

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**1 JUNKINS AVENUE
City Council Chambers**

7:00 p.m.

November 2, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman John Rice, Vice Chairman David Adams, , Members, Ellen Fineberg, John Golumb and Richard Katz, Alternates Sandra Dika and John Wyckoff

MEMBERS ABSENT: City Council Representative, Joanne Grasso, Planning Board Representative, Ken Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Building Inspector

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting of October 5, 2005

It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the Minutes as presented.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A) Work Session/Public Hearing for Peirce Block Condominiums, owner and Donald Rosella, applicant for property located at **3 Market Square** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace existing windows facing Market Square and High Street with vinyl windows containing the grids inside the glass) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 17 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts. This item was tabled at the October 5, 2005 meeting to the November 2, 2005 meeting.

It was moved by Vice-Chairman Adams, seconded by Mr. Golumb, and passed unanimously to remove the request from the table.

Chairman Rice called for the applicant to speak to the petition and, with no response, it was moved by Vice-Chairman Adams, seconded by Mr. Golumb, and passed unanimously to table the petition to the end of the session.

Just prior to beginning the Work Sessions, Vice-Chairman Adams moved to table the petition until the December 7, 2005 meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Golumb, and passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **Petition for Agostino Alessi, owner and Nickerson-Remick, applicant** for property located at **40 Prospect Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing building (remove existing roofing, remove rear left chimney to below roof line and replace shingles in kind) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 141 as Lot 12 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Messrs. Nickerson and. Richards, representing Nickerson-Remick, indicated they are speaking for the applicant. Of the two chimneys, one is utilized by utilities and the other, with nothing attached, needs repairs beyond the application of tar which is all the owners have been able to do. The chimney is now acting as a funnel; the mortar is almost gone; and water runs into the house. They would like to remove the chimney and sheath and shingle over the space.

In response to questions from Ms. Dika, Ms. Fineberg and Mr. Katz, they indicated that there were non-functioning fireplaces attached to the chimney, it was structurally unsound and they didn't know if it was original. The chimney would be just below the roof line and could be brought back in the future.

Chairman Rice stated that what the Commission is struggling with is that, if approved, this would remove one of the unique features of the property which give it character. If this is not an original chimney, at some future date, perhaps someone could put back a chimney that would be more suited to the period.

Mr. Wyckoff commented that the chimney appears to him to be original and noted that the cost of taking care of 6 or 7 joints and capping might be equal to taking it down.

Mr. Richards stated that, with what would be necessary to fix, there would be an entirely new structure. They would have to go several courses below the roof line and that might not meet today's codes. The owners can't wait much longer as it is leaking badly in the kitchen.

Chairman Rice stated that the Commission can empathize, but removing a piece of character is against their charge.

Mr. Katz stated he saw no harm to the historical context of the City if the chimney disappeared.

Mr. Golumb disagreed, stating that if there were another house in the neighborhood with the same problem, they would then be without two chimneys. There would be no problem if preventative maintenance had been done and he asked if a mason had inspected the chimney.

Mr. Richards stated the owner had maintained while he was still physically able, but it has now reached a point where it has to come down. The owner could not afford a mason,

but the cost for them to take down would be approximately the cost of a dumpster, cheaper than to try to flash it.

After Chairman Rice reiterated that they could set a precedent of removing chimneys rather than rebuilding, Mr. Katz stated that they judge each application separately and he didn't feel there was particular distinction to this building.

Chairman Rice added that, because they don't have all the information in front of them, such as cost estimates for other courses of action, he was not convinced that repairing is more expensive.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if they were stripping the entire roof and Mr. Richards answered, "yes."

Mr. Wyckoff stated they were only stripping because they were taking down the chimney. A repair could be done to correct a bad leak around the chimney for less money. His feeling was that a hardship in the property needs to be demonstrated, similar to that needed for a variance, not a personal situation. He felt a repair could be made to the chimney that would serve the owners temporarily.

Mr. Richards stated that, if you leaned heavily against the chimney, it would come down and reiterated the cost would be basically the cost of a dumpster.

In response to a question from Ms. Fineberg, Mr. Richards stated that the reason the roof was being replaced was because it was of an age where a patch was no longer feasible.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

With no one rising, the public hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Katz made a motion to approve the petition as presented, which was seconded by Vice-Chairman Adams.

Mr. Adams detailed the reasons for his belief that late federal house chimneys were not built like this. He felt the presenters had been direct about the problem and solution. The masonry mass is unstable. Usually the brick is not exposed at the top, but is capped. If more damage takes place, it will take more of house with it. While he feels it is important to keep those features that contribute to the neighborhood, he agrees with the applicant and will support the motion. However, if the issue ever comes back, he will do everything to make sure the chimney comes back in place.

Ms. Dika stated she did not believe it was the original chimney and would support the motion. Mr. Wyckoff stated he would also.

The motion to approve passed by a vote of 5 to 1, with Mr. Golumb voting against the motion and Ms. Fineberg abstaining.

2. Work Session/Public Hearing for Thomas Hindle, owner and Roe Cole, applicant for property located at **204 Washington Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing building (convert existing duplex into a single family dwelling; replacing front entry doors with single entry door with pediment and add a window to RH side facing driveway) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 109 as Lot 29 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

Chairman Rice stated that they were now in work session mode and that they were basically talking about converting a doorway to a single doorway with a pediment and adding a window. He asked if what was in the packet was what the applicants were proposing.

Mr. Roe Cole, the contractor for the project, indicated they are now leaning toward the picture in their packet, identified as house #205 and will be duplicating the detail moldings and dimensions.

In response to a question from Ms. Fineberg, he stated they are requesting approval of the nine panels as shown in the house #205 picture.

Ms. Dika asked when the house was built and Mr. Cole indicated that it was pieced together over time. The right hand side is original and he estimated the stairwell to the attic is original – about 1760. They intend to keep as much of the original panelling as possible.

Ms. Dika stated that her question had more to do with the fact that the pediment as proposed is more formal than what is there now. Mr. Cole clarified that, with two doors, the pediment had to be as it is currently built.

Chairman Rice commented that he didn't see a drawing of the face of the building where the new window is going in and asked the size.

Mr. Cole stated that, with the house so close, it was hard to get a picture, but it would be 6 over 6, replicating the other windows as closely as possible.

Vice Chairman Adams asked if they were going to be replacing a lot of clapboard and if they realized how the clapboard was constructed. He also questioned how wide the proposed door was.

Mr. Cole responded they would be replacing clapboard around the front door, using cut nails to try and make it look as it was. The size is 3'6" x 6'1". It has to be that short to accommodate the transom and, according to Mr. Clum of the Building Inspection Department, the Code only requires one 6'8" door in the house.

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion, seconded by Ms. Fineberg, to go into public hearing and the motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Chairman Rice stated that the Commission was being asked to approve the blue-tone picture, with flat pilasters – no flutes.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Mr. Cole presented a letter from two abutters, Mr. and Mrs. Churchill who expressed their support for the project.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Vice-Chairman Adams moved that the request be granted as it had been presented, which was seconded by Ms. Dika.

After some brief comments from the Commission members, a voice vote was taken.

The motion to grant the request was passed by a unanimous vote of 7 to 1.

3. Petition for Ron Cogswell, owner and Charles Hoyt, applicant for property located at **180 Islington Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing building (convert second and third floor into residence, create new separate business entryway, add dormers, replace windows, construct spiral stairway and deck off rear and add a chimney) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 137 as Lot 19 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Charles Hoyt stated he is the designer for the project and outlined the details of what the applicant is proposing. On the left elevation plan, he pointed out changes and, on the right elevation, a new window.

Chairman Rice indicated that they were familiar with the project, having had a site walk and a work session.

Mr. Ron Cogswell, the owner and applicant, thanked the members for their time and stated that, with the changes Islington Street is experiencing, this will be a benefit to the neighborhood. He presented letters from supporting abutters, Ms. Noyes and Ms. McNichol.

Chairman Rice stated they should discuss the front of the building first.

In response to questions from Ms. Fineberg and Vice-Chairman Adams, Mr. Hoyt stated they will replicate the design of the pediment over the door, there would be six new windows with new frames and sashes and the exterior would be 5 quarter by 6 casing. They hadn't drawn sills, but will have long horn or sill about an inch thick. He indicated, on the back page of the plans, they would see long sill horns due to the 6" casings.

Ms. Fineberg indicated they had not seen plans for the handrail, which appears on the left, but they were probably going to come back with that.

Vice-Chairman Adams listed the remaining windows and Mr. Hoyt identified them on the elevations provided. They are aluminum clad on the outside and wood on the inside.

Chairman Rice asked if the windows would be true or simulated divided light and Mr. Hoyt pointed out the plan of the LePage window they would be using.

Vice-Chairman Adams recalled from their site walk, that the existing sills were quite significant – 2 and a quarter inches or so.

Mr. Hoyt stated it was hard to see because of the aluminum, but they will be able to determine once they open it up. They are not looking to copy the existing, but put in what is historically correct.

Vice-Chairman Adams pointed out that the demonstration sill was about an inch thick and he didn't feel it related well, particularly with 6" casings.

There were several minutes of additional discussion among some Commission Members and Mr. Hoyt about the construction and appearance of the sills, ending with Chairman Rice indicating that, if the windows are approved, it will be with a stipulation that the sills be 2" wide.

With regard to the rear elevation, Chairman Rice indicated what was being presented is pretty much what they saw on the site walk.

For the left elevation, the plans have cleaned up what was complicated there.

In response to questions, Mr. Hoyt indicated they are still in the stage of patching the siding. It is their intent to leave the left portion intact until they get in and see how extensive the replacement of the siding will be. They are proposing a modest crown package in keeping with the historical nature. The chimney construction will be brick and he passed around a sample of what they would be using, which had been recommended by Goodrich.

Vice-Chairman Adams asked if he could be walked through the Corinthian capitals to the front door, stating he didn't understand why they appear – they were new exterior pieces to the front doorway?

Mr. Hoyt indicated that was correct and they support a cap over the door itself.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

With no one rising, the public hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

For purposes of discussion, Vice-Chairman Adams moved to accept the application as presented with a stipulation that the sills be 2" thick . Ms. Fineberg seconded the motion.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated that the architect had brought a chocolate brick and he felt red brick would be more appropriate. He was a little concerned about the unknown factor of the clapboard work and how it relates to the corner trim. He hoped the applicant would come back with some modification if it seemed necessary. He felt there was a significant old house underneath which is showing. Also, to replicate the windowsills in a substantial

way is important. He's not sure about the corinthian capitals, but overall thinks it's a great project for the street and that the property will remain a contributing building.

When Vice-Chairman Adams added that he is upset over the brick, Chairman Rice stated they could remove that part of the proposal. The brick he has liked to see used in the past is called "Old Port" by the Morin Brick Company, although there are others. He'd like to see the applicant use that, or something equal to, to which Mr. Hoyt agreed.

Ms. Fineberg asked what would be appropriate, if corinthian columns were not used. Vice-Chairman Adams said he would be surprised if there were anything at all in a building like this – it was out of period.

Mr. Katz commented that he didn't see what was wrong with corinthian columns as he likes to see an occasional glimmer of originality manifested. He didn't see how that destroyed any historical heritage.

Mr. Cogswell noted that on the first floor, there are original carvings which are corinthian.

The motion to approve the petition as presented passed by a unanimous voice vote of 7 to 0, with the stipulations that the sills be 2" in thickness and the brick be "Old Port" or equal struck, red brick,

4. Petition for Emilio Gori, owner and John Colbert, applicant for property located at **112 Newcastle Avenue** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing building (replace the windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 28 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Emilio Gori, owner, and John Colbert, stated they would appear on behalf of the petition, Mr. Colbert representing Adam Windows and Doors.

In response to questions from the Commission members, Mr. Colbert stated the windows were simulated divided light and he passed around a sample, indicating it was a wooden interior and aluminum clad on the exterior and would be replacements, 6 over 6, just taking out the sashes and balances that are there now. The storm windows would be removed and they would paint around them so that all matches. Everything will be sized properly, with diminished sizes of glass if necessary. The attic window which is part of the ventilation and some of the crankout windows will remain. All the double-hungs will be replaced

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

With no one rising, the public hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Vice-Chairman Adams moved that the application be approved as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Golumb.

The motion to approve passed by unanimous vote of 7 to 0.

5. Petition for Sean and Lina Tracey, owners for property located at **24 Johnson Court** wherein permission is requested to erect a new freestanding structure (construct a garden shed) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 47 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Sean Tracey stated he is the owner, with his wife Lina, and that they had a better photograph to present of the shed. He described the quality of the construction and stated it would be placed so that it would not obstruct any view or be seen from the street.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

With no one rising, the public hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to approve the application as presented, which was seconded by Ms. Dika.

Vice-Chairman Adams felt that the structure was a charming adjunct and reasonably placed. The only problem with the application stems from work done by the previous owner. There was previously approved work to be done to the building, which was not performed and the building is currently in non-compliance with previous approvals.

Ms. Fineberg commented that he was not talking about the shed and Vice-Chairman Adams replied, "No." In September of 2003, approval given by the Commission referred to replacing windows and an exhibit for the previous application shows a window sill, but he had taken a photograph of the property that afternoon and there were no sills. When Ms. Dika asked if that wasn't under the previous owner, he replied that it did not have to do with the applicant, but with the property.

Mr. Roger Clum stated that Mr. Adams had brought this to his attention as Assistant Building Inspector and it was true that the project approved in 2003 did not end with the construction of sills as approved by the Commission. With this in mind, the Commission can go forward with the approval being requested this evening. The City, however, will issue a violation notice and will not be able to issue a permit for the shed until the violation is rectified.

It was decided to vote on the request and let the rest take its course.

A motion to approve the petition as presented was passed by unanimous voice vote of 7 to 0.

6. Petition for Jeffrey Marple, owner for property located at **254 State Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace the windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 72 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Jeffrey Marple showed a prototype of the window, which he stated would be of aluminum construction outside, with the sills remaining the same.

In response to questions from the commission members, he stated there would be no masonry work and no changes to the wooden frames unless a piece was missing. In that case, the piece would be carefully matched. All the windows on the second and third levels would be replaced along with two or three on the first floor that are double hung.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PEITION

With no one rising, the public hearing was closed.

Ms. Dika moved to approve the petition as presented and Mr. Wyckoff seconded.

The motion to approve the petition passed by unanimous voice vote of 7 to 0.

7. Petition for Teddy Czyz, owner for property located at **241 Middle Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (repair all deteriorated brownstone, windows sills and caps, and entrance pillars and overhead porch) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 136 as Lot 15 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Teddy Czyz stated he is the owner and referred to the pictures which he was submitting. They want to redo a deteriorated brownstone with materials manufactured to a color match by Conproco. The installation would be done by Northeast Masonry.

Chairman Rice stated that it seemed that they were replacing everything in kind and he was not sure why it was before the Commission and Ms. Fineberg stated it was because it was not the original brownstone material and Mr. Clum clarified that it was basically an epoxy.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

With no one rising, the public hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

It was moved by Vice-Chairman Adams and seconded by Mr. Golumb that the petition be approved as presented.

Vice-Chairman Adams noted that there was a great deal of deterioration and the building is so significant on this corner, that it's valuable to preserve its quality and look. He wholeheartedly supports.

The motion to approve the petition passed by unanimous voice vote of 7 to 0.

8. Petition for Parade Office, LLC, owner and DeStefano Architects, applicant for property located at **77 Hanover Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing building (minor amendments to retaining wall) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 29 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Chairman Rice stated that the Commission had been at a site walk earlier that evening to view the proposed changes.

The Parade Office, LLC, owner, was represented by Ms. Lisa DeStefano of DeStefano Architects, the applicants.

Ms. DeStefano outlined the change in material from their first presentation, which was not found to be the best for their purpose. The material they have now chosen is a block material on which they have done substantial research on for its features. What they like is that in place of the brick face for the retaining wall it shows the contrast between the brick sidewalk that would be alongside it. With this system, she added, they can also step the retaining wall, where previously they had the wall sloping with the grade.

In addition to the retaining wall, page two also indicates the plantings.

Sheet 3 is the site plan. The wall is in the same location as previously proposed and approved. On back pages are the specifications for the block itself. She passed out color copies for anyone who had not been at the site walk and indicated some of the features of the product are that it has a variety of sizes so that, when laid, it looks like cut stone and has the ability to make corners.

In response to a question from Mr. Golumb, Ms. DeStefano stated the material would have the appearance of dry laid block but there is a structural connection to keep it in place and the cap is securely fastened as well

When Mr. Wyckoff questioned why no one was speaking about the windows, Ms. DeStefano indicated there was no change from the previous approvals. Page two is the only change.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

With no one rising, the public hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Vice-Chairman Adams moved that the request be approved as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Golumb.

The motion to approve was passed by unanimous voice vote of 7 to 0.

9. **Petition for Strawberry Banke, Inc., owner and Dunaway Restaurant, applicant** for property located at **66 Marcy Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing building (add 4 clear windbreaks to existing front porch area) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 104 as Lot 7 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Ms. Jessie Aiken, of Back Channel Canvas, and Mr. Jay McSharry, applicant, appeared in support of the petition. Ms. Aiken had brought a model of what they are proposing to do and described the attached hardware. She indicated the proposed front porch locations on the plans. They propose to use the wheelchair access for the winter and close off the front entrance.

In response to questions from the Commission members, Ms. Aiken indicated this will be a seasonal use, with only twists in the uprights showing in the summer.

When Ms. Fineberg asked if the Commission usually specifies dates for this type of use, Mr. Clum indicated they had not for Peche Blue and Mr. McSharry added they will take it down as soon as feasible in the spring. Mr. Clum also stated that a building permit is required as this is a change to the exterior appearance of the building.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

With no one rising, the public hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Golumb moved that the petition be approved as presented and Ms. Dika seconded.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated that, realizing that the applicant will not want to keep the windbreaks up any longer than possible, he will support the motion and doesn't feel dates need to be specified. He recalled the Commission had approved a similar request for the Oar House deck.

The motion to approve the petition passed by a unanimous voice vote of 7 to 0.

Prior to conducting the work sessions, it was moved by Vice-Chairman Adams and seconded by Mr. Golumb to remove from the table consideration of the petition for **3 Market Square**.

With no one rising to speak to the petition, it was moved by Vice-Chairman Adams and seconded by Mr. Golumb to table the petition until the December 7, 2005 meeting.

IV. WORK SESSIONS

A) Work Session requested by Chris and Alison Pyott, owners and David Witham, applicant for property located at **774 Middle Street, #4** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (addition to the existing house, replace all windows and skylights). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 153 as Lot 9 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts.

- Mrs. Pyott distributed some photographs and gave an overview of the property and what they are hoping to do. They are looking to expand and replace the windows, which are all casement with one exception. The major part of the project is expanding into the driveway 8' off the northern side of the house.
- Mr. Pyott stated the first diagram is the existing house where they will be replacing the skylight and windows.
- Page two shows the front of the house and the 8' addition into the driveway. They will be replacing windows and installing windows in the addition as shown. The roofline will be dropped to right below the trimboard.
- The roof will be slate, with architectural shingles. There will be a crawl space under.
- The third diagram shows the back portion where the deck will not be touched.
- In the bumpout portion, there will be two windows there and two more added for light.
- The final diagram shows another modification. They have one slider and want to add another. On top there are two existing skylights and they would like to add one over the bedroom and one in the addition in the master bath.
- Mrs. Pyott added there would also be an expanded skylight near the solarium.
- Mr. and Mrs. Pyott indicated they are looking for input as to the materials and products to be used.
- Mrs. Pyott pointed out two changes to the plan. One builder is suggesting removal of the crawl space entrance and doing a full basement with a "dog house" entrance at the back.
- The second floor space in the addition will be the master bath and they are working with the builder for the correct design of window for more light. The window shown in the plan will not be the one used.
- Chairman Rice noted that, since skylights are consistent with the rest of the house, the Commission might look less askance at them, but he would like to see the one in the addition, if they approve it, be less in width and area than the one below it.
- Mrs. Pyott asked, for clarification, that then the two skylights that are side-by-side would be o.k., because the sliders below them are larger?
- Chairman Rice stated he didn't exactly say that, and indicated the window and area to which he was referring. The two large skylights over the sliders could be said to be in conformance, if they were approved – there is some symmetry there. The one on the far end already exists.

- Mrs. Pyott stated their reasons for their choice of skylights and windows and other options that they had considered. One issue was their need for headroom.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked why they did not drop the level of the first floor, if the crawl space remained that, so that the headroom would be increased.
- He also wondered, since they were changing all the windows, why they were not trying to correct the design of the casement windows.
- Mrs. Pyott stated that they love the casement windows.
- Returning to the skylights, Mrs. Pyott questioned whether, if they go too much smaller, would that create a problem on egress, particularly from the master bedroom.
- Mr. Clum stated they were required to have 5.7s.f. of operable window area. However, even with replacements, the Code would be silent on an old house with existing bedrooms and windows that probably don't meet current codes as long as they don't make the windows any smaller.
- Vice-Chairman Adams pointed out an area on one of the plans and asked if the applicants were planning on doing anything there.
- Mrs. Pyott said there was a little vent on the gas wall unit and that would come out and the area be re-sided.
- Mrs. Pyott summarized the Commission's recommendations: the window in the addition needs to be smaller in width and size than the window below it and it was suggested to look at square footage space by dropping the floor of the whole addition.

B) Work Session requested by Seacoast Properties, LLC, owner and McHenry Architecture, applicant for property located at **117 Bow Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (construct roof deck and rooftop pavilion structure with skylight additions). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 57A and lies within the Central Business A and Historic A districts.

- Chairman Rice invited the members of the public to sit asking that, if they had comments, they wait until the members of the Historic District Commission had spoken and then he would invite them to speak.
- Mr. Steve McHenry, of McHenry Architecture stated he was representing the applicants and passed out packets of photographs of the project. They are proposing a rooftop structure on an existing building. The design is in the working stage and they need and welcome the feedback of the Commission.
- The first photograph shows the view from across the river and sheet one shows approximately the same view as the photograph. It is simplified to the degree that all the windows in surrounding buildings have not been indicated. He confirmed it is also a closer point of view.
- In response to a question from Ms Fineberg, he confirmed that there was a steel deck off a residence on that level.
- Page two is higher up, showing from an architectural point of view what the building will look like. The public would have a different vantage point. He pointed out the front edge of the parapet on the water side has a more pronounced edge. The roof there now steps down almost two feet, with a thin parapet wall. There are also problems with rain infiltration which they're hoping that the addition of a parapet wall extending out a few feet will alleviate.

- In response to questions about materials, Mr. McHenry stated the parapet will be a flat seam, folded metal that looks like matte colored lead and a stainless steel core. The overall width is 3'3" and sticks out from the building about 2'.
- The building itself is set back allowing a deck about 16' from the front edge and a 1' railing on top of the proposed parapet wall.
- Also on page 3, there's a fire wall that separates this building from the Harbour Place condominiums. They're trying to keep the profile low and not go higher than the fire wall. Although they would like the pavilion to be light and airy to go up into from the unit below, they want to try to not interfere with views from the other buildings.
- He pointed out some additional features on page 3, including skylights and hip shaped light monitors, which are also low profile. The existing roof drops almost 3' from the edge to the center of the building and has interior drains.
- The depth of the building from the river to the Bow Street side is based on the two existing big steel beams, which will be reinforced to carry the building's width.
- Page four shows an existing chimney and an I-shaped wing which houses the staircase. Right now the material is generic siding material. They're considering various options, including painted wood and other types of metal cladding.
- In response to a question from Vice-Chairman Adams, Mr. McHenry confirmed the fire wall ends and there's a separation between the buildings like a light well.
- Pages five and six perspectives step back further and page seven is to show the visibility of the structure if the observer were standing in the middle of Bow Street.
- Mr. McHenry stated their goal this evening was to talk about the scope of the work, including the building, the parapet edge, the skylights, the exterior deck, its scale in relationship to the buildings around it, as well as the potential for other materials.
- Chairman Rice stated they would take one at a time and asked if anyone had problems with the parapet deck, to which no one responded.
- He stated the skylights were an attractive, interesting way of bringing back an older character – something that might be seen in the late 1800's.
- Chairman Rice asked if there were any problems with the building itself and several members responded "no." He then asked about the windows.
- Mr. Katz stated it fits in very well.
- One of the abutters asked when they would get to talk and Chairman Rice indicated that they wanted to satisfy the Commissioner's questions first and then open up.
- Mr. Golumb asked why the windows were so small in the rear section that houses the stairwell.
- Mr. McHenry responded there is not a lot going on there and the skylight brightens it up pretty well.
- Mr. Golumb stated that, in proportion, he thought they could be a little larger, but overall, he liked the project.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated that his only comment at this junction was his sense that the roof edge trim was being overplayed a little.
- Ms. Fineberg asked if they had considered what the roof surface would look like and Mr. McHenry indicated it is a rubber membrane and would look like what is there.
- Chairman Rice indicated the Commission would be very interested in the finish material.
- When Ms. Fineberg questioned the function, Mr. McHenry indicated it was a place to relax. Their first impulse had been was to create decks off the building where they were replacing the windows. A prior plan had an approved design for those decks, which the owner thought was still in place. The condominium association indicated otherwise. Under the terms of the condominium association, he did have a right to develop the roof so he is trying to do what he can there.

- Ms. Dika asked if the view of St. John's steeple was obstructed from the riverside.
- Mr. McHenry stated he did not have a view from that vantage point. After Ms. Dika indicated she would like to see that, he said he could take a photo from the other side of the river.
- Mr. Wyckoff indicated it would be a tunnel view because the structures on the sides are higher.
- Mr. Wyckoff thought there would be more of an obstruction viewed from Badger's Island and Mr. McHenry indicated that was actually where the first page photo was taken from.
- Mr. Wyckoff added that his concern was the stairwell, as shown on page 4 and whether it had to be so massive, square and industrial or could it have a roof on it that would follow the angle of the stairs, for instance.
- Mr. McHenry stated they were trying to not create another category of roof plane – many of the ones they looked at they felt were out of character for the building.
- Chairman Rice asked if there was anyone else on the Commission who wished to comment and then opened up the discussion to others who were present.
- One of the abutters asked how tall the structure was, commenting there were no dimensions.
- Mr. McHenry stated there were none now, but it could be seen from page 3 that the parapet along the edge of the roof is roughly the top of the existing fire wall so that gives an idea of scale. Right now, at that point, from the base of the building to the top of the roof, it's 8' 6" to the top of the wall. In order to get final approvals, they will have plans showing dimensions.
- She then asked the height of the roof windows.
- Mr. McHenry stated they were only designed on the form at this time. There's a base that sticks up a foot and then the actual top of the actual skylight sticks up 16" above that foot. Depending on the pitch, it will be within a couple of inches of that. The curb piece is a foot high.
- The speaker indicated they live next door and commented that this doesn't look anything like any of the buildings around it. She felt the addition was so different and not historically anything.
- Another abutter stated he was surprised that nobody was concerned about just plopping the structure on top of any flat roofed building in the historic district, like Lizzy's.
- Chairman Rice demurred, but the speaker maintained it was the same concept – taking a sunroom and plopping on a flat roof somewhere. He stated he was missing how that seemed to be categorically o.k.
- Chairman Rice stated that the Commission was saying the proposed addition to this building appears to be aesthetically all right. He noted the project was without a public hearing so far and approvals weren't given at work sessions. He felt the abutter was concluding that because they might approve of this addition, the Commission would be making a categorical approval for other situations and that was not correct.
- The abutter stated he understood, but that everyone with a flat roof was going to be coming in with the same type of design. He mentioned again another a previous situation, stating this project was the same with a different design and everyone was not concerned.
- Chairman Rice stated they had not seen the materials yet. He agreed he would not like to repeat the problems with the first property cited.
- Mr. McHenry interjected that this was not approached lightly. He cited as an example of a worse situation that of the building behind with the hip roof where they constructed a woodframe structure on top of the building which was out of character.

- The abutter stated they couldn't do anything about that, but they didn't have to continue to make things worse.
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked what the abutter's particular interest was.
- The abutter stated it was the concept of popping these on top of flat roofs and how that was consistent with the historic district. He stated they had spent an hour talking about a 2" window sill but they can pop a structure like this on top of roof.
- Vice-Chairman Adams listed a few structures they had approved, noting the reasons for the approval which included some historic precedents for roof structures.
- Another abutter interjected that they own the Bow Street Inn and stated the applicants were taking away the only water view rooms that she has and eliminating part of their livelihood. The Harbour Place condominiums were not supposed to be as high and took away views that they had.
- Mr. McHenry said the best view of what she was describing was on page two of the plans and asked if the windows were the two at the corner closest to them.
- The abutters answered 'yes' but said that in the plan they look like they're above.
- The other owner of the inn said that, on page six, looking at the same windows, they look at the side of the addition.
- Mr. McHenry stated that, currently, there is a platform off the fire escape and, if you stand on it, you're at floor height of the room the abutters were describing and if you look north, you have to strain yourself to see the water.
- The first abutter said she was not convinced by this— when she is in that room, you look right over that (indicating a feature on the plan) and that's blocking.
- Mr. McHenry reiterated that, if you stand on the platform or in the room and look north, you're still seeing the river – blocked somewhat by the townhouses that are there now. He acknowledged there will be some interference, but his suggestion was a mock-up of the structure so that people could see whatever blocking there might be.
- Chairman Rice suggested that the abutters approach the applicant
- The abutter stated she talked to Mr. McHenry and she was told this was going to hug this wall and not obstruct her view.
- Chairman Rice again suggested she discuss it with the applicant and stated they often find that effective – to work out a solution before coming to the final approval process, if possible. He noted it is an unfortunate fact that the Commission cannot preserve people's views.
- The abutter stated, "thank you" and left the hearing.
- In response to a question, Vice-Chairman Adams stated he believed this would not require going before the Board of Adjustment.
- Another abutter stated that she didn't understand how they had been nitpicking for several hours about other issues and, here, something modern and asian was going on top of a more industrial building, with the windows not matching.
- Mr. Wyckoff reiterated that this was just a work session and that Mr. McHenry had indicated he was just giving them the basic shape and no decisions had been made on items such as siding.
- She pointed out the overhang.
- Mr. Katz stated that one of the many considerations they utilize is not necessarily historical accuracy as much as what the Commission considers historical appropriateness.
- He referenced information provided in a seminar conducted for the Commission recently. Looking at the building, one would say it was not appropriate, but you look a couple of hundred feet over and see the Memorial Bridge which is also not appropriate, but it has a metallic presence. In the other direction you see structures and mechanism for ships. Public opinion has reaffirmed that aspect of Portsmouth -

they want a working waterfront as part of historic perspective and aesthetic. He added he would like to see the design a little more industrial, which might be accomplished with the finish.

- The abutter said the rooftop structure did not look like Portsmouth.
- Mr. Katz said maybe not like what is on the postcards, but in the entire context, it is for them to decide if it is appropriate to the location and consensus seems to be that it is.
- The abutter maintained it doesn't match anything else.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated he was happy to hear all the questions and that the Commission was not taking this lightly. That said, looking at the photographs, the applicant could be before them wanting to add another floor or two of the same plain brick with another set of arched windows, leaving only a three foot well between the side of their building and the abutters.
- There would be no argument to stop it, so when he sees something requested that is lightweight in mass and is set back from the edge with little purview from the street or waterfront, he feels it adds less disturbance than another set of dormer windows.
- In answer to a question from one of the abutters, Mr. Clum indicated the height limit was 50' or 60'.
- Ms. Fineberg believed it was lower by the waterfront
- Chairman Rice indicated he had intended to mention to the abutter before she left so quickly that there had been cases before the Commission which were heart rending and they had been referred to the Legal Department as Article X also states their job is to preserve property values, which would include water views. Apparently, the state looks at it differently. He noted that there is also a right that a landowner has to build something in the space that they own, subject to what falls within the purview of the HDC.
- The abutter again raised the issue of this type of structure on any flat roof.
- Chairman Rice stated no one likes to see people aggrieved, but the applicant has presented a proposal that the Commission finds aesthetically acceptable.
- In response to a statement from an abutter about the time spent on a windowsill, Ms. Fineberg noted that the building where they were talking about window sills was on a different scale and residential. She noted this was only the first work session and urged the abutters to come back as their input was valuable.
- The applicants were urged to come back for a second work session.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:25 PM, a motion was made, seconded and passed to adjourn to the following month's meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary E. Koepenick
Acting Secretary

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