

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
1 JUNKINS AVENUE  
City Council Chambers**

7:00 p.m.

April 13, 2005

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman John Rice, Vice Chairman David Adams, City Council Representative, Joanne Grasso, Planning Board Representative, Ken Smith, Members, Rick Becksted, and, Alternates, Richard Katz and Sandra Dika

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ellen Fineberg and John Golumb

**ALSO PRESENT:** David Holden, Planning Director

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**I. WORK SESSION**

**A) Work Session requested by Mr. Peterson Peterson, applicant and HarborCorp, LLC, owner** for property located on Russell St., Deer St., and Maplewood Avenue (to review preliminary proposals to construct a 200 room hotel with 20,000 ± sq. ft. conference facility and 680 ± car parking garage). Said property is shown on Assessor Plans 119 as Lot 001, Plan 118, Lot 28, Plan 124, Lot 12 and Plan 125, Lots 20 and 21 and lies within the Central Business A and Historic A districts.

- Mr. Peterson and Ms. Ludwick presented the modifications
- He stated that the team took the time to incorporate the ideas suggested at the previous meeting
- They lowered the number of rooms to be around 200
- They rereviewed all support areas due to the high ratios and removed most
- They shaved 90 feet off of the end of the building which resulted in less scale and no reconstruction of Russell or Green Street
- One access to the complex on Deer Street due to shared concerns about vehicular and pedestrian traffic in and out of the parking garage and the loading dock
- Their solution was to remove the loading dock from Deer Street and relocate it on the railroad side
- They presented a revised model with greater detail depicting the dramatic changes to the streetscape and architecture
- Ms. Ludwick brought a piece of the old model and compared that with the new
- The building is significantly shorter, much less massing
- Due to the building being shortened it allowed two elevations
- They created a main entry at the top of Russell Street
- They incorporated loading, trash removal and service onto Woodbury Avenue
- They now have short term drop off spaces

- The parking garage still has the same sloped style design
- The parking garage entry on Maplewood Avenue would hold spaces for the City and the hotel
- They tightened up the public area and added additional conference space
- They moved administrative offices onto the second floor and added several smaller conference rooms
- They still suggest a sky connector
- The shortening of the building did change the hotel rooms slightly; larger suites on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> levels
- The exhibit hall ballroom would face Deer Street
- The elevations on Russell Street were similar to the last presentation
- They dormered the roof
- Ms. Ludwick noted that Market Street is 45 feet from building wall to building wall and that they are at 60 feet at least
- She pointed out the octagonal forms was changed on Deer Street which was squared now but that they wanted to keep Russell Street octagonal
- She moved onto the design of the garage which has a lighter steele framed structure and a more enclosed stair element and noted that the entry to the garage is much less dramatic
- Chairman Rice brought up the massing to the Board and suggested comment on the same
- Vice Chairman Adams liked the pulling back and shortening of the building
- He felt the change opened it up more and did not have a tunnel like feel
- He was pleased with the proposed changes in the drop-off area and the corner on Deer Street is much better
- He thought the ballroom section was more interesting than the previous design and loved the loading dock area
- He thought that they were all great moves
- Everyone on the Board agreed with Vice Chairman Adams' comments
- Chairman Rice asked for everyone to focus on Deer Street and noted that there was still a lot of glass on the stair tower to the garage
- Councilor Grasso liked the entry and didn't think it was abrasive; the tower still had a lot of glass but it was better than the last one presented
- Mr. Becksted asked how much masonry versus glass that was incorporated in the design and if they were fixed in detail
- Ms. Ludwick felt the handout depicted a rough idea of what they wanted to do
- Mr. Becksted though the whole façade was very plain looking
- Ms. Dika thought it was contemporary and was very pleased with the entry on the garage
- Mr. Katz mentioned that someone earlier noted a mill complex and he felt the garage in whole reflected a mill complex but didn't like garage entrance; it didn't seem to fit in with the City
- He remarked that symmetry works sometimes and he thought that the garage entry was skipping a beat and that it may need to match end of the garage façade
- Vice Chairman Adams wanted to know why they designed the roof like that and asked if they really needed such volume
- He stated that he didn't like the octagon shape on the end of the building and agreed with Mr. Katz's comments/suggestions

- Chairman Rice asked whether the entry way of the garage should be arched because all of the other entry ways were arched
- Mr. Smith agreed with Mr. Katz's comments and also agreed with Chairman Rice about the arch
- He thought they should mimic the end elevation with the banding
- He agreed with Vice Chairman Adams, he did not like the roof
- He thought that Russell Street should be brick and semiticious or wood instead of all brick and that a lot of the buildings are a combination of materials in downtown
- He noted in the other drawings that were presented the buildings were different as they moved down the street and currently they look too repetitious
- Chairman Rice asked if there was anyone else who wanted to comment on Deer Street and then asked the public the same question
- Mr. John Grossman made some suggestions about changing the roof
- Ms. Ludwick suggested it could be flat and the Board seemed receptive to that idea
- Vice Chairman Adams suggested that they look at some buildings downtown for design ideas on the change of the roof and named a few in particular
- A member of the public expressed her concern about the volume of traffic and the garage entry point since the new Hilton Garden Inn would be directing their traffic onto Deer Street due to the failing intersection
- Ms. Ludwick noted that the garage system would be pay before you leave so there would not be backup from that point and that the Maplewood Avenue entry would be designated parking only
- Mr. David Holden noted that they do have the proper distance
- Chairman Rice asked them to move onto Russell Street
- Mr. Becksted asked if a little bit of the detail or articulation was gone that was on their other plans and if they were simplifying the design; the elevations have a lot of square windows just as wide as tall
- Ms. Ludwick agreed with Mr. Becksted about the proportions of the windows and that they need to be changed
- Vice Chairman Adams stated that the balance was off
- Ms. Ludwick noted that the floor to floor heights would be different due to tricky elevation restrictions
- Chairman Rice thought all the brick without being broken up gave a grey appearance and suggested another band
- Ms. Ludwick noted that she was worried about there being to many transitions within the entire structure; she thought they could make it more similar
- Chairman Rice asked if anyone would like to comment on anything else
- Ms. Dika said that earlier in referencing alternative materials the suggestion of metal was mentioned and she didn't like that idea
- Ms. Ludwick felt that the bays needed to be a colored metal
- Vice Chairman Adams suggested they look at the Rockingham Hotel for ideas
- Chairman Rice asked about elevators
- Mr. Peterson and Ms. Ludwick said there would be multiple elevators but that they haven't worked on those particular aspects as of yet
- Mr. Katz suggested to use materials that mimic cast iron since that is a prominent element in downtown

- Chairman Rice noted that a great interest the Board has in this project is in the mechanicals as well as how they would design the walkway connecting the hotel to the conference center
  - He hoped that it won't look like Logan Airport's connector
  - Mr. Smith made the final comment that he wanted to see the details on the rear of the building facing the railroad
  - He thought the detail on the front façade of the building should carry over onto the rear
  - Mr. Becksted noted that the whole building is very visible and they should add some interest onto that side
  - Mr. Peterson noted that they had the same challenge with the designing of the Sheraton because there wasn't any back side to the building and that they would handle the same challenges with the new building's design
  - Vice Chairman Adams suggested that they provide the Board with different perspectives from the affected streets
  - Chairman Rice suggested another work session to be held but on a regularly scheduled meeting
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## II. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:15 P.M., a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved with a 7-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina V. Staples  
HDC Secretary

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