historic District Commission shall evaluate the study and its recommendations and potentially require further study or action at the sole discretion of the Commission.
2. Historic District Commission approval is contingent on a lot merger being approved by the City.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded.*

Ms. Ruedig said the design package was very well done and that the details were fantastic. She said the Commission was requesting the additional archaeological work because the site was such a well-known, sensitive nationally significant one. She said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and add to the conservation and enhancement of property values. She said the design was compatible with surrounding properties.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff concurred with Ms. Ruedig and added that, after so many years, the applicant had a good project. He said the Commission was looking at mostly an above-ground application and that he was willing to accept the stipulation for a Phase One study.

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

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

A. Work Session requested by **Margot L. Thompson, owner**, for property located at **57 Salter Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction and exterior renovations to an existing structure on the property (the replacement of windows and doors, the addition of a new dormer to match the existing dormer and relocation of exterior stairs) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 102 as Lot 32 and lies within the Waterfront Business (WB) and Historic Districts.

B. Work Session requested by **Henderson Living Trust, Norman and Eliz Henderson Trustees, owners**, for property located at **325 Marcy Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (the replacement of twenty one existing windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 102 as Lot 12 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts.

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to postpone the two work sessions to the February 6, 2019 meeting.*

## VI. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

Mr. Cracknell recused himself as Planning Department Representative, and Peter Stith assumed his seat.

A. Work Session requested by **The Estate of Bernard A. & Elsie Hollings, owners**, and **Nicholas Cracknell & Lisa Koppelman, applicants**, for property located **11 Meeting House Hill Road**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct a 2 ½ story addition to existing garage and 1 story connector to existing home) and to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 103 as Lot 59 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts.

Present were the applicants Nicholas Cracknell and Lisa Koppelman, the owner Elsie Hollings, the project architect Richard Shea, and the broker Sandra Dika. Mr. Cracknell reviewed the project goals. He stated that the 1790 Captain Drisco House would be restored. He said the 2-1/2 story addition was new construction but was intended to be a partial reconstruction of the house that used to be on the corner but burned down. He said the two properties were involuntarily merged by the City, and the goal was to convert the Drisco House back to a single-family home and put the second unit on the other structure. He reviewed the existing conditions and the neighborhood context map, noting that 70% of the properties were single-family homes, 20% were two-family homes, and the remaining 10% were multi-family homes or other uses. He said the property coverage was 40%, which was higher than the two properties surrounding it, but that the neighborhood was a highly integrated one. He noted that the garage and an outbuilding were the only non-contributing structures in the National Register District neighborhood.

Mr. Shea said the project's inspiration was to mirror the original structure in scale but also add 10-1/2 feet to the left side elevation. He said they decided on the barn feel for the parking and felt that it fit the neighborhood. He reviewed window sizes and textures, pointing out that all textures would be natural cedar shingles. He reviewed the elevation facing Manning Street,



noting that they wanted a small shed dormer on the top floor. He said they tried to minimize the windows on the back elevation to give the abutter privacy. He discussed the connector to the two buildings and reviewed the floor plans.

Ms. Ruedig said she was concerned that the addition would overwhelm the Drisco House because it was so big, was on the corner, and had a connector. She was also concerned about the dormer windows facing Manning Street and suggested a simpler dormer. She said she had no major concerns with the design. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the existing garage had design problems and could use a rebuild that would be appropriate for the Drisco House. He said that the fact that the garage was connected to the Drisco House spoiled everything structure-wise. He said the addition's massing was totally inappropriate and couldn't believe a structure of that size was proposed at that particular location. Mr. Rawling said he was fine with the massing and felt that the barn style approach was the right one. He explained why the detailing could be simplified. He said the attachment didn't trouble him because barns were frequently connected in the past, and he felt that the attachment had such a deep recess that it wasn't seen by someone looking up and down the street. He recommended that the second-floor window over the dormers be improved by raising the head height over it to create a more interesting rhythm. He recommended changing the 8/8 window to a different fenestration pattern to resemble the doors a bit more. He said if the canopy overhead was an access, the canopy wouldn't be there, but he thought it created some interest and broke up the mass.

City Council Representative Roberts said the massing was difficult. He said the tall building on a high point of the Hill would make it look even bigger, and he was concerned about having three garage doors on a building that large. Mr. Beer said he liked the design but thought the addition would stand out and be the focal point of the neighborhood. He said the 3-bay garage wasn't something he saw anywhere else in that neighborhood, and that he liked the idea of the barn and the hayloft but hadn't seen similar dormers elsewhere in the neighborhood. Mr. Ryan said it was a strong building for a corner lot, which he thought was good for an urban gesture. He said he didn't mind the connector because it could barely be seen. He said the addition stood on its own, almost like a commercial building or like the neighborhood's blacksmith shop. He said he liked the design because it was very textured and nicely done. He agreed that the massing was large but felt that there was a precedent for what used to be there. He suggested putting human scale figures in the renderings to get a more accurate idea of the addition's size.

Chairman Lombardi said the massing was large and thought the existing garage didn't stand up to the house in any way. He thought the massing was fine on the corner and that the barn influence was great. He said the multiple garage doors were fine because the building looked barn-like and barns had multiple doors. He suggested that the returns on the roofline be simplified. He said he had no problem with the dormers facing the Drisco House but wasn't sure about the dormers facing Manning Street. He liked the shed roofs over the doors. Ms. Ruedig said they were a nice contemporary touch. The dormers were further discussed.

Mr. Shea concluded that the Commission was 50-50 on the massing and that there were some negatives about the 3-door garage. Mr. Cracknell said the connector would not be seen because it was set back and that he wanted to keep it because of the two-family structure and said it would also provide parking for the Drisco House in perpetuity. Ms. Ruedig said she had initial concerns



with the connector but then realized that it was pretty set back. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he wasn't objecting to the connector *per se* but had a problem regarding its function with the Drisco House. He said everyone seemed willing to accept the new structure as a barn, but he thought it looked like a large, contemporary structure stuck on to a very old, small Colonial. He said it would look like a beacon at night when it was lit up.

Mr. Cracknell then announced that he had a Plan B and distributed it to the Commission. Mr. Shea said he spoke to some direct abutters, some of whom were concerned about the size of the addition and the quality of light. He said that he and Mr. Cracknell considered something a bit smaller to minimize the overall size impact, and that Plan B brought the structure in about three feet and didn't allow a third parking garage. He said the overall height would drop 18 inches but would still have a similar look. He said the connector would remain.

The Commission discussed the new plan. Mr. Rawling said the design looked like a version of the existing garage and was significantly less attractive proportionally. Ms. Ruedig agreed and said that 18 inches was not a noticeable difference. She said separating the doors in that manner turned the structure into a garage instead of a standalone barn structure. Chairman Lombardi said the new design went back toward the old garage and felt that the building read better as a larger building. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he preferred the building size in Plan B. Mr. Ryan said he preferred Plan A because the industrial feeling of the building was lost in Plan B. City Council Representative Roberts said he preferred the smaller size because of its proportions but felt that there was something off about it. He suggested toning down the larger building and reducing the impact of the five windows. Mr. Beer said he still had the same concerns about the barn being the focal point of the neighborhood, especially at the top of the hill. Mr. Cracknell asked if the dormer would read better as two smaller ones. Chairman Lombardi said it would look cluttered. Vice-Chair Wyckoff explained why the dormers looked odd, and it was further discussed.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chris Brodeur of 51 Manning Street said he lived behind the property and thought the addition seemed too big and would eliminate his sunlight and block his view.

Peter Whelan of 100 Gates Street said the proposed structure's scale and massing were too big and would ruin the other historic houses that were focal points of the neighborhood. He said the views from walking up Manning Street would change. He said the Drisco House should be the center point rather than the building on the corner and thought the size and massing of the addition would fit the neighborhood better if it were in the same footprint as the current garage.

Ken Sullivan of 40 Howard Street said he liked Plan A because it fit in with the mixed massing in the neighborhood. He noted that the original house was even bigger. He said the barn idea worked better for the neighborhood and that squeezing it down to two doors would take away from the architectural aspect.

Peter Harris of 48 Manning Street said his gambrel faced the proposed structure and that he was opposed to its mass because it would block his sunlight and views. He noted that the five dormers would face his windows and affect his privacy. He said the proposed structure didn't

architecturally match the houses in the neighborhood and felt that his house, which had a significant presence on the Hill, would get lost because of the structure's mass.

Esther Kennedy of 41 Pickering Avenue said she was disappointed that Plan B was presented without being posted on the website. She said the Commission's mission was to consider how the project would affect the historic houses and thought it wasn't right that a brand new barn would be the second focal point of the neighborhood.

Megan Harris of 48 Manning Street said she was concerned about the massing and felt that the size and location of Plan A could overpower the corner. She suggested a simpler façade. Paige Trace of 27 Hancock Street said she agreed that Plan A would overpower the neighborhood as well as diminish another neighbor's first-period house. She said the Drisco House should be restored but not at the expense of a 3-car garage that was so tall and had shed dormers and was disrespectful to the existing neighborhood.

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said the Commission should focus on blending the structure into the neighborhood instead of having it make a statement. He said the double windows would make the structure starker and make the gable the focal point instead of the home. He said the structure should have a chimney to blend in with the neighborhood.

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 to **continue** the work session to the February 6, 2019 meeting.*

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to **adjourn** the meeting at 10:12 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
HDC Recording Secretary