

April 9, 2019

Board of Adjustment
City Of Portsmouth
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801



Dear Board of Adjustment:

To address the request for additional information in the upcoming third hearing, please review the below document. I believe that this will satisfy the remaining questions posed in the second Board of Adjustment hearing held on March 19, 2019.

1. A clear explanation of how the proposed project meets all the criteria necessary to grant a variance including a more comprehensive narrative addressing how the hardship test is met with information on how this property is distinguished from other multi-family properties in the area.

We believe that the variance request for 53 Austin Street meets the following criteria in Article 2, Section 10:233.20 in that:

- The variance will not be contrary to the public interest; but will in fact invite public participation and attraction to the city. Portsmouth does not have a completely historic inn or hotel. There are historic sites where inns are operated, but this will be the only, truly historic lodging accommodation in Portsmouth – and we are brimming over with travelers and tourists who frequent this city because of it's incredibly unique historic preservation along this New England Coast.
- The spirit of the Ordinance will be observed; - we relish the thought of not destroying this historic property in favor of a modern structure.
- Substantial justice will be done; - putting a property into the public domain in this fashion is the embodiment of substantial justice being done. Allocating a piece of fine architecture such as this for public use and enjoyment is the highest and best use possible for this historic home. We owe it to future generations to leave a legacy of beauty and history in Portsmouth.
- The values of surrounding properties will not be diminished; but in fact, in our opinion will become all the more desirable and valuable.

- Literal enforcement of the provisions of the Ordinance would result in an unnecessary hardship since this property is distinguished from all others save 43 Austin Street in its rich and carefully restored historic nature.
2. Information on the historic nature of the property and the specific features of this property that make it uniquely suited to support an inn use.

43 and 53 Austin Street was built in 1804. This home began one room deep, three rooms high. The sea captain who built the home erected a wall to provide a home for his daughter who married a sea captain as well. Over the years the two homes grew exponentially but with the same stunning architectural design and detail. Since 1804, many, many historic buildings in Portsmouth have been destroyed by first, fire, then urban renewal and now the trigger happy lure of monetary gain by developers. According to Dr. Richard Candee, Professor Emeritus of American and New England Studies at Boston University and author of Building Portsmouth, 43 Austin Street together with 53 Austin St are two of the last remaining single family residences in the city of Portsmouth that have fully intact/ restored craftsmanship of the highest quality.

There is very little to zero historic architecture that remains, which is tragic.

Portsmouth played host to Russian and Japanese peace delegations in 1905. After a month of negotiations, they signed the Treaty of Portsmouth that ended the Russo-Japanese War at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Dr. Heffenger, then owner of 53 Austin, commissioned a builder to construct a grand dining room where he hosted a celebration dinner for the Russian/Japanese delegation to mark the signing of the treaty. This treaty was a major event in the history of our country and the world and therefore, most assuredly to Portsmouth. Today, this property is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. See below from US Department of the Interior National Park service/National Register of Historic Places:

53 Harris-Heffenger House, ca. 1800 (14, 15, 16, 17)

The Harris-Heffenger House at 53 Austin Street is a three-story, five-by-two-bay, rectangular, wood-frame Federal-style residence with symmetrical southeast (facade) elevation. The building has an asphalt-shingle-clad hipped roof with overhanging eaves, denticulated cornice, three gable dormers with triangular pediment at the front slope, and brick chimney at the rear slope. Walls are clapboard and rest on a parged and granite foundation. The facade has a wood-paneled entrance door with single-light elliptical fanlight and rectangular sidelights surmounted by a flat-roof portico with overhanging bracketed eaves supported by channeled columns at the entrance porch. The northwest elevation has a two-story, gable ell with a shed-roof

dormer at the southwest slope and a brick chimney at the ridge. The building shares a northeast wall with the Austin-Pickering House at 43 Austin Street. Most windows are six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash with simple surrounds and bracketed lintels. C

West of the main building is a mid-nineteenth-century, two-story, seven-bay-by-two-bay, wood-frame barn with a slate-shingle-clad side-gable roof and center ridge cupola. It has remnants of a brick chimney stack on the west elevation, clapboard walls, six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash windows, and a one-story, full-width, shed-roof porch at the facade. The barn has been converted for use as an apartment building. C

Attached to the northwest corner of the main building is a late nineteenth-century, one-story, three-bay, wood-frame wagon shed with an asphalt-shingle-clad, side-gable roof and clapboard siding. C

A late twentieth-century, one-story, one-bay, wood-frame shed with an asphalt-shingle-clad side-gable roof, drop board siding, and a double-leaf, vertical board door is west of the main building. NC

In addition, Dr. Richard Candee wrote a brilliant description of the property in his book, *Building Portsmouth*. Taken altogether, these irrefutable facts deem this property unequivocally separate from all other surrounding properties [save 43 Austin] and therefore perfectly suited as an inn use. The proposed use of a historic property such as this is a reasonable one.

3. More information to support the argument that the value of the surrounding properties will not be diminished.

As professionals in the financial and investment sector for more than 40 years with access to all global market financial data, both myself and Frank Veneroso can attest to the fact that the information you seek through this question is not a data point that is tracked. There is no data to support changes – whether positive or declining – in surrounding property values when change in use variances are granted. However, we defer to industry expert for this industry knowledge:

FROM TONY JALBERT _ Sotheby's International – Tate & Foss

"In my best opinion, the variance is granted to the specific property and has no adverse effect on the surrounding properties. We don't have one source of data to support the

increase or decrease of value. However, as we all know Portsmouth, the area has been dotted with hospitality licenses and I haven't seen anything that has slowed the train down in terms of value". – Tony Jalbert, Sotheby's International Tate & Foss

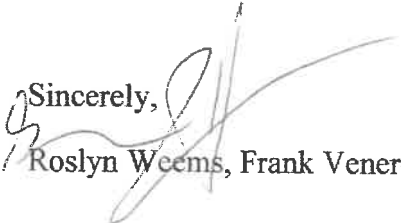
4. Details on how the inn will function, with floor plans including the reception sign-in area, a plan for the proposed signage, food service and how the inn will be advertised.

This inn will function as a traditional inn – by providing accommodations for transient guests along with breakfast and snacks. Guests will be checked in digitally and in a foyer which will serve as a reception area, provided accommodation and optional breakfast and will check out. Housekeeping will be included in the stay. Food service is for guests only and not the general public. The inn will be advertised using current technology included but not limited to website, social media and local chamber of commerce. I included in the original application a rough floor plan. Please refer to that.

Since signs must be permitted in order to be erected anywhere in Portsmouth according to Section 10.1210 Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Ordinance, I will place the appropriate sign as per the ordinance type number location size and illumination in an approved location. As regards the sign - I plan to purchase from the Portsmouth Historical Society and it will in no way diminish the character of the property or the surrounding properties or neighborhood. As I said in the initial hearing in February this year, the sign for this inn will not be a neon sign but it will be what is permitted and appropriate to the historic nature and character of the property.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,


Roslyn Weems, Frank Veneroso

Venerose/Wearns

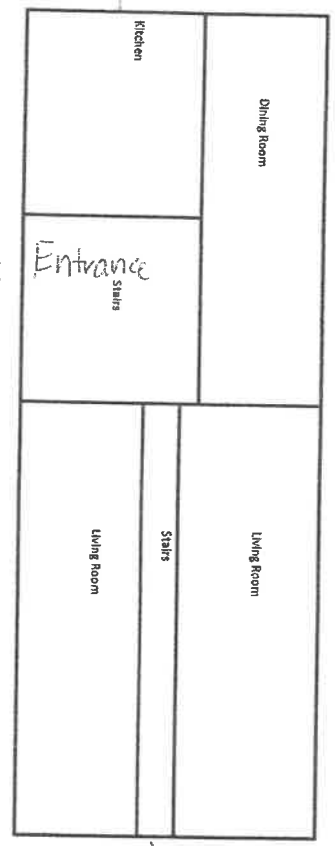
53 Austin Street

Portsmouth, NH 03807

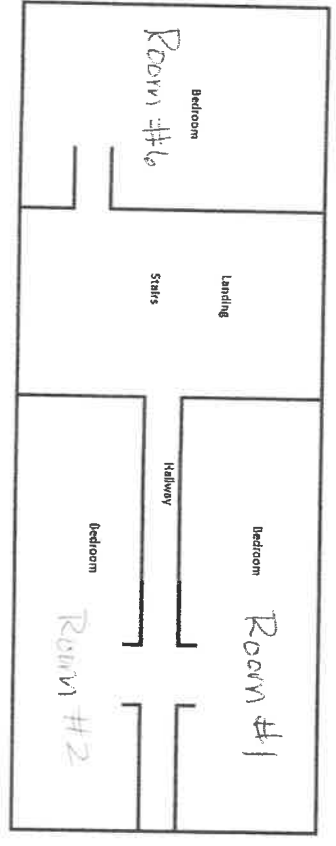
Main House Floor Plan

Permit # LD 19-17

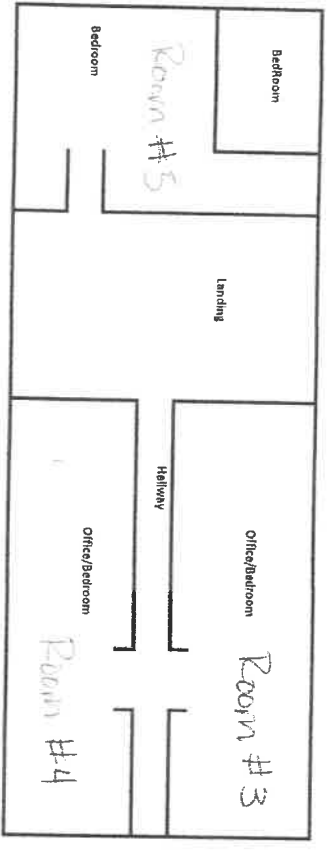
First Floor Layout



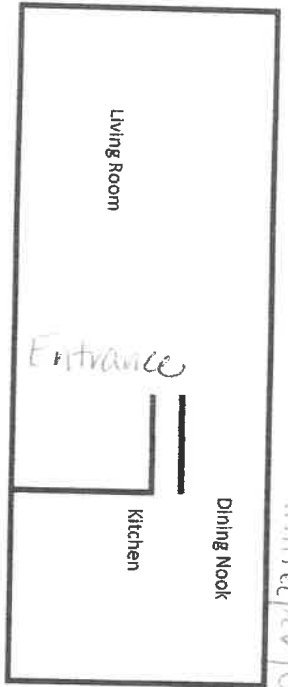
Second Floor Layout



Third Floor Layout

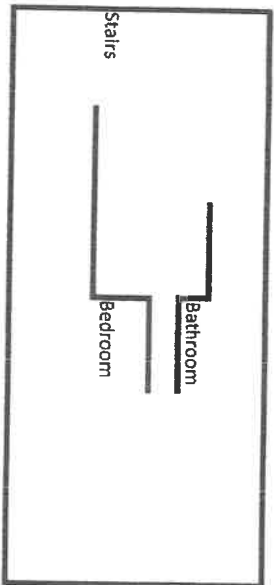


53 A Austin Street - First Floor Layout



makeover/owner

53 A Austin Street - Second Floor Layout



Venues/Wrants

53 Austin Street

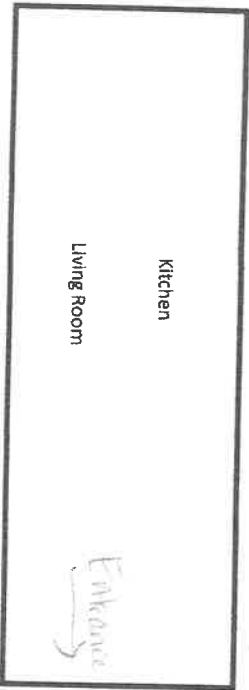
Paulsboro, NJ 03501

Carrage House

Floor Plan

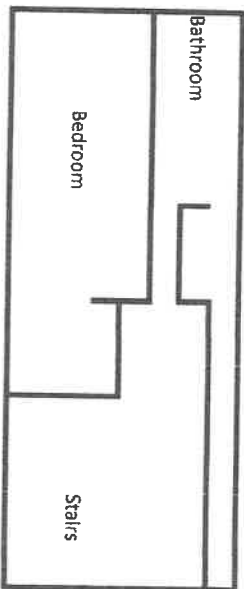
Permit # LA 19-17

53 B Austin Street - First Floor Layout

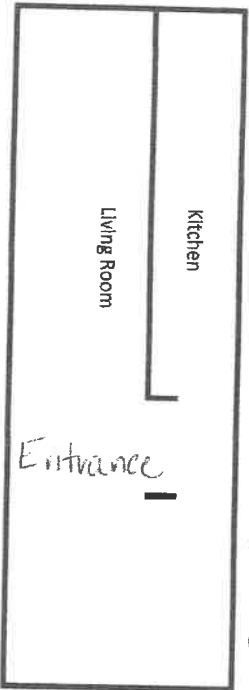


Room #7

53 B Austin Street - Second Floor Layout



53 C Austin Street - First Floor Layout



Room #8

53 C Austin Street - Second Floor Layout

