

**MINUTES
THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NH**

Remote Meeting Via Zoom Conference Call

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Per NH RSA 91-A:2, III (b) the Chair has declared COVID-19 outbreak an emergency and has waived the requirement that a quorum be physically present at the meeting pursuant to the Governor’s Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8, as extended by Executive Order 2020-16, and Emergency Order #12, Section 3. Members will be participating remotely and will identify their location and any person present with them at that location. All votes will be by roll call.

6:30 p.m.

August 19, 2020

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: N/A

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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Ms. Doering was the voting alternate for the evening.

Chairman Lombardi stated that there were two petitions that were requested to be postponed, 458 Marcy Street and the work session for 132-134 Middle Street.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **postpone** Petitions II.B, 458 Marcy Street, and III.A, 132-134 Middle Street to the September 2, 2020 meeting. City Council Representative Trace seconded. The motion **passed unanimously**, 7-0.*

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

Note: Items 2 through 5 were addressed first as a group.

1. 135 Congress Street

Mr. Cracknell said there were five changes to the project: 1) leave the historic windows in place and restore them on the inside due to costs; 2) remove the transom windows on the side wall of the stairwell; 3) change the stairwell roof from metal to PVC; 4) add a post to support the canopy over the walkway; and 5) modify the standing seam roof of the addition to a tinted glass similar to the glass on the walls of the addition.

The project designer Andy Sidford was present and said the PVC standing seam roof would not be seen from the street. He said the original intent was to have a solid roof with glazing above and below it, but the supplier couldn't do it, so it would be done as one glazing system. He said the canopy was pulled away for waterproofing details so that it sat a few inches from the glass pane, so it was a freestanding roof now.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked if soft lighting would be placed behind the windows, and Mr. Sidford agreed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked how the standing seam would go into the tinted glass relating to insulation capabilities and meeting code. Mr. Sidford said they had to treat it as one glazing system, so they lost some insulation but would provide sufficient insulation in that section and make it look like a solid roof. Mr. Ryan said it was an improvement over the solid metal roof and also thought the vinyl wouldn't be seen from the pedestrian level. Ms. Ruedig asked what the texture and look of the PVC roof would be, noting that it might be visible from far away or abutting buildings. Mr. Sidford said it was a flat white membrane that was much less reflective than the metal roof and wouldn't have a shiny texture. Chairman Lombardi asked if the roof glass was the only tinted glass. Mr. Sidford said no, that all of it had sheeting coefficients. He said the roof glass would look solid from below but would look like solid glazing from above.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** the project item as presented, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

2. 290 Pleasant Street

The request was to replace the skirting on the church's mansard roof with a rubber membrane with a wide aluminum drip edge and repair the rotten wood on the edge, and to repair the rotten wood on the entryway. Ms. Ruedig noted that the application said the front entryway would be replaced with PVC stock, and she asked that it be replaced in kind with wood. The other Commissioners agreed and said it would be stipulated in the motion.

3. 56 Middle Street

The request was to turn the rear addition's stairs to the left to create a better entry into the garage, and to extend the State Street fence two panels further to the edge of the driveway.

4. 76 Congress Street

The request was to place a guard rail around the mechanicals on the roof to meet code. Mr. Cracknell said it wouldn't be seen from anywhere except the Porter Street alleyway.

5. 70 Congress Street

The request was to remove the chimney on the abutting building and rebuild it by using restoration bricks, new flashing, and a cap. Mr. Ryan said it looked like the height would have to be increased if the chimney was an active one because it didn't meet code. Mr. Cracknell said he wasn't sure if it would be an active fireplace and that he would check with the applicant.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** Items 2, 3, 4, and 5, with a **stipulation** on Item 2 that the rotten wood repair on the entryway be replaced in kind with the same materials, dimensions, and profile. Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Petition of **John S. Guido Jr., owner**, for property located at **35 Howard Street, #35**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace (10) existing windows on the structure) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 103 as Lot 83-2 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the August 05, 2020 meeting to the August 19, 2020 meeting.)*

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant John Guido was present and said he submitted photos of all the windows and the Green Mountain brochure for the window replacements. He said a few surrounding homes had Green Mountain windows and that he wanted to replace all his windows with Green Mountain ones. He said he would not change the 6/6 design and that the back windows would remain 2/2.

Ms. Ruedig asked the applicant if he had considered restoring the windows. Mr. Guido said he talked to his architect neighbor who gave him the name of a place, but he wanted to put in Green Mountain windows. He also noted that a lot of the window pulleys didn't work, and if he restored the windows he would have to keep the storms. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said Green Mountain made a quality product and that the new windows would be symmetrical with the other side of the house and more energy efficient. It was further discussed. Mr. Guido said the windows were original and that the house was built in 1910. Vice-Chair Wyckoff thought the house was built around the 1850s and suggested doing a site walk to look at the windows and see if they were original. Mr. Cracknell recalled that some of the windows were previously replaced on the rear and offered to give the applicant a list of restoration window contractors. Ms. Ruedig suggested that the façade windows be restored but thought the rear 2/2 windows could be replaced. Mr. Ryan agreed but said the Commission needed more information on the street side windows. Ms. Doering said further research should be done on the windows on the other side of the house to see if they were replaced so that matching windows could be installed.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff, Mr. Cracknell, and Mr. Sauk-Schubert said they would do a site walk to examine the windows. Mr. Cracknell said he would work with the applicant on the restoration issue. Chairman Lombardi noted that the Staff Memo said the house was built in 1888.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **continue** the application to the September 2, 2020 meeting, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

B. Petition of **Sarah J. Minor Revocable Trust 2016 Sarah J. Minor Trustee, owner**, for property located at **458 Marcy Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace all windows on existing home) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 101 as lot 76 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the August 05, 2020 meeting to the August 19, 2020 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to **postpone** the meeting to the September 2, 2020 meeting.*

III. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Work Session requested by **132 Middle Street LLC and 134 Middle Street, LLC, owners**, for property located at **132-134 Middle Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (re-pointing brick, roof replacement, add ADA accessible entry, and front entrance renovations) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 127 as Lots 11 and 12 and lies within the Character District 4- L1 (CD 4-L1) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the July 08, 2020 meeting to the August, 2020 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to **postpone** the meeting to the September 2, 2020 meeting.*

B. Work Session requested by **Kevin Shitan Zeng Revocable Trust of 2017, Kevin Shitan Zeng Trustee, owner**, for property located at **377 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow the partial demolition of an existing structure and renovations to an existing structure (new windows, siding, and roof) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 141 as Lot 22 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the July 08, 2020 meeting to the August, 2020 meeting.)*

WORK SESSION

Project architect Dan Barton was present. He said the house was built in 1941 and was an anomaly in the neighborhood. He discussed the outbuilding that had a small ranch in the front and a small gable in the back and said everything was beyond repair. He said originally they wanted to maintain the back structure but later decided that it made more sense to rebuild it. He said they designed a carriage house style that would relate to a future renovation of the front house and that he would go before the Board of Adjustment (BOA) for variances before formalizing the process with the Commission. He said the proposed structure would be a turn-of-the-century carriage house design with a double swing door, a small shed roof, 2/2 windows, a loft door, an ell with a recess containing the main entry and clad in wood shingles with trim.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he looked at the existing structure and agreed that the floor and roof were completely rotted. He thought the applicant had responded well to the Commission's comments at the previous work session about the original ranch style home design and that he created a good design. He noted that the main house was built after the structure, which used to be a sail-making company. Ms. Doering said the mass of the building would not be secondary to the primary building any longer because it looked taller and bigger, and she was concerned about the relationship between the primary building and the accessory dwelling unit, which she thought looked like a full house. Mr. Ryan agreed and said he felt like a piece of history would be lost. He said the applicant went from an ell-shaped utilitarian building to a very standard housing unit. He said some nice things were kept, like the double doors and the barn door, but there was a lot of roof. He said the structure looked bland and lacked the existing structure's character. He asked if there was a second floor. The applicant said a second floor wasn't intended and that the amount of roof shown matched existing. He said the pitch changed because it was related to the front, which had a full building wall on top of an elevated foundation and had more vertical stature. He said they intended to have the back low to the ground and would frame the side wall like an outbuilding. He said the gable would face the street like any small carriage house, noting that it was 20 feet wide and not a very large building but might look bigger in the drawings.

Mr. Rawling suggested keeping the gable end facing the street but bringing the roof pitch down on the side pieces, which would break the scale of the building down a lot. He said there wasn't a lot of inspirational detail on the existing buildings and thought that playing with the massing would improve the project. Ms. Ruedig agreed. She said the diagrams made the project look like a suburban development but that the introspective set behind the building gave a better understanding of what it would look like. She said taking the pitch of the roof down would make it look more like a secondary building rather than a standalone house. She thought the details could be developed more to make the structure look less generic. She said the large loft door was too tall, skinny, and large, and she suggested that the applicant find better examples to get the correct proportions for it. She said shingling the building would differentiate it as a lesser structure. She asked that the existing building be documented and photographed for the Athenaeum before it was demolished. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed that dropping the pitch on the roof to a 6 or 7 would still be appropriate for that type of building and would reduce the overall massing of the roof. He said the door above the main doors could also be a double door, wider and not so tall, which would help the proportions of the little rectangle.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **continue** the work session to the October 7, 2020 meeting, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

C. Work Session requested by **K.C. Realty Trust and Keith and Kathleen Malinowski Trustees, owners**, for property located at **84 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (renovate wood structure fronting Pleasant Street and allow the partial demolition and replacement of the Church Street masonry addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 107 as Lot 77 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD4), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the July 08, 2020 meeting to the August, 2020 meeting.)*

Note: Vice-Chair Wyckoff was Acting Chair for the beginning of the work session.

WORK SESSION

The project architect Michael Keane was present to review the petition. He said they opted for the setback floor and said the only change was to the Pleasant Street side of the building, where they proposed to realign the entrance and pediment to the far north to the center of the building so that it was historically located where the three townhouses were. He said an entrance would be eliminated by sliding it further to the south, and he reviewed all the other entrances and egresses. He said they had lot coverage and setback issues that would be reviewed with the BOA before returning to the Commission for a public hearing.

Chairman Lombardi resumed his seat as Chair at this point. He asked if there was a sidelight in the entry door between the buildings, and Mr. Keane agreed. Ms. Doering asked if the two renderings of the two entrances on Pleasant Street were intended to look different. Mr. Keane said they would be the same but the one to the left was existing and raised up 4-5 steps from Pleasant Street, and the one to the right was at street level. He said the intent was to leave the one on the left and either relocate the one on the right or build it to match the one to the left. Ms. Doering said it didn't work for her. Ms. Ruedig said it was difficult to see the intended design from the renderings, and she asked for more details that showed the difference. She said restoring the original entryway was fine but that it should be made clear that it was either an entrance echoing the original entrance, or a restoration. She thought it was appropriate to have a residential entrance in that area, which would add another active door on the streetfront.

Mr. Rawling said he supported Mr. Keane's approach and thought there should be a replica door surround for the new entrance because it would restore the pattern and rhythm of the original structure. He said the left side of the building had its floor levels at a higher level than the right side, where they were lowered and had the entrance, and he thought it was the right approach. He said he supported the flat roof on the back building because it was the least complicated one and could solve related problems. He felt that the elevations needed more work but thought the Commission could work within the massing and general approach if they gave it their support in this phase. City Council Representative Trace noted that there was a third store entrance at the tail end of the Pleasant Street building that would strengthen the rhythm. She said she approved

the project as it was. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the Commission would need details on the entryways, molding, trim, pilasters, and so on.

Ms. Ruedig asked if there was still a plan to work with the abutting owners to remove all the vinyl and restore some of the façade's wood siding. Mr. Keane said the owners had indicated that they would do so. Ms. Ruedig asked if the doorway into the Times Building was the final design. Mr. Keane said it was just a concept at that point. Ms. Ruedig suggested emulating the original historic door. She said the multi-paned door with the vertical sidelight didn't match the beautiful glass windows and she suggested making a doorway that would blend in better.

Mr. Ryan said the drawings were so small that he couldn't even see the doors. He asked if the Commission was approving changes to a previously-approved design. Mr. Keane said there was a previously-approved design for the current owner that had a door to the far right. He said that plan also had a recessed entry into the commercial place where the recessed door was shown in the center. He said they were going back to the original townhouse rhythm and moving a door to the alleyway and that there were only two in the townhouse area. Chairman Lombardi asked when there would be more detailed drawings. Mr. Keane said they needed relief from the BOA before detailing the project to a public hearing level.

Mr. Sauk-Schubert said he had problems with the Pleasant Street elevation area of the interface between the Flores building and the residential townhouses to the southeast. He said the trim didn't terminate where it should. Mr. Keane said the two windows on the upper floors were set back from the entrance, so the roof terminated into the gable end of Pleasant Street. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was important that the storefront be terminated there as well. He said if there was a canopy over the roof, it shouldn't be a continuation of the sign area above the storefronts. He said the way it was drawn was confusing. It was further discussed.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*The applicant said he would **return** for a work session/public hearing in the future.*

IV. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Work Session requested by **Vincent A. Marchese Jr. Revocable Trust and James Marchese, owners**, for property located at **232 South Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace siding, trim, windows, roof and granite steps) and new construction to an existing structure (construct new rear addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 111 as Lot 2 and lies within the Single Residence B (SRB) and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

The project architect Dan Barton was present. He said the original 1780 structure had gone through several renovations and was presently clad in vinyl. He said none of the windows or

shutters were original. He said there was a detailed railing at the side front porch and two ells on the back of the building that had a larger gable and a smaller one. He said the intent was to restore the exterior by removing the vinyl, windows, and trim that wasn't original, and installing cedar clapboards, adding new trim and new clad windows, and extending the middle gable to the rear of the property. He said the house would be renovated into two new residential units. He reviewed the elevations in detail and said they would restore the character of the original house by stripping off all the layers that had been put onto the house over the years.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that stripping the house down was probably the only way to bring the house up to the 21st century. He said his only issue was the spiral staircase on the back and wondered how visible it was. Ms. Ruedig said it was a good renovation because all the original materials would be brought back, and stripping off all the siding and bringing the building exterior back would be a huge improvement. She said she had no problem with the extension of the rear massing because it was in line with the footprint and the main gable. She said the staircase would be set far back and didn't think it was a problem because it was on a new addition. She asked the applicant to look into restoring some of the early windows and maybe some of the 2/2 windows as well. Chairman Lombardi said it was a great project and that he had no problem with the spiral staircase, especially if it wasn't visible from the street. Mr. Rawling said there was enough space to screen the stairway with landscaping. Mr. Cracknell noted that the Portsmouth Advocate Survey stated that the building was built in 1870 and not 1780. Mr. Ryan said he was surprised that the spiral staircase was a second means of egress. Mr. Barton said it complied with a one-family or two-family home.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kristina Logan and Michael Graf of 220 South Street said they were disappointed by the spiral staircase and by the Commission's approval of it. Mr. Graf said there was a public right-of-way from New Castle Avenue to Little Harbor School that got regular use, so the stairway would be highly visible. He said the house would become a two-family structure but there was no place for outdoor equipment storage. He said the applicant was showing vertical boarding under the porch on the south area but not on the east and north sides. He asked if there was a better opportunity in the public hearing to comment, seeing that it had been difficult to phone in for the work session.

Chairman Lombardi said public comment was taken at every work session and public hearing, and he encouraged Mr. Graf to speak to the new owners and architect directly. Mr. Cracknell said the comments were on the record and that he would contact Mr. Barton in the morning to let him know. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he objected to the statement that the Commission approved of the staircase, pointing out that he had said that the staircase was an issue. City Council Representative Trace said she had trouble seeing a spiral staircase attached to that house because there wasn't anything like it in the south end and thought there could be another solution.

Mr. Graf asked what the Commission's position was on PVC for exterior trim. At that point, Mr. Ryan said the applicant was no longer present and that it wasn't fair to him. He said all objections should be voiced when the applicant was present so that he was aware of them.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

The applicant would return for a public hearing at the October 7, 2020 meeting.

Chairman Lombardi stated that it was Mr. Rawlings last meeting. Everyone wished Mr. Rawling well and said he would be missed.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary