

**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 2020-21, 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.

December 09, 2020

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to **approve** the applicant's request to withdraw Work Session 3, 21 Fernault Court.*

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 37 South Street

The request was to place a lattice screen on three sides beneath a deck that was previously approved by the Commission. Mr. Cracknell showed an example of the vertical lattice and reviewed the dimensions.

2. 50 New Castle Avenue

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant modified the bracket design for his previously-approved petition. He showed a diagram of the submitted bracket design. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the bracket shouldn't have sharp edges and suggested that it be chamfered, and the Commission agreed. Project architect Amy Dutton was present and said she was fine with the suggestion.

It was stipulated that the bracket shall have a one-inch chamfered edge.

3. 553-559 Islington Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant simplified the trim on his small building in response to a previous stipulation for his approved petition. Mr. Ryan said the design was better than the previous one, and Ms. Ruedig said it was fine.

It was stipulated that the two-light door option shown in the elevation shall be used.

4. 21 South Street

The request was to replace an existing fence with a new fence of a different design and material (natural cedar instead of pine) and to move it a few inches onto the property.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** Administrative Items 1, 2, 3, and 4, with the stipulations as noted on Items 2 and 3. Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

1. 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. *(This item was continued at the November 02, 2020 meeting to the December, 2020 meeting.)*

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant Jessica Kaiser was present and reviewed the petition. She said the slate roof was badly deteriorating and causing shingles to fall. She said it was also leaking and that most of the leaking was coming from the cupolas. She said the engineer and architect that she consulted did not recommend putting the slate back on the roof, due to its age, so she wanted to use a slate-like material as a replacement. She reviewed replacement options, including natural slate, composite slate, and asphalt shingles. Ms. Kaiser noted that some of the Commissioners had suggested removing the cupolas and replacing them with slate. Vice-Chair Wyckoff verified that the cupolas were open to the inside of the building and performed a function. He said they were a more modern style but that there were very few 170-year-old cupolas that had not been significantly rebuilt. He said the leaking might be due to not being able to properly flash the cupolas with the slate roof. He said he preferred that the cupolas be preserved and repaired.

City Council Representative Trace said the slate was as much of a defining historic aspect of the building as the cupolas. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said the present use of the building didn't comport to the part of history that the applicant claimed to be preserving. Ms. Kaiser said it was an office building and her goal was to preserve the exterior of the building. She said the composite slate replacement was expensive and that the surrounding buildings in the complex had asphalt roofs. Chairman Lombardi noted that each building was reviewed by the Commission as a separate entity. Mr. Ryan said buildings in Portsmouth gained value because the City's architectural heritage was protected and that Ms. Kaiser would put money back into her property by replacing the slate. He thought the roof was failing because it hadn't been properly vented, and ice damming was breaking up the edge. He said the roof could be saved if the damming effect was repaired on the first five feet of the building and the ridge was repaired and properly flashed. The project contractor Adam Butler was present and said the Commission had approved a non-slate roof on a private building and that the applicant's roof posed a safety problem. Mr. Ryan said the Commission cared about safety but had to preserve the District. Ms. Doering said the Commission's scope was the historic nature of the building and that they couldn't solve maintenance or financial problems.

Ms. Ruedig said it was clear that the applicant had exhausted all the options. She thought the replacement option would be an appropriate alternative because the other buildings in the complex all had asphalt shingles. She said the applicant's building was a piece of a significant set of historic buildings in the west end but that it wasn't a focal building. She said it was a private building and not a large entity that an owner could fundraise or get grants for. She said there had to be a balance and thought the applicant's proposal was appropriate because it matched the context and was an acceptable solution.

Ms. Kaiser said the Slateline asphalt shingle was her choice because it was historic-looking, durable, and affordable. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the Commission's third criteria was that the project's proposed exterior, design, scale, texture and so on complement or enhance the existing structure and be compatible with surrounding properties. He agreed with the applicant that it was best to replace the roof and have it match the rest of the buildings in the complex.

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 petition as presented, including that the cupolas be retained. Ms. Ruedig seconded.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff referred to his previous statement regarding Criteria 3. Mr. Ryan said he wouldn't support an asphalt shingle replacement but would accept a composite, even though it really couldn't compare with slate. Council Representative Trace said the Commission didn't

have a say in the other buildings, but the applicant's building fell under their purview. She said she could not support replacing a slate roof with asphalt.

*The motion **failed** by a vote of 5-2, with Mr. Ryan, Mr. Adams, Ms. Trace, Ms. Margot, and Chairman Lombardi voting in opposition. The Certificate of Approval was denied.*

III. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Work Session requested by **100 Market Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **100 Market Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (remove and replace existing front corner entrance) and renovations to an existing structure (remove sunshades) as per plans on file on the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 118 as Lot 6 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD5) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the November 10, 2020 meeting to the December, 2020 meeting.)*

Project designer Tim Hart representing the applicant was present and said modifications were made based on the Commission's feedback from the previous work sessions, as follows:

- The thin canopy at the corner entry would be replaced with a different steel and glass canopy;
- The entry system would remain in its proposed location as a full-glass storefront;
- The stainless steel material would be replaced with a dark anodized aluminum for the columns and cladding material on the precast pillars;
- The exterior pavers would include a granite paver; and
- The awnings along the street would be removed.

Ms. Doering said she liked the new design a lot better. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was a much better proposal and was happy that the Paul Revere bronze tablet was preserved. Mr. Ryan agreed and said maintaining the pedestrian experience at the entrance and the walkway was important. In response to Mr. Ryan's questions, Mr. Hart said the columns would be clad with aluminum composite material and the existing precast concrete would be removed. He said the columns would have seams at the side. Mr. Ryan said the texture would be a good thing. He said the new signage had a rich material and looked terrific. Mr. Sauk-Schubert agreed and said the entrance was much improved. He asked if the actual entry door could be black to match the anodized black material, and Mr. Hart said they could consider it.

Chairman Lombardi said it was a great improvement but that he was disappointed that the awnings would be removed from the sides of the building, noting that they were a defining characteristic of the building. He asked if the column on the Hanover Street side at the back entrance would be treated the same as the other columns. Mr. Hart said the other entrance was more of an office one and that the goal was to mark the entrance as a special place that addressed retail. He said he would talk to his client about keeping the awnings on the sides. Ms. Ryan agreed that the loss of the awnings made the sides of the building look barren. Mr. Heinz-Schubert asked what would happen to the remnants of the removed awning brackets. Mr. Hart said he didn't think there was a way to hide the remnants.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

The applicant said he would return for a public hearing at a future meeting.

IV. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Work Session requested by **City of Portsmouth, owner**, for property located at **Marcy Street (Prescott Park)** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior construction to an existing structure (elevate, remove additions, and re-locate the Shaw Warehouse on-site) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 104 as Lot 5 and lies within the Municipal (M) and Historic Districts.

City Facilities Manager Joe Almeida and landscape architect Sheri Ruane were present. Mr. Almeida said the project was a high-profile one that would impact some of the historic architecture at Prescott Park. Ms. Ruane reviewed the petition. She said the Shaw Warehouse was vulnerable at its present site, so they wanted to elevate it and move it toward Marcy Street. She said the lean-to building and the garage would probably not survive a raising and moving and had less historic value. She said the Prescott Park stage could be placed in a better space as well. She said they wanted a new addition that would preserve the Shaw Warehouse better.

City Council Representative Trace asked why the applicant would put a temporary stage in a location that was sensitive to flooding. Ms. Ruane said the stage was there for only one season and the materials were more resilient than the Shaw building. Ms. Trace said the stage would be moved closer to a residential neighborhood. Ms. Ruane said they were working with audio consultants and would be able to mitigate the sound from the stage and direct it to the performance lawn. Ms. Ruedig said she was pleased that the City was taking a lead on addressing water issues that were occurring due to climate change and sea level rises. She said the water retention base was a great option and that the option to pick up historic wooden structures and move them out of harm's way was the best one. She asked if the Sheafe Warehouse would also be lifted up. Ms. Ruane said that it eventually would but was four feet higher than the Shaw Warehouse and was the safer building of the two. She said the Shaw building would have a new foundation and that the site would be regraded. Ms. Ruedig recommended that the addition be smaller than the Shaw Warehouse.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked if the Shaw Warehouse would be stripped of its shingles and redone. Ms. Ruane said they wanted to preserve the Shaw Warehouse in its historic context and allow people to have meetings in it and so on. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he had no problem if new shingles were put on the building because it happened to historic shingled buildings every 30 or 40 years. He said he was concerned with the look of the new addition and preferred to see a simple rustic style on it, with maybe the windows being similar to the Shaw Warehouse. Chairman Lombardi asked about the permanent stage's location. Ms. Ruane said they would remove the platform and shift it back. She said the phasing intention was to put a temporary stage back but not all the way, and if an addition was approved, it would allow some of the trailers to be removed and the first floor of the addition to be used for dressing rooms and so on.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kerry Vautrot representing the Portsmouth Advocates said the Shaw Warehouse was a contributing resource and one of the few examples of maritime architecture, and she wanted to ensure that the National Park Service guidelines were considered. She recommended that the applicant consider what documentation would be done before the relocation and that the height change and grading be compatible with the building's scale.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

The applicant said they would return for a future work session.

2. Work Session requested by **Michael Stasiuk, owner**, and **Louis Canotas, applicant**, for property located at **41 Dearborn Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (construct addition between existing home and garage) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 140 as Lot 2 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Historic Districts.

The applicant Louis Canotas was present and said he wanted to consolidate the four additions to the original structure. He said the gap between the garage and the original structure would go away and that the house would become larger.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it wasn't right that the applicant was trying to emulate the house's Colonial style by adding the saltbox because the roof didn't have enough pitch to it. He said he didn't like a building that was right up against the garage because the garage roof would have to be removed, and he thought the house should be connected with a new structure that was larger and came across and hit the garage. He said he wasn't sure if there was a way to get two full stories over to the garage. Mr. Adams agreed and said the idea of completely filling the space between the house and the garage to get ten feet of living space seemed to be going too far. Mr. Canotas said there was only five feet between the garage and the addition's west end and that he wasn't proposing to go any farther. Ms. Ruedig said that doubling the size of the house by moving the outside wall wasn't appropriate because the house was old and simple. She said it would be better to take down the garage and design an addition that was a self-contained one to preserve the original shape of the house. She said some square footage could be gained that way and that it could still be two stories but set back.

Ms. Doering said she had looked at the addition at the back and that it wasn't subordinate to the primary building. She said the Commission didn't want to see additions that radically changed or obscured the original structure. She recommended an alternative for dealing with the back water-side addition by getting rid of it or building off of it to get an ell so that it would be subordinate and wouldn't change the original footprint of the historic structure. Mr. Ryan asked if the zoning would allow the project. Mr. Canotas said it was open to interpretation as far as the lot coverage and further discussed it. Mr. Ryan said the proposed design was not a very attractive addition and wouldn't work as presented. City Council Representative Trace said the applicant might have

issues with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) if the foundation was dug that close to the water. She said the historic form, structure, and size of the building had to be respected rather than just trying to double its size, and she recommended that the applicant find a good architect.

Mr. Ryan asked the applicant to return with views of the elevations to show the massing and scale. Ms. Trace said Ms. Doering's idea of doing an ell of the back was a good one.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Cracknell said he received a letter from the abutter Mike Brandzel at 39 Dearborn Street that raised many issues, including the saltbox design and the building's geometry. He said Mr. Brandzel suggested that the garage be detached and pushed back because it was only ten feet off the pavement and that he could not support the addition tied to the garage.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0) to **continue** the work session to the January 6, 2021 meeting.*

3. Work Session requested by **James P. Fernald owner**, and **Michael Schwartz, applicant**, for property located at **21 Fernald Court** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior construction to an existing structure (construct side addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 207 as Lot 55 and lies within the Single Residence B (SRB) and Historic Districts.

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to **withdraw** the item.*

4. Work Session requested by **Anne Moodey, owner**, for property located at **180 New Castle Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (expand front deck and rebuild (1) chimney) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 101 as Lot 23 and lies within the Single Residence B (SRB) and Historic Districts.

The applicant Anne Moodey and the project architect Michelle Shields were present. Ms. Shields reviewed the petition. She said the two chimneys were visible from the back of the house but not the road and that the right chimney had a large base. She said they wanted to remove the right chimney and the base and replicate it in kind. Ms. Moodey said she found a company that restored historic brick with restoration veneer brick. Ms. Shields said they also wanted to widen the front porch and make it five feet deep instead of four.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he had no problem with removing the right chimney as long as the contractor guaranteed that he would use historic bricks and slice them up as proposed. He said it was sad to see interior bricks removed, but he knew how much room they took up and it wasn't the Commission's purview. He said he was torn about the front stairs because the original stairs

had probably been granite steps with no landing. He said the return of the railing on the front on both sides of the steps probably made it look too contemporary. He asked why the applicant wanted it that wide. Ms. Shields said it would be nice to put a chair out there and that it would add to the street view. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was difficult to replicate a porch from the 1800s and that it should be as simple as possible. Mr. Adams said that granite steps would go in easily and last forever. He said if the original chimney was removed, it would never really be there again. Ms. Bouffard said the chimneys were necessary for the balance of the back of the house. Ms. Doering said the chimneys were like twin sisters on the house and thought it would be difficult to take one down and put replace it and match the twin. Ms. Moodey said her neighbors said they didn't have an issue with a replacement chimney and that a lot of patchwork had been done on the brick, so the chimneys didn't really match anyway.

Ms. Ruedig suggested that the applicant find someone who would do a good job with real brick. She said most of the chimneys the Commission had approved in the District were short and squat and more stable, so she was concerned about such a tall, thin chimney stack and its exposure, expansion and contraction and so on. Mr. Ryan said removing the chimney would be like cutting the heart out of the house just to have more space in the interior. He suggested adding onto the back of the house to expand the kitchen. Ms. Moodey said the center portion of the chimney was enormous and the bedrooms were small, so she wanted to get additional space on the second floor. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he felt that the contractor would do a good job in removing the chimney. He suggested that the front steps be solid granite going up, with an iron railing and a stone platform. City Council Representative Trace said something less obvious could be done, where the entrance was to one side or the other or both, which would leave space for a few chairs. It was further discussed. Mr. Ryan said he had no problem with the stairs as proposed and that they may not need to be so wide. He suggested that the first two steps be granite and then transition into wooden stairs. Ms. Doering agreed and said she would keep the chimney.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Ryan moved to **continue** the work session to the January 6, 2021 meeting, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 7-0.*

5. Work Session requested by **One Raynes Ave, LLC, 31 Raynes LLC, and 203 Maplewood Avenue, LLC, owners**, for properties located at **1 Raynes Avenue, 31 Raynes Avenue, and 203 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow the construction of a 4-5 story mixed-use building and a 5 story hotel) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 123 Lot 14, Map 123 Lot 13, and Map 123 Lot 12 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD4) and Historic Districts.

Eben Tormey of North Mill Pond Holdings and project architects Adam Morrill and Christopher Lizotte were present. Mr. Tormey reviewed the petition, saying they wanted to redevelop the site with a 5-story hotel and a four or five story mixed-use building. Mr. Morrill showed context photos and reviewed the proposed massing of the buildings.

Mr. Ryan said the amount of the project's surface parking lot in the District gave him heartburn and that it was painful to see it up against North Mill Pond. Mr. Adams agreed. Ms. Doering said she found the mass of the buildings from the North Mill Pond side distressing, noting that buildings should get smaller and lower as they approached the waterfront and not be big walls that blocked off everything. City Council Representative Trace agreed. She said the applicant was offering to give the City a path that connected with another park on the perimeter of the parking in exchange for an extra floor. She said she could not support a wall of building that was five stories tall and probably even taller with the condensers and so on. She said a beautiful waterfront path would be destroyed by a parking lot and a wall of buildings.

Ms. Ruedig said the North End Vision Plan talked about moving the heights of the buildings away from Maplewood Avenue, so she didn't have as much of a problem with the hotel in the back being bigger and taller. She said she'd like to see the 5-story building be four stories and have better stepping back and better shaping so that it wasn't so much of a wall. She said the buildings would be viewed from all sides and that the view from Maplewood Avenue was important. She said it would be hard to hide the back of the building, with its dumpsters and so on, because all the elevations would be prominent. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was important to get the pathway along the pond. He said some of the parking could be gotten rid of by reducing the size of the project. He said the residential building should tier back like a pyramid so that it gradually got taller toward the left-hand side coming down from Maplewood Avenue. He said the hotel was just another corporate hotel that was controlled by the hallways on the inside and the elevator, and that he was sick of that design and that it was time to come up with creative ideas. He said he didn't like the 5-story massing and noted that less parking spaces would be required if 20 or 30 hotel rooms were eliminated. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said he didn't have anything to say because he was speechless and couldn't believe what was being presented.

Chairman Lombardi said the North Mill Pond Vision Plan's purpose was to respond to the surrounding context by stepping down building heights and densities toward the waterfront and existing historic structures. He said the Commission had to fight with the AC hotel to reduce its massing against the 3S building and that the applicant's project was showing a huge wall up against the 3S building as well. He said the massing was way off the mark, and that defiling the Mill Pond edge with parking was unacceptable. He said people in Portsmouth were sick of the corporate architectural style of hotels and agreed that there had to be some creativity on that particular site because it was a gateway to the city. City Council Representative Trace noted that the terrace was the one interesting thing the proposed apartment building had but that no one in Portsmouth would be able to use it because it would be private. She said the applicant was creating a wall that people would see coming over the bridge onto Maplewood Avenue and into town and would also affect the nearby historic structures.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Doering moved to **continue** the petition to the January 6, 2021 meeting, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary