

**MINUTES OF THE
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 2020-17, 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.

7:00 p.m.

September 09, 2020

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to **postpone** the 132-134 Middle Street work session.*

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 169 Lafayette Road

Mr. Cracknell summarized the history of the project, including:

- The project was before the Commission previously, and the condo association had asked to replace the roof with architectural asphalt shingles, but the Commission requested that they explore a rubber roof system; when the applicant said they couldn't do a rubber roof, the Commission had voted to approve the architectural asphalt shingles;

- The applicant later said that a roof manufacturer told them there could be problems with the asphalt shingles on a roof of that pitch and recommended a rolled asphalt roof, which the applicant installed; and
- Two Commission members were asked by the applicant's neighbor whether the rolled roof was consistent with what was previously granted by the Commission, and the applicant wanted approval for the rolled asphalt roof instead of the asphalt shingles.

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to pull the administrative request for a separate discussion and vote.

The applicant Karen Crouch was present and said she and another condo unit owner, Caitlin Sweeney, thought a rolled asphalt roof would be more consistent with the home and the neighborhood. She said the rolled roof was installed in July. Vice-Chair Wyckoff compared the before-and-after renovation photo and thought no one would notice anything. Mr. Ryan said it was subpar roofing material and didn't look that great. He noted that another owner, Steve McCarthy, had spoken in opposition to the project. Ms. Crouch said she and Ms. Sweeney planned and paid for the roofing material and Mr. McCarthy had not spoken to them. She said she had a permit for the rolled roof. Mr. Ryan said a rolled roof was something placed on a shed or camp building and was not an appropriate material for the District. Ms. Doering said it looked like a black metal roof but thought its installation looked unfinished and temporary. Ms. Ruedig agreed and thought the material might not last long but felt that it was a better solution than asphalt shingles. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it looked fine from a distance.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **approve** the request. Mr. Ryan seconded, noting that he agreed with Ms. Ruedig's comments. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

2. 84 Gates Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to replace the front cedar clapboards with a Lifespan treated wood product, with exposure to match the existing side. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said there were several courses of clapboard below the windowsill on the first floor and that it couldn't be replaced with 4" to-the-weather Lifespan clapboards. Contractor Joe Terravechhia was present and said the cedar clapboards were installed 20 years before and that the rest of the house had 3" exposures and the front and the driveway sides had a 2" exposure. Ms. Ruedig said it was interesting that the entire house had the small exposure, and Mr. Terravechhia explained that it was just the front and driveway sides and that the clapboards weren't pine or spruce, but that the previous owner tried to make a cedar clapboard into a restoration one. Ms. Ruedig said the 1982 photograph of the home indicated that those two elevations had a 2" exposure to the weather.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked if the new clapboards were tapered to the feathered edge like the existing ones, and Mr. Terravechhia said they were not and that they would be 3 inches to the weather. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked why restoration clapboards wouldn't be used. Mr. Terravechhia said they would not hold up well. City Council Representative Trace said she was familiar with the house and was saddened to see it have a treated manufactured siding instead of a good cedar. Mr. Terravechhia said it was plantation-grown wood from New Zealand impregnated with an organic rot preservative. Mr. Ryan asked if it would be painted in the field

and installed the same way the current cedar was exposed. Mr. Terravechhia said it came primed and would get two finished coats in the field. Mr. Ryan said he had no problem with it. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he couldn't support it because the clapboards shown in the 1982 picture were probably the original clapboards and that was why the previous owner tried to get cedar to match the small reveal. Ms. Ruedig agreed, noting that the original thin clapboard was really the look of the building. Ms. Trace asked which reveal would be used. Mr. Terravechhia said it would vary between 3" and 3-1/4" to match the rest of the house. He said the owner was confident that the original clapboards were at a much greater exposure than they currently were, and he asked if the Commission would approve the request if the owner could provide evidence of it, and several Commissioners agreed.

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

Mr. Cracknell said it would have to be a stipulation because the owner could return with an answer saying that it was correct or not, but the Chair or Vice-Chair could authorize release of the building permit once the evidence was seen. Mr. Sauk-Schubert suggested approving the request with the stipulation that the information needed to be correlated.

*Ms. Ruedig **amended** her motion and **approved** the item with the following stipulation:*

- 1. The applicant shall submit historic photographs or other evidence to show that the previous siding profile of the building was a 3 inch exposure rather than the current 2 inch exposure.*

*Ms. Trace seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 7-0.*

3. 232 Court Street

Mr. Cracknell said the request was to install an iron fence along the Pleasant Street side of the house. He said the applicant presented two design options, classic or hoop and picket.

Mr. Ryan asked if the fence was aluminum bar sections or hollow ones. Mr. Cracknell said it was cast iron. City Council Representative Trace said the description indicated that the fence was authentic sand-cast iron finial pickets with galvanized components but didn't state whether the rest of the fence was cast iron. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was more concerned with the posts because they were small and square and had a bracket on the bottom, which indicated that they were meant to go into the ground. He thought the posts affected the design. Mr. Ryan looked up the website and confirmed that it was a sand-cast iron fence. The Commission further discussed how the fence would attach to the ground without a foundation. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said he was concerned with how the fence was supported laterally. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the fence also didn't return to the house. Mr. Cracknell said the applicant would use concrete footings under the posts. In response to Ms. Trace's questions, Mr. Cracknell said the fence was three feet tall, had 8-ft sections, no gate, and was open to the wall. The two style options were discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said both styles were not appropriate for an early 18th Century house, and Ms. Trace and Mr. Sauk-Schubert agreed. Ms. Doering said she wasn't a fan of putting a fence in that location and didn't like either style because they were modern and light. Ms. Ruedig said she

would support it if it came without the finials and was just a simple iron fence. Mr. Ryan said he had no problem with either fence.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** the item based on the submitted information, and Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion for further discussion, if any.*

*The motion **failed** by a vote of 6-1, with only Mr. Ryan voting in favor of the request.*

4. 110 Brewery Lane, Unit C 105

Ms. Ruedig recused herself from the vote.

Mr. Cracknell said the restaurant owner wanted to install a retractable awning system for a previously-approved patio space.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the request, and City Council Representative Trace seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 6-0.*

II. REQUEST FOR RE-HEARING

1. Request for Re-hearing by 3A Trust, Guy D. Spiers & Elizabeth R. Spiers, Trustees, owners, for property located at 241 South Street, for Administrative Approval originally heard at the August 05, 2020 Historic District Commission meeting.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **grant** the Request for Rehearing to be heard at the October 7, 2020 meeting, and Mr. Ryan seconded.*

*The motion **passed** by a vote of 5-2, with Vice-Chair Wyckoff and City Council Representative Trace voting in opposition.*

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Petition of **Vincent A. Marchese Jr. Revocable Trust and James Marchese, owners**, for property located at **232 South Street**, wherein permission was 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.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Project architect Dan Barton was present to review the petition on behalf of his clients who were purchasing the property. He stated that they met with the neighbors to discuss the visibility of the spiral staircase from the walking path behind the property and decided to shift the stairway to the

opposite side of the building. He said he hadn't been able to look under the current siding to see any details but that the intent was to appropriately rehabilitate the structure. He said all the trim would be wood to match the original profiles and that an alternate Boral was also available for places that might be subject to rot. He said the windows, sills, shutters, and blinds would all be wood, and a masonry infill would go below the front bays to match the existing foundation. He noted that there would be a planting area instead of asphalt at the front of the house. He said the thresholds of the front doors would be done in oak if they needed to be replaced, and all siding would be smooth-faced cedar clapboards with an exposure to weather that was consistent with the house. He said the new windows would be Marvin double-hung 2/2 ones and that the spiral stairway would be screened from South Street and obscured from the walking path by trees.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was a thorough renovation of the property's exterior and thought the shift of the stairway was an effective solution. He said the area where the clapboards were under the bay windows looked like there would have been panels due to the large cornerboards. He thought it would be discovered when the siding was addressed but said it would be an exception after the removal of the siding. Ms. Ruedig said she was eager to see what was found under the siding and thought moving the spiral staircase was an improvement. Mr. Ryan said the project was a nice improvement but thought the double-hung windows up against the cornerboards on the building's back and sides was awkward. Mr. Barton said they were that way for light and air concerns but would consider putting some clapboards between the cornerboards. Mr. Ryan suggested putting another shutter on the gable end as well. City Council Representative Trace asked where the HVAC system would be. Mr. Barton said the mechanical system hadn't been designed yet and could be located under the back deck. Ms. Trace noted that the house was listed as a circa 1800 contributing structure in the Historic District, and it was further discussed.

Chairman Lombardi opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Christina Logan of 222 South Street thanked Mr. Barton for contacting the neighbors and spending time to review the details of the project. She said she agreed with the changes and looked forward to seeing the property restored to its former beauty.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

No one else was present 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 petition as presented, with the following stipulation:*

- 1. The trim under the bay window could change to match the original design after the removal of the siding.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project preserved the integrity of the District and maintained its special character, and the structure's exterior design was compatible with surrounding properties.

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

IV. 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 August 05, 2020 meeting to the September 09, 2020 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to **postpone** the petition to the October 7, 2020 meeting.*

V. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Work Session requested by **Margot L. Thompson, owner**, for property located at **57 Salter Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (add new side entry porch and recessed porches on the rear elevation) and renovations to an existing structure (re-size and replace windows, remove existing skylights) 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.

WORK SESSION

Project design architect Brendon McNamara was present to review the petition. He said the current owners were selling the home to his clients and noted that there were two buildings that were joined when the 1990 renovations were done. He said his clients wanted to change some windows, put a recessed deck on the road side of the building, eliminate the skylights, replace the three-window arrangement on the south side with a five-window one, and add a small porch at the side entry door. He said the replacement windows would be larger than existing ones.

Ms. Doering noted how the outer walls would disappear with the recessed interior porch on the corner of the building. Mr. McNamara said there would be a steel substructure to support the doors. Ms. Doering asked if the inside of the porch area would be shingled like an outside surface. Mr. McNamara pointed out that one view showed no exterior siding other than the cornerboard because the wall was taken up with the doors and trim, but another view showed that there would be siding below the windows on the porch's north wall. He said the porch would be supported by corner posts and there would be a balustrade. Ms. Ruedig said the façade had a lot of changes and thought more research should be done on the house's history. She said the 1955 photo at the Athenaeum looked very different from existing and that the house was once a very simple structure. She wondered if there were historic photos that predated the 1955 one to show how the house had changed with the 1990 restoration. Mr. Ryan agreed and thought there should be a site walk to get a sense of which features were worth saving. Mr. McNamara said the

exterior was done in 1990 and the core structure had substantially been replaced. He said they would maintain some of the remaining timber frame. He said he didn't know if there was anything worth preserving until all the sheetrock was removed. Mr. Ryan said he felt that all the rules had been already broken and that a lot of Mr. McNamara's suggestions were appealing. Chairman Lombardi said that so much had happened to the house that it was hard to know what was left. Mr. Sauk-Schubert asked if something could be done to the west elevation. Mr. McNamara said they could add more windows and make them larger than existing.

Mr. Cracknell said he would coordinate a site visit before the October meeting. Ms. Ruedig asked Mr. McNamara bring photos of the 1990 renovations.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

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

2. Work Session requested by **Timothy M. and Alexandra Lieto, owners**, for property located at **50 New Castle Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct rear addition with deck and patio space) and renovations to an existing structure (new siding, windows, and roofing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 101 as Lot 33 and lies within the Single Residence B (SRB) and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

Project designer Amy Dutton was present on behalf of the applicant to review the petition. She said the addition was to accommodate a growing family, and they also wanted to replace the existing 1/1 windows with 2/2 ones, replace the aluminum siding with either Hardie Board or wood clapboards, and add more detail to the home to break up its tall façade. She discussed a large privacy screen for the deck and a back patio.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said there were a lot of changes to absorb. In response to Ms. Doering's questions, Ms. Dutton said the trees between the house and the walking path would stay and that the porch was on the walking path side of the house because the other side was the current driveway and proposed patio. It was further discussed. Mr. Ryan noted that the addition had a lot of bumps, elements, and recesses, and that the screen looked like a tall garden fence at the deck level. He asked if the photo indicated exactly what was proposed for under the deck. Ms. Dutton said the idea came from a neighboring house that had sliding barn doors but that she would submit a more detailed drawing. Mr. Ryan said it was very contemporary and didn't have a lot of historic references but that he could support it.

Ms. Ruedig said renovating the little cottage house would be an improvement but would double the size of it. She said she was concerned about the busyness of the addition and all the dormers, brackets, different window sizes, and so on because it changed the look and feeling of the simple

original cottage. She said she'd like to see some of the cottage's language brought to the addition so that it blended in more. She also suggested bringing the roofline down a bit to make the building look more diminutive and better match the historic house. Ms. Dutton said they were going to add the same roof overhang that was over the front door with the bracket over the mudroom door on the driveway side. Ms. Ruedig said it was fine to dress up the small secondary door but thought the prominent pitch and gable on the sides of the house got lost in the back because of all the dormers and other elements. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed, saying there were many different designs and the number of dormers conflicted with one another on the east side. He said the eyebrow windows could be simplified and regular windows could be placed on the second-floor level. He said the massing was huge, and the proposal for the second-floor deck exacerbated the issue. He said he was concerned about the complicated array of bumpouts and dormers on the south and east sides, doors with sidelights, and bracketed projected windows.

The Commission further discussed the massing. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said it was convoluted and not unified, and he suggested that a massing study be done. City Council Representative Trace said the proposed porch was too large and thought the house would be more appropriate if the second-floor deck and privacy petitions weren't included. She said she was staggered by the largeness of the three stories on the back and the privacy screens going out on the porch and thought they were monstrous in size and too busy. Mr. Ryan thought the designer was trying to break down the massing with a lot of elements, which made it look bigger. He said the structure was double the height in the back due to the land drop-off, so there was a need to deal with that extra height, and he suggested breaking the ridge as a start and eliminating the dormers and thin windows that fed into the gable to simplify the massing. Ms. Doering suggested using the land's grade to advantage, like having a finished basement. Mr. Sauk-Schubert wondered how three cars would be parked perpendicular to the house due to the steep drop. Ms. Dutton said they would have a retaining wall.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

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

At this point, Ms. Ruedig left the meeting.

3. Work Session requested by **553-559 Islington Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **553-559 Islington Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct a new rear 2 ½ - story addition) and exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace siding, repair and replace trim as needed) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 157 as Lot 3 and lies within the Character District 4-L2 (CD4-L2) and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

Project architect Tim Brochu was present on behalf of the owner to review the petition. He said his client acquired the property in June and wanted a small addition at the rear. He said an egress stairway would be added to the center of the building that would push the reconfiguration of the units, so the back addition would help. He said the intent was for the addition to match the front of the back building look with a gable end and similar roof details. He said the current two-story addition on the back didn't match the house's character. He said there would be no changes to the façade of the building other than the finishes, which would include replacing the siding, roofing, and trim, and that the flat roof of the existing addition would have the HVAC units. He said there were no decisions yet on materials but that the owner wanted low-maintenance ones. He said they were considering composite materials for the trim and siding, and they didn't plan to replace all the windows. He said they wanted to remove the wrought-iron fence in front of the home and make it an open planting area.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the fence had been there for 170 years or so and that he'd like to see it repaired and re-installed. He asked if any siding had been removed off the front. The owner Ed Zimmerman was present and said the left-hand side of the building had a different type of composite under the siding and wasn't sure what was under the rest of the house but thought large sections on the front or right-hand side could be clapboard. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it could also be flat, like tongue-and-groove boards on the front, which were popular at the time the home was built. He said the window trims were important to preserve and, if they had to be removed, they should be replaced with something that looked very similar. He said he had no problem with the massing in the back. Mr. Zimmerman said they wanted to replace the asphalt in the front with green space. Mr. Ryan agreed that the fence was important and asked what would replace the pressure-treated balcony. Mr. Brochu said it would probably be a deck. Mr. Ryan asked if new roof material would be placed on the dormer. Mr. Brochu said the entire roof had to be replaced and that they would probably do an architectural asphalt shingle. Mr. Ryan said the dormer had no character and suggested adding trim to it. He said the massing looked good. Mr. Brochu said some of the brackets at the roof line and entryway may be rotted and might have to be replaced in kind, and it was further discussed.

Ms. Doering said she thought the building was built around the same time some of the other houses on Islington Street were built, and that the house was later used for a purpose that someone didn't care about because the materials and designs had no character. She said the renovations should be done with an eye toward bringing the jewel of a house back to what it originally was, and she suggested that the applicant find historic photos. Chairman Lombardi said the City was putting a lot of effort into improving Islington Street and thought the house should have quality wood materials on the façade. Ms. Doering agreed and said people would notice the materials because the house was so close to the street. Mr. Sauk-Schubert suggested moving the window to the right of the rear entry over more and said the upper window in the apex seemed to infringe on the trim and should be shorter in height.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Ryan moved to **continue** the work session to the October 7 meeting, and Ms. Doering seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 6-0.*

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary