

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

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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 2020-18, 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.

November 04, 2020

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. October 07, 2020

Mr. Ryan and Mr. Adams abstained from the vote.

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote, 5-0, to **approve** the October 7, 2020 minutes as amended.*

2. October 14, 2020

Mr. Ryan, City Council Representative Trace, and Mr. Adams abstained from the vote.

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote, 4-0, to **approve** the October 14, 2020 minutes as presented.*

II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 49 Hunking Street

The request was to extend a stone wall into the rear yard and relocate a single window on the rear addition.

2. 285 Union Street

The request was to replace a side door and window on the rear shed addition. The applicant was present and said he would replace the current door with a sliding one. He said the new window would be the same type and size but with more insulation. Mr. Adams suggested that the new trim match the existing window. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it wasn't practical to put a high-level Victorian trim on the shed addition, and that it would be sufficient to just replace the door and put a basic casing around both window units. City Council Representative Trace agreed.

3. 56 Dennett Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to modify the window design on the rear addition. He said the new design wasn't the one shown at the previous approval and was more contemporary. The applicant was present and said it wouldn't be visible from the street. He said the new design was just a slight change in the shape of the window.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he knew the owner and had to recuse himself from the request, so he asked that the item be pulled from the others.

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to pull the item and vote on it separately.

Mr. Ryan said the window change was suitable for the back of the house. City Council Representative Trace said there were no window specifications. The applicant said the windows were the same ones that were approved for the rest of the house, but just a different shape.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** the administrative request as presented, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote, 6-0.*

4. 222 Court Street

The request was to remove three or four concrete blocks before the entryway door. Mr. Cracknell said the granite step had a smooth face on all four sides and would remain where it was.

5. 249 Pleasant Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to install a condenser as well as go back to the original window count on the rear elevation and add a new exterior door style. He said the project was previously approved and that the new doors and Marvin windows would be in existing locations.

In response to the Commission's questions, the applicant's representative Jennifer Ramsey said the existing front fence would shield the condenser except for a few top inches of it. She said the fence ran along the side of the property and behind the back yard and that the distance from the condenser to the fence was three feet. She said the condenser wouldn't be visible to the neighborhood. City Council Representative Trace asked if it would be seen from Washington Street. Ms. Ramsey said parked cars would block the view. Ms. Trace said parked cars were not a screening for a condenser unit. The owner was present and said it was a hidden area obscured by trees and that she planned to add some bushes to further shield the condenser.

The Commission stipulated that:

1. *The applicant shall shield the condenser from public view with plantings.*

6. 46-64 Maplewood Avenue

Mr. Cracknell said the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) was amended to revise the community space for the project and provide a connector to Bridge Street from Maplewood Avenue in exchange for removing the covered passageway within the parking garage. He said the applicant wanted to enclose the garage openings with windows that were more commensurate with the rest of the building. Architect Jennifer Ramsey was present and discussed the elevations.

7. 10 New Castle Avenue

The request was to change the pressure-treated material on the rear deck to mahogany and replace a lattice surround with a vertical white board. The applicant was present and said the vertical board would be a standard one with a 1-inch vertical gap.

8. 77 New Castle Avenue

The request was to add a heat pump to the rear structure. The applicant was present and said the existing fence would screen it. She said the unit was tiny and on brackets and would be two feet away from the fence, and that it would also be screened by the neighbor's 8-ft bushes.

9. 39 Richards Avenue

The request was to add a heat pump condenser on the rear sidewall of the structure, which was on the edge of the Historic District. Mr. Cracknell said the condenser wouldn't be visible and didn't need a screen. Mr. Ryan noted that a previous applicant was told that a screen was necessary, and he thought the commission should be consistent. Ms. Ruedig said each application was individually assessed. She said the other petition's screening was questionable, whereas the current applicant's unit would not be viewable. The applicant Tom Morgan was

present and said a 6-ft fence screened the backyard from the neighbor. Mr. Ryan said the unit would be visible to neighbors and the middle school.

It was **stipulated** that:

1. *That a wooden screen shall be installed surrounding the A/C condenser of a similar style to either 36 Richards Avenue or 410 Islington Street.*

10. 306 Marcy Street

The request was to replace six skylights on the rear of the building with ones of a slightly different size. The applicant John Singer was present and said the size was changing because the original units would be replaced with VELUX ones. He said they would be in the same locations and that the size difference would not be noticeable from the street.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** Items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, with stipulations on Items 5 and 9 as noted above. Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 7-0.*

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Petition of **553-559 Islington Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **553-559 Islington Street**, wherein permission was 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. *(This item was continued at the October 07, 2020 meeting to the November, 2020 meeting.)*

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Project architect Tim Brochu and owner Ed Zimmerman were present. Mr. Brochu reviewed the changes, which included the following:

- A window was replaced in the smaller building with two double hungs;
- Pilasters were added to each side of the larger building, including a vertical reveal with an arch on top, and the posts were moved to grade level, with the handrails brought down;
- The third-floor height was raised to seven feet; and
- The front doors were Italianate style in the small entrance.

Ms. Ruedig said the changes were an improvement. She said the extra detail on the corner boards made them look more appropriately wider but thought the addition of the pilaster crowns on the small building was a bit too much. She said it should be a simple little structure without much detail because it wasn't historic or Italianate. She said the two added windows were an improvement. She recommended stripping off most of the detail and keeping the corner board simple. She said the arched windows and doors should be reserved for the main house and should be simpler on the addition. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed. He said the molding projected out beyond the small covered roof and should be rebuilt so it looked like it was supported by the pilasters. He suggested that the door be simplified by making the two lights rectangular. Mr.

Ryan agreed. He said the decorative elements on the smaller building could be pulled back but helped relate the building to the main house, and he said the Italianate style in the small entry helped make the two buildings work well together.

Mr. Adams said the small structure shouldn't be in competition at all because it was basically a garage and that the Italianate style moved it back into a time in which it didn't even exist. He said the high end columns were a bit much. He said he liked the quirkiness of the windows being a different size and liked the overhang in front. City Council Representative Trace agreed. Ms. Doering said the door surround was a bit overdone. She asked if the door material was a Therma-Tru fiberglass. Mr. Brochu said they would make the three front-facing doors wood and the back of the building doors Therma-Tru fiberglass. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said the door was diminutive to the two windows and asked if the windows could be simplified. Mr. Brochu said they had to meet a façade glazing requirement. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he liked the double windows and suggested that the casings on top of the door be aligned with the casing on top of the window.

Chairman Lombardi said he agreed with most of the comments and opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

No one 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 application as presented, with the following stipulation:*

- 1. The applicant shall simplify the façade of the small building as discussed at the meeting and shall resubmit it for Administrative Approval.*

Mr. Adams seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the changes to the corner boards would be appropriate in the District and would enhance surrounding property values. Mr. Adams said it was nice to see a building that contributed to the street in that part of the District.

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

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Petition of **Timothy M. and Alexandra Lieto, owners**, for property located at **50 New Castle Avenue**, wherein permission was 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.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The project architect Amy Dutton was present on behalf of the applicant to review the changes, which included the following:

- The addition was stepped in by 12 inches on each side and the roof ridge was lowered;
- The screened porch would replicate the front porch, and the office and storage area would be under the deck and screened porch to allow the second floor to be lower;
- Rooflines and windows would be smaller;
- The aluminum would be replaced with wood cedar clapboards;
- The windows would be Marvin Elevate 2/1 SDLs with black exterior;
- The front door and porch door on the front façade would be replaced with a wooden door with six lights and a Dutch door, respectively; and
- The grade on the back elevation would continue to slope down, and a low brick retaining wall would be placed near the mudroom door.

Ms. Ruedig said it was a very successful plan and thought stepping down the roofline ridge and simplifying the addition would fit in nicely. She asked if the proposed window would have a black frame on the trim or a black sash. Ms. Dutton said the sash and mullions would be black and the window trim and siding would be white. Mr. Adams said removing the aluminum siding would expose the window casings and the sills would be missing. He asked if there would be gutters on the addition. Ms. Dutton said she wasn't a fan of gutters and that there was a good control of water flow. Mr. Adams said the brackets for the front doorway were a little fancy to be used for the back of the house, and he also suggested a whitewash on the new brick to have it match existing. Vice-Chair Wyckoff recommended simplifying the brackets on the more contemporary back and sides of the home. He said he was happy with the massing and recommended restoring the rake boards on the front and right yard elevations.

Chairman Lombardi opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested stipulating that the side balances of the Marvin windows be either black or dark so that they didn't stick out. Ms. Ruedig said a liner holding the screen would be black, and it would be appropriate if the frame and jamb liner matched it or if the sash was black. She said a different bracket design could also be stipulated.

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

1. *The frame and door jamb liner shall be white to match the trim and the sash shall be black.*
2. *The rear brackets should be simplified and shall return for Administrative Approval.*
3. *Half-screens shall be used.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded.

Ms. Ruedig said the project would preserve the integrity of the District, have compatibility of design with surrounding properties, and relate to the historic and architectural value of the existing structure. She noted that the massing was in line with the neighboring properties.

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

2. Petition of **Jewell Court Properties, LLC, owner, and Jessica Kaiser, Applicant**, for property located at **33 Jewell Court**, wherein permission was requested to allow renovations to an existing structure (replace slate roofing with slate asphalt shingle) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 155 as Lot 5-S1 and lies within the Character District 4-W (CD4-W) and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant Jessica Kaiser was present. She said some of the existing slate roof was sliding off and that the entire roof should be replaced due to its age and poor condition. She said the proposed asphalt slate would match the other buildings in the complex. She said she was concerned about the cupolas because the roof was held up by beams but had no standard wall structure to support it. She said she had considered composite slate but thought it looked fake.

Mr. Ryan said asphalt shingles would make the roof look totally different and that he could not support the removal of something that made the building a great example of mill building architecture. He said he could support a composite slate roof because it was closer to the existing one. Mr. Adams agreed and said the original roof made the building historic and that a new slate roof would benefit future owners. Ms. Kaiser said she had concerns with economics and functionality. Ms. Ruedig said many slate roofs were reaching their life expectancy and that the building wasn't South Church or a downtown focal building. She said that, in certain situations, all parts had to be weighed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and thought that perhaps it was time to replace the roof. He said they didn't want to lose a 170-year-old roof but the fasteners under it were rusted and a slate could fall down and kill someone. Ms. Trace asked if the applicant had considered faux-slate shingles, and Ms. Kaiser said they were about the same price as real slate.

Mr. Ryan said he wasn't comfortable with replacing the slate with asphalt because the mill had a continuous history that should be preserved for centuries to come. Ms. Kaiser said the slates were fragile and falling down. Mr. Ryan suggested Boral composite slate. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said the slate was removed from other Chinberg buildings next door and the commission had no objections because the buildings weren't in the District. Ms. Doering said the District's lines were where they were. She said the building was historic, and if the cupolas were removed and a new solid slate roof were added, there wouldn't be people walking on that roof for years or slates falling down. She said she would not support replacing the roof with asphalt.

Mr. Cracknell said he would review the commission's comments with Ms. Kaiser and that Ms. Kaiser could return at the next meeting with other options.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **continue** the public hearing to the December 2, 2020 meeting, and Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0*

3. Petition of **Rebecca A. Shouse and Kathryn C. Shouse, owners**, for property located at **249 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow renovations to an existing structure (replacement of all windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 108 as Lot 7 and lies within the Mixed Research office (MRO) and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Project architect Jennifer Ramsey was present, along with contractor Adam Butler and owner Kathryn Shouse. Ms. Ramsey reviewed the petition and said Marvin Elevate windows would be the replacement windows.

Mr. Adams asked if the proposed window had a sash and jamb extension and a plastic fin sticking out. Mr. Butler said there would be replacement sashes from the inside, and the exterior trim would remain. In response to further questions, Mr. Butler discussed the existing sash weights and said the replacement windows would have less glass. Mr. Ryan said more frame would be seen in the window area due to the jamb liners. He asked if all the storms would be removed. Mr. Butler agreed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff thought the new windows would be a huge improvement and would eliminate the ragtag assortment of storm windows. Ms. Ruedig asked what kind of profile the flange would have. Mr. Butler said it wouldn't stick out and would be white on white and fiberglass clad. Ms. Ruedig said she could support the replacement window and hoped that the window's style would match the width of the muntin bars.

Chairman Lombardi opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

No one 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 application as presented, and Mr. Ryan seconded.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project would preserve the integrity of the District because the replacement windows would look the same. He said it would encourage the innovative use of technology and materials and would relate to the special and defining character of the property, including the details. He said it was a win-win situation all around and that the removal of the window weights was important.

*The motion **passed** by a vote of 6-1, with Mr. Adams voting in opposition to the motion.*

4. Petition of **Michael and Claudette Moretto Baker, owners**, for property located at **5 Hancock Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (add 2nd floor to garage and expand existing garage and connector) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 103 as Lot 86 and lies within the Mixed Research Office (MRO) and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Project architect Anne Whitney was present on behalf of the applicant Claudette Moretto Baker, who was also present. Ms. Whitney reviewed the changes. She said a small room was added above the connector; the garage wall height was raised a foot; the Andersen E Series windows would match the other windows; a screened heat pump would be added; and the second-story gable would have double-hung windows, with some casements added to the connector.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he appreciated the work done with the frieze board, crown moulding, and return. He said he had no problem with the windows. He thought the garage looked a bit narrow due to its added height but said it wasn't a big deal. Ms. Ruedig said that increasing the pitch of the roof over the garage looked more appropriate. She said it was a simple and nice design. Mr. Ryan said the garage was a bit tall and suggested adding light fixtures above the garage doors. City Council Representative Trace said it was a great addition that would make the house read much better. The light fixtures were further discussed.

Chairman Lombardi opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, with the following **stipulation**:*

- 1. The applicant shall submit spec. sheets for the light fixtures to be located above the garage doors for Administrative Approval.*

City Council Representative Trace seconded.

Ms. Ruedig said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and relate to the historic and architectural value of the existing structure.

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

5. Petition of **Daniel and Kristin Posternak, owners**, for property located at **57 Salter Street**, wherein permission was 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.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Project designer Brandon McNamara was present and reviewed the petition. He said they wanted to remove the skylights and reorganize the windows and doors, add two recessed porches and an AC unit to the rear, replace the exterior in kind, and replace the roof with architectural shingles. He said the owners wanted to get rid of the muntin bars on the doors and wanted Green Mountain wood windows and Marvin bi-fold doors.

In response to questions from the commission, Mr. McNamara said the bi-fold doors had a four-way fold and that the back of the house was seen from the water and Peirce Island. Mr. Ryan said he liked everything but thought the muntins would have to be kept or the sliders would look too modern. Ms. Ruedig agreed and said it would be too much of a glaring contrast with the historic house. She said the redesign was appropriate for the District and that the doorway on the connector was an improvement as well. Ms. Doering said she supported the project as presented. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he preferred to see the muntins on the doors.

Mr. Adams said the project was a demonstration of excess and had nothing to do with the integrity of the District. He said 18th-century buildings didn't have multiple windows mullied together or multi-lighted doors. He said he couldn't support it. City Council Representative Trace agreed and said she struggled with all the mullioned windows on the back.

Chairman Lombardi opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

No one 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 application as presented, and Ms. Ruedig seconded.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said there were six existing mullioned windows together on the back, and one of them had three mullioned windows together. He said the applicant was just changing things around to make their lifestyle more comfortable. He said the project would encourage designs for new buildings, structures, and additions and would also encourage the use of innovative technologies. He said it picked up on the character of surrounding properties, some of which were excessively built out.

Chairman Lombardi said he thought the house was really lost thirty years ago when the renovations were done. He said it would be one thing if the applicant was trying to restore it back to what it was, but it was a new house, as far as he was concerned.

*The motion **passed** by a vote of 5-2, with Mr. Adams and City Council Representative Trace voting in opposition to the motion.*

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary