

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6:30 p.m.

**August 14, 2019
Reconvened from
August 07, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice-Chairman Jon Wyckoff; City Council Representative Doug Roberts; Members Dan Rawling, Martin Ryan, Reagan Ruedig; Alternates Heinz Sauk-Schubert and Margot Doering

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cyrus Beer

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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Chairman Lombardi noted that the applicant for the 14 Mechanic Street petition work session requested that it be postponed.

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to **postpone** the work session to the September 11, 2019 meeting.*

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 124 State Street

Mr. Cracknell stated that the item was broken up into two components. He said the second component was a request for three condensers at the rear of the building, and the first component was more complicated because the request was to convert wooden sills and lintels to granite, and some of the lintels were thin and covered up the brick.

Mr. Rawling said the Commission had approved granite in the past, but he was concerned about altering the significant construction method that was used on the building. He asked if there was a way to do a steel lintel with wood overlay that would represent the appearance. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed. Ms. Ruedig also agreed that granite would change the look of the building and its details. Mr. Ryan said he preferred the granite because it was more of an authentic detail. Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that the exposed brick wasn't original. It was further discussed, and the Commissioners agreed that the sills and lintels should be repaired in kind with wood.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the location of the condensers (Part 2 of the request) and **deny** Part 1 of the request for granite to replace the wood sills and lintels, stating that the sills and lintels on the front of the building should be replaced in kind with wood.*

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

Mr. Cracknell stated that a building permit for the demolition or restoration of Creek Farm had not been applied for as yet and that he would keep the Commission apprised.

II. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

C. Work Session requested by **PNF Trust of 2013, Peter N. Floros Trustee**, owner, for property located at **266-278 State Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (278 State Street) and new construction to an existing structure (4-5 story addition at 266 & 270 State Street) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is located on Assessor Map 107 as Lots 78, 79 & 80 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD 4), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the July 17, 2019 meeting to the August, 2019 meeting.)*

The project architect Michael Keane was present on behalf of the applicant. He said he had considered the Commission's previous comments by giving the façade a more visual interest and moving it away from a reproduction piece, making the storefronts glassier and lightening up the frame, adding an entrance at the corner of Pleasant and State Streets, shortening the railing across the top, and adding another top rail to reduce the height of the balustrade. He said the Times Square building looked more authentic because they embellished the entrance and connection on the Pleasant Street façade.

Ms. Doering said the new version made her smile because there was something very different about it. Mr. Rawling said he liked all the storefront improvements but thought they could be a little glassier. He said the fenestration patterns were varied but still orderly. He was surprised to see the differences from the previous design, noting that the peak dormers seemed to be set inside the tabature and pilasters. He said the sharp peaked forms weren't one of his favorite elements in town but thought they added an extra layer of texture and rhythm. He thought the railings could be simplified more and suggested having a strong horizontal cap on the pilaster and placing the extra rail on top. He said that presenting them more as solid rectangles within sections of railings would give it more of a horizontal emphasis. He also noted that the relationship between the garage doors and the pedestrian door on the west elevation was awkward. Mr. Ryan said he agreed that the design was less safe and more interesting, and thought it would look richer when the applicant figured out how the rakes of the dormers met the cornice. He said the top rail was spot on and the penthouse didn't bother him because he didn't think it would be seen from ground level. He said the project was going in a good direction.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he agreed that the gables on the fourth floor were a little narrow at the base and didn't seem to have anything to do with the pilasters coming up, but felt that it would present an opportunity to fill in the bays going up between the pilasters with a different siding material as opposed to the picture windows almost in-between the pilasters. He said he liked the first floor, especially the appearance of an awning over the storefront windows, which he hoped would be heavy construction so that they looked real. He liked the extra door on the corner of Pleasant Street and thought the small entry between the two buildings worked. He said the windows looked stuffed in but could be worked on and wasn't sure about the railing.

Ms. Ruedig said she felt like different things were being thrown at the building to see what stuck. She thought the gables would make the building more interesting but wished they had been developed at the beginning to make a stronger, holistic design. She wanted to ensure that the door and window materials were quality and not fake-looking. She felt that the Commission was looking at the building in a bit of a vacuum because they hadn't been shown many street views to consider the surroundings. She suggested that the building's design be placed in the City's 3D model to see if it fit within its context. City Council Representative Roberts agreed that the building needed to be looked at in context but felt that it would fit in.

Chairman Lombardi said the gables confused him at first but that he liked the design better and thought it was different, even though the elements were seen in several houses in Portsmouth. He said the storefronts had improved and thought the railing was going in the right direction. He agreed that seeing the whole streetscape was important. He said he didn't like picture windows in general but thought they were alright because of the gable ends. He agreed that the windows were crowded on the Pleasant Street side near the entranceway, and he was glad to see an entrance on Pleasant Street. Mr. Salk-Schubert said there was an element of humor in the facades but it reminded him of a child's building block structure. He said the symmetrical design didn't work out in all the spaces. He said the Times Building was missing some pilaster and two dormers weren't situated over the windows like they were in the other bay. He said the peak of the gable seemed to be higher than the peak of the Pleasant Street gable. Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that there was no plaster where the building butted up against the Times Building, making it look more like a corner board against the brick. It was further discussed. Mr. Ryan said Mr. Keane was starting over and that the design would have more authenticity. He said he wanted to see a floor plan at street level to see how deep the storefront was for the pilasters, and he suggested a slight angle at the doors so that there was more variation at the street level.

There was no public comment.

DECISION

Mr. Keane said he would do some engineering and would return for a work session/public hearing at a future meeting.

D. Work Session requested by **Alan W. & Wendy G. Wong, owners**, for property located at **179 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow the construction of a new free-standing structure (garden pergola) and new construction to an existing structure (replace roof and structures of existing ells and expand middle ell) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 108 as Lot 15 and lies within the Mixed Research Office (MRO) and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the July 17, 2019 meeting to the August, 2019 meeting.)*

The applicants Alan and Wendy Wong, project architect Tracy Kozak, and landscape architect Terence Parker were present. Ms. Kozak thanked the Commission for attending the site walk before the meeting. She reviewed the petition and noted that there were some changes from the previous work session, including:

- Two new dormers were added to the pair of dormers on the annex;

- A new railing was added to the sunroof to use as a deck;
- A shed dormer and a small gable dormer were added to the carriage house;
- A chimney was added;
- The shed roof on the connector barn was replaced with a slope roof;
- The doors on the connector barn would be repaired and possibly salvaged and brought forward in the opening so that a vehicle could fit;
- The left doors on the front of the carriage house were changed;
- The original condition of the barn door would be restored if necessary;
- The shutter on the hayloft door would be replaced with a real window.

Ms. Ruedig said the chimney looked a bit funny on the carriage house and suggested pushing it back to make it less visible.

Ms. Kozak discussed the rear elevation. She said they wanted to remove the back wall of the connector barn and keep the foundations of the structures but rebuild the walls above that were compromised. She said a flat roof could be used as a walk-out deck on the second floor of the carriage house and that the connector house would have an arched loggia. For the south elevation, she noted that there was a doghouse dormer on the main house and the two new windows would be on the hillside façade.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the Commission wouldn't want the slate roof removed. Ms. Kozak said the slate shingles were nearing the end of their lifespan, so they wanted to remove them, add insulation, and then put back the viable ones and replace the damaged ones. Ms. Ruedig said it could be mixed with salvaged slate. Mr. Ryan said they would end up replacing all the slate because a lot of slate would be broken by removing them. The insulation was discussed. Ms. Kozak said they would try not to pull off all the siding and trim on the carriage house because it was original and in good shape. She said they wanted to replace the curved sunroom windows on the north elevation with 6/6 windows. She showed prospective views of the different elevations.

Mr. Parker discussed the landscaping, noting that the ramp going into the carriage house would be maintained. He said there would be either concrete or cobblestone pavers in the circle, bluestone terrace in the back, and brick walkways in the front. The pergola was discussed.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was happy to see the amount of restoration and thought the new construction was appropriate, noting that the back was a bit busy but wouldn't be seen. He appreciated that the Andersen windows would be replaced with double-hung windows. Ms. Ruedig said she appreciated the applicant's effort to preserve whatever they could. She agreed that the back was busy but wouldn't be seen and would match the style of the house. She suggested that the applicant hire an archaeologist to document the artifacts and also suggested that the Portsmouth Advocates document and photograph the interiors.

Mr. Rawling said he appreciated the effort to maintain the facades, especially on the outbuilding. He thought the new construction was within the right scale and massing for the outbuildings and that it would feel light and airy in the back, even with all the landscape elements, pergola, and so on. He said it was a nice project. Mr. Ryan agreed that it was a wonderful project, noting that the front façade was plain and simple and the back was beautiful and organic. He said his only

criticism was that the new roof on the front façade connection was very severe, and he suggested improving the design or adding a few dormers to bring in some light. Ms. Doering thought the roof was fine also felt that documenting the building was a great idea so that people could see what an authentic 1700s outbuilding was like. She didn't think that the chimney belonged on a carriage house. Ms. Kozak said they could make the chimney smaller.

There was no public comment.

DECISION

The applicant indicated that they would return for a public hearing at the October, 2019 meeting.

E. Work Session requested by **Dagny Taggart, LLC, owner,** and **Mark A. McNabb, applicant** for property located at **Daniel Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow the construction of a new free-standing (3-story, 50,000 ± s.f.) commercial structure as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown in Assessor Map 107 as Lot 27 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD 4), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the July 17, 2019 meeting to the August, 2019 meeting.)*

The applicant Mark McNabb, project architect Tracy Kozak, landscape designer Robbi Woodburn, and Attorney F. X. Bruton were present.

Ms. Kozak reviewed the petition, noting that they were developing a community space in exchange for the potential of extra height and were considering adding more inches but not another story. She said the first floor plan had not changed but that there were minor revisions on the solar panels that included accentuating the stepdown for extra relief to break up the skyline. She said the panels would be sunk down and recessed into the roof. She reviewed the elevation drawings, noting that the pattern orientation on the wood siding was changed from vertical boards to horizontal material. She said they were considering a real wood veneer product with composite backing material, and she showed a sample to the Commission. She said other refinements included the third-floor horizontal curved band being de-emphasized by pushing it back a few feet from Daniel Street. She said they also changed it to the wood product and added a lot of details to the connections. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked if the timbers on the façade were part of the structure. Ms. Kozak agreed, noting that they would hold up the wall and roof around it but would not go very far into the building. She said it was a laminated timber and solid wood. Ms. Kozak discussed the elevations, noting that they brought in the detail of the west elevation's vertical paired columns; changed the Penhallow Street elevation by simplifying the far left corner and integrating where the masses joined; and extended the upper roof section to access the solar panels and unify the building's silhouette. Mr. McNabb noted that all the siding was changed to horizontal. Ms. Kozak reviewed the 3D street elevations and views, showing how the timbers were connected to each other. The timber and other materials were discussed in detail. She mentioned capping the end beams with metal and said the crisscross connectors were connected internally with tension cables at the corners.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he wasn't comfortable with all the silver and black and thought they looked like children's jacks thrown at the building. Mr. McNabb said they were very common on

modern glass. Ms. Kozak said they wouldn't be as visible in real life as they were in the line drawings. Mr. Rawling said it referenced metal connections that he wasn't troubled by and thought would be an interpretation of the context. Mr. Ryan agreed. Ms. Kozak said they would be on the inside of the building, on the glass, and that the tile material on the bottom side band was a textured patterning type of motif. Chairman Lombardi said he liked the wavy bands and would like to see the green tile on the upper part as well. Mr. Rawling said he preferred the earlier design because the different layers going up the different floors had animated and uplifted the building. He said the exit felt awkward without them. City Council Representative Roberts disagreed, noting that the horizontal bands made the building look horizontal.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he thought the green material was going to be copper. He said the building was a playful one in that location, and he was afraid that piling all the elements on the building would make the complicated front even busier. Mr. Rawling agreed and said the copper was easier to visualize. It was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was still trying to accept the glass connectors and asked where the building's design was going. Mr. McNabb said the intent was to inject art into the design with the bottom art band but that they wouldn't be opposed to copper because it worked well with the bands. It was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested using the same galvanizing material on the bolts that was on the new Memorial Bridge. Ms. Kozak said it was five-layer zinc and thought it was a great idea. The granite base was discussed. Ms. Kozak said they wanted a warm tone similar to seawalls and a variety of warm colored granite. She said they would bring samples at the next meeting. Ms. Woodburn reviewed the landscape and lighting plans.

City Council Representative Roberts said he didn't like the garage entrance because it was right next to the view of the church. It was further discussed. Mr. Rawling said he preferred the vertical siding on the north elevation because it played better with the horizontal band weaving. He felt that the lack of the green banding was a huge loss and thought the previous overall design was much stronger. Mr. Ryan said he liked how the middle band faded into the rest of the building. He said the green tile shimmered but felt that the other materials were natural looking. He said he preferred copper and thought the two corner entrances with boat-like forms should be set into glass instead of the wood paneling to reflect the 'glass is water' metaphor. He said he liked the corner of Daniel and Penhallow Streets and suggested that the great corner story be used in the back of the building to give it the same prominence. He said the wood paneling was a terrific material and made the building look like one big piece of furniture. He suggested that the ground-floor windows make an artistic statement like the windows on the second and third floors instead of looking like conventional strip mall storefronts entrances. He also thought the solar panels were appropriate. Ms. Doering agreed that the first-floor windows should have more of a design but liked the ability to open them up. She said she liked the copper but thought there could be a more artistic material. City Council Representative Roberts said he agreed with the first-floor comments. He said he was okay with the back corner of the building with the ship structure on it because it was at the back, but thought there could be a better representation of the building from the alleyway view. It was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the frame of the boat looked like it was chopped off at the top of the third story and suggested making the timbers come together in a bow at 15 feet higher or so, which would make more sense and would accent the building more. Ms. Doering said the back of the building was a second entrance and could be made more inviting by truncating it to the small courtyard.

Ms. Ruedig said she had a tough time seeing the building in its context because it had no visual reference to anything around it and was very different. She said she favored contemporary designs in town but struggled with the building fitting in contextually, physically, and visibly.

Public Comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street said he loved the technology, the pedestrian experience, the market, and open space but had a hard time seeing the design preserve the architectural and historic resources of the city and foster its architectural and historic character and sense of place, as noted in the HDC guidelines. He said it was a design that was above and beyond anything in the heart of Portsmouth, especially a stone's throw away from the Customs House and the North Church, and that those views had to be protected. He said it was not the appropriate location for a building that was so artistic, symmetrical, and large.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously to **continue** the work session to the September, 2019 meeting.*

F. Work Session requested by **Michele P. Cronin, owner**, for property located at **14 Mechanic Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow the partial demolition of an existing structure (removal of additions and 1 chimney), new construction to an existing structure (relocating house to new foundation and adding a 1-story addition), and exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace siding, windows, and trim) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 103 as Lot 10 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued from the July 10, 2019 meeting to the August, 2019 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **postpone** the work session to the September, 2019 meeting, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.*

III. ADJOURNMENT

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to **adjourn** the meeting at 9:15 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary