

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

7:00 p.m.

**APRIL 19, 2006
(Reconvened from
April 5, 2006)**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: City Council Representative Ned Raynolds

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

Chairman Rice called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. WORK SESSIONS

E) Work Session requested by **Mike and Amy Quigley, owner** and **Bob Maranhas, applicant** for property located at **40 Mt. Vernon Street** wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (16' x 26' two story addition to rear of house with 6'x18' one story side porch). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 111, Lot 28 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

- Bob Maranhas, spoke on behalf of the application. He passed out pictures of the house as it exists. He was hoping to put an addition across the backside of the house and small side porch on driveway side.
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked if he would need a variance for that.
- Mr. Maranhas stated he got a variance approved yesterday. One side is right on the lot line.
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked if the current building was 12" deep and 10" wide.
- Mr. Maranhas said it was actually 12' by 12' and the new addition will go out 16' all the way across the back plus another 6' beyond the side of the house. He notes the area on the plans. He stated that it would be a 2 story addition.
- Chairman Rice asked if it was coming out of the back.
- Mr. Maranhas said it was.
- Ms. Fineberg asked to see where it was coming out of the back.
- Mr. Maranhas shows where the porch runs down into the addition. Mr. Maranhas reiterated where the addition was and the size.
- Mr. Golumb asked if there were clapboards on the house now.
- Mr. Maranhas stated it was vinyl on the house. He stated that the new addition would be done in clapboards and wood and they would eventually like to do the whole house in clapboards.
- Chairman Rice asked why the French doors were not centered under the windows.

- Mr. Maranhas stated that the windows were put to the side because there was a staircase which sticks out 6' from the house so he pushed toward one window.
- Ms. Fineberg said the problem was there was no picture from that perspective.
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked if he was proposing to extend the roof of the house to the center point of the ridge of the addition
- Mr. Maranhas stated that was right.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated that this was an uncommon form for an addition. He felt it creates a lot of odd views with the gable end extruding out of the house. It looks like a piece of the house was cut away.
- Mr. Maranhas said it was not uncommon and there were other additions similar to it in the south end of Town. It just looked like an "L" shaped New Englander.
- Ms. Fineberg asked if they could discuss what might work better.
- Mr. Maranhas stated that he originally had the roof going all the way across the back of the house and then cut it back.
- Ms. Fineberg stated she was struggling with the height of the addition roof and where it sits in relation to the house. It is usually tucked in and then telescoped out.
- Vice-Chairman Rice explained that if something like that is done you can avoid clipping a window in the bedroom and it cuts down on extending a smooth flush wall running yet another 16' making it extra long.
- Mr. Maranhas explained that it was touch to come up with the space.
- Ms. Fineberg said that she was just trying to think of another way to do this because she felt there were too many awkward pieces.
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked how many square feet they were trying to add on.
- Mr. Maranhas stated that the addition was 15 ½' by 22 ½'.
- Ms. Fineberg asked how many square feet the original house was.
- Mr. Maranhas stated that it was just less than 1600 square feet.
- Ms. Fineberg felt that the addition was large and that was why it looked awkward. She stated that traditionally an addition to a house would be a much smaller scale.
- Mr. Maranhas made reference to the New Englanders in the area and stated that usually the roof line goes all the way to the back of the house and it is squared off and this was just a piece coming off the end. He felt that when he drew it originally the house looked huge and that was why he cut it off to try to get the scale down.
- Ms. Fineberg stated she was having a hard time visualizing it.
- Chairman Rice suggested telescoping out and creating an "L" off that telescoped addition.
- Mr. Maranhas was originally going to do that but it was expensive and would create more roof space.
- Ms. Dika felt that it looked awkward.
- Chairman Rice found it difficult to support the current design because it was so awkward.
- Mr. Maranhas brought additional pictures of similar houses in the area.
- Ms. Dika stated that just because there were houses similar in the area it did not mean it was a good design.
- Mr. Katz said the Commission was not there to pass good design but was there to support historical appropriateness. If there were examples that support his contention he would like to see them.
- Ms. Fineberg noted an example in one of the pictures stating it could be a little bit taller.
- Mr. Maranhas said that it would have to be a lot taller because they were trying to support a bedroom and a bathroom.

- Ms. Fineberg felt that the Commission did not think this was the best design for the house and he might look at some other options.
- Mr. Maranhas said that the addition came out an extra 6' to accommodate the side porch and the other entryway.
- Chairman Rice felt there were other ways to accomplish that. He suggested coming in for another work session with some pictures.
- Vice-Chairman Adams suggested that everyone in the Commission visit the site. He felt the whole rear of the house seemed to disappear with the addition.
- Chairman Rice stated that the Commission would prefer to see divided light instead of the sliders in the addition.
- Mr. Maranhas stated that the house has all 2 over 2 windows so the divided light would seem out of place.
- Ms. Fineberg said this was mostly an aesthetic detail.
- Vice-Chairman Adams suggested a pair of half light doors where the lights of glass fall in scale instead of dividing the lights into tiny pieces which doesn't fit with the rest of the building.
- Mr. Maranhas said he could slide a window over by the stairs instead of a triple door.
- Chairman Rice recommended a site walk.
- Mr. Maranhas indicated he would get more pictures and a working design.
- Vice-Chairman Rice stated that he would like it if he could get on the next month's Agenda.

F) Work Session requested by **Tasha Kastantacos/Norm Olsen, owners** for property located at **70 New Castle Avenue** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (renovate existing barn structure in current footprint). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101, Lot 31 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Kastantacos speaking on behalf of the application. She stated she was going to give an overview of what they were doing. She noted the picture which shows how the property sits on New Castle Avenue. She pointed out other extensions which were done before they owned the property. She noted the third extension which was a barn attached to the house which they would be renovating. She pointed out site plans which were brought to the Board of Adjustment and they were granted variances to build the barn on the existing footprint and enlarge the deck with the stipulation that they would not put any type of cover or second floor above the deck. She pointed out above the existing residence where it juts out they wanted to put an air conditioning unit or two.
- Ms. Fineberg asked why they needed to get a variance if they were building on the same footprint.
- Ms. Kastantacos answered because it was nonconforming and they would not be meeting the rear and side setbacks. She also stated that the coverage was a little over the requirement but that was acceptable to the Board of Adjustment. They had looked at how they could work at enlarging the space without going into the setback but that would have entailed going into the side yard which would have been architecturally hard. She noted the elevations of the existing front and rear of the house along with the barn as it now exists. She referenced the proposed elevation and stated they wanted to work with the same footprint and rebuild a barn and bring a roof and a peak which would mirror the original house with a New Englander style which she felt would bring more continuity to the property. She stated that the back of the barn would have three 2 over 2 windows.
- Chairman Rice asked if the height of the proposed barn was going to be the same as the house.
- Ms. Kostantacos said it would be slightly shorter. She then showed various elevations and pointed out how they were going to pull the addition together to match the existing house.

- Ms. Fineberg felt that the proposed right side middle section looked radically different than the existing.
- Ms. Kostantacos said that the proposed windows were slightly larger at 2 over 2 where the originals were 1 over 1.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated that the foundation was wider and made the windows jump right out.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that the ground was also tapering down on that side.
- Vice-Chairman Adams thought it was an excellent location for the air conditioning unit. He noted that the windows in the barn seemed smaller than the windows in the shed it was connected to but was a small thing. He felt that the windows on the rear first floor were uncharacteristically apart for a barn and seemed further apart than the windows in the house.
- Mr. Golumb asked if the proposed front window will be tucked in the gable. He felt it looked awkward.
- Mr. Whitney stated he did not place the window it was just to give an idea of where it would go.
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked if these elevations were of an acceptable scale for approval.
- Ms. Kostantacos asked if this was the correct format they should use.
- Vice-Chairman Adams said that would be great.
- Mr. Olsen asked if they should speak about the products they would be using.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated that they were assuming they would use non removable mullions in the house. He stated that they have stayed away from metal door in residences and they have accepted fiberglass doors. He felt that the clapboard siding would not be a huge problem as long as it matches. He stated that they have not approved cement clapboard hardy plank before in the Historic District.
- Mr. Whitney stated they planned on using Therma True Smooth Star and would put in oak sills. He stated that they would be using VCG (vertical grain cedar) at the same exposure that was already on the house which would be coated on both sides. The windows would be Eagle aluminum clad but he prefers vinyl. He felt that what gets approved in the Historic District is wood which he was against because it deteriorates fast.
- Chairman Rice asked if he was proposing vinyl.
- Mr. Whitney said his preference was vinyl because it would look the same in 50 years, however, he brought them before the Commission before and they were not approved.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated that this house has a 2 inch window sill and asked Mr. Whitney if he would be able to achieve that in the addition.
- Mr. Whitney stated that he would be able to.
- Ms. Dika asked if there was a chimney on the barn.
- Ms. Kostantacos stated that it was going to be removed.
- Ms. Fineberg asked if she would be discussing the deck design.
- Ms. Kostantacos said that was the intention and the details would match the front porch.
- Mr. Whitney asked if they could present two different windows and they could make the decision.
- Chairman Rice stated that would be fine.
- Ms. Kostantacos said it could be potentially approved with the stipulation of which windows would be acceptable. She asked if they had any thoughts on the foundation.
- Vice-Chairman Adams said it depends on how much it shows and a lot of foundation will be exposed on the side with the driveway and patio.
- Mr. Whitney stated that he normally takes pressure treated plywood and covers it down so you only see about a foot of foundation.
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked if he would be building it up then covering it back down to its normal condition. He felt that wasn't what it looked like in the drawing.
- Mr. Whitney said the drawing showed clapboards below the water table.

- Ms. Kostantacos asked if the Commission had any thoughts on the AC enclosure.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated they do not require any enclosure around the AC.
- Ms. Kostantacos asked if they had any other concerns.
- Chairman Rice felt she did a great job.
- Ms. Kostantacos asked if her next step would be a public hearing.
- The members of the Commission stated a public hearing could be her next step.

G) Work Session requested by **7 Islington, LLC, owner**, for property located at **7 Islington Street** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure and a new free standing structure (renovate existing building and add new building on adjacent site). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126, Lot 51 and lies within the Central Business B, Downtown Overlay and Historic A Districts.

- Mr. Steve McHenry spoke in favor of the application. He passed out copies of research on the building.
- Chairman Rice asked if it was the yellow building.
- Mr. McHenry stated it was the yellow building. He indicated that this was their first work session on this property and it is more than one property. He wanted to explain the complexity involved in this project to get a sense of the scale and the possibilities on the site. The first 3 pages are pictures of the neighborhood. The primary building was on page 1 which was the yellow building. He noted to the right a small 1 story garage and a portion of a 2 story building that now has Harbor Light Productions and there is another building behind that which is not visible. He stated there are 3 buildings involved in this project. Page 2 shows the 2 story building. Page 3 gives a panorama around the property. Page 4 shows the complexity of the project which shows the city block in question where the buildings of this project are noted in light brown.
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked what the red line was on the photograph.
- Mr. McHenry explained that to the right of the red line is not the Historical District and the left of it is. He explained that the yellow building at the corner and the one above it are in the Historical District however the building in the next lots back are not
- Ms. Fineberg stated that Café Mirabella is the only building on Bridge Street that is not in the Historical District.
- Mr. McHenry stated that the picture he was showing was the color zoning map downloaded off the City's website and this showed where a lot is going on. He noted the blue line which denoted Downtown Overlay District where you cannot have residential on the first level.
- Mr. Katz said Mr. McHenry was not quite right but in the ball park.
- Mr. McHenry stated that what they were proposing was connecting things and making it all the same project. He stated that the Commission will have to look at the whole project even though some of it will be in the Historic District and some of it won't. He stated that there is also the Central Business B Zone and the Mixed Residential Zone which intersect in this block as well. The CBB Zone allows for 60 foot tall buildings with 90% lot coverage whereas MRO allows for 40 foot high buildings and 40% of lot coverage. He stated that the following pages showed 4 different options using the different zones which were all compliant. Pages 5, 6, 7 and 8 were existing condition elevations of the building at the corner on 7 Islington Street. He noted that there were notes on them for window replacement.
- Ms. Fineberg assumed they were going to be replaced in kind.
- Mr. McHenry stated they haven't gotten that far yet; it was just a piece of data. He noted that on Page 9 it showed the yellow building and the rest of the combined lots become 3 and 4 story buildings.

- Mr. Golumb asked how much higher the proposed was from the original building.
- Mr. McHenry said that he wanted to walk through the elevations to see it at different angles and not to pin down specific feet to give an impact. Page 10 showed where the building has a 3 story mass tucked behind the second lower wing of the yellow building and the 4 story building behind that. The 3rd page of Option A is from the other direction at the bottom of Bridge Street showing the 4 story building with the residential units around it. Page 12 shows a separate Option B where the recessed lower wing is brought all the way to the street and the step down portion of the yellow building is removed. Page 12 shows Option B from above and Option C which is within current zoning which is 4 and 5 floors with the recessed wing. It has the same footprint as Option A and B but it is a story higher with three views of it. Page 18 shows Option D pulls the recessed L out to the street and taking the rear portion of the wing off and creating 4 and 5 story structures with three view points from above.
- Chairman Rice stated that Option D with the 4 and 5 floors of the building, the right hand wing would be dropped down a floor or w to in tune with the smaller residential buildings around it and the left side of the building may be the same to respect the historic house to left allowing it to be taller in the middle.
- Ms. Fineberg asked what Mr. McHenry was looking for today.
- Mr. McHenry stated that he was looking for the Board's initial reaction to the massing and that they were at the very early planning stages. All of the versions he proposed were allowed by zoning.
- Chairman Rice stated that just because it meets zoning it does not necessarily meet Historic District requirements.
- Mr. McHenry stated that this was just the first option.
- Ms. Fineberg stated that there were no views from the other side of the building.
- Mr. McHenry stated that he could bring in different views next time.
- Ms. Fineberg said that he had consistently brought the scale down on all of the options.
- Mr. McHenry explained that the building on the corner was a historically significant building and was an anchor for that corner and he felt that getting too close and too large wouldn't be appropriate.
- Ms. Fineberg stated that she was talking about a building in the back that fits into the neighborhood.
- Mr. Golumb believed that was an existing building.
- Mr. McHenry stated that it was a separate house. Part of the issue is that a portion of it was in the MRO Zone and to have vehicular access to the site they have met with the Planning Board to go in and out on Tanner Street. This separate house was a gateway to the rear drive.
- Ms. Fineberg stated that if the piece noted was attached to the building it would no longer be residential.
- Mr. McHenry stated it was not attached and stays residential however it is on land owned by the same. Page 2 shows the house on Tanner Street.
- Mr. Golumb stated he was trying to grasp the massing.
- Ms. Fineberg felt that these initial versions were overwhelming and she would have a hard time approving them to this scale and she would not be willing to let go of the addition on the yellow house. She felt there should be something smaller off to the side to help mitigate the enormous façade to the building. She felt that the interesting part of this street was its inconsistency.
- Chairman Rice said that the Commission would consider whether this was a contributing building or not, does it add to the character of the neighborhood or does it take away character or does it create a character all its own and is it a way the Commission can see the neighborhood going.
- Mr. Katz stated that this large yellow building would affect the massing in that neighborhood.

- Vice-Chairman Adams said he sees a block of 2 story buildings and this is how blocks of 2 story buildings get bulldozed. He felt that this project will make every other building on that block irrelevant.
- Mr. McHenry considered the buildings on Islington Street 3 story buildings.
- Ms. Fineberg stated there was a difference between one side of Islington Street and the other.
- Chairman Rice stated that it was not a clear cut project.
- Mr. McHenry stated that it was the edge of the zoning change.
- Chairman Rice stated that it was also in the Historic District and they are the stewards.
- Mr. McHenry stated that because it was at the edge and in the Central Business B Zone they needed to find a balance.
- Ms. Dika felt that what Mr. McHenry showed them look huge.
- Mr. Golumb felt that this overwhelmed the neighborhood.
- Chairman Rice stated that Mr. McHenry needs to use an extraordinary amount of sensitivity if he puts in a building of any mass if he wanted the Commission to approve it.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

- Roger Clum, Building Inspector, presented a 2004 approval of 449 Court Street to the Commission for guidance. He stated that Vice-Chairman Adams pointed out to him that there was something inappropriate in the execution of it and the architect had a different opinion. The architect and the owner have agreed to go with whatever the Commission's decision was. He noted that the last page showed the architect's opinion. The window casing was presented as a picture frame and that was the architect's opinion. He noted that on the two small pages the architect claimed he proposed to show the shutter only and not the window casing.
- Chairman Rice asked if it was a bow window.
- Mr. Clum stated it was.
- Chairman Rice asked where it was located.
- Mr. Clum said it was probably on a property line where you can't have a real window.
- Ms. Fineberg pointed out what they were talking about.
- Mr. Clum stated that the proposal by the architect was a picture frame window in their elevation detail and they were showing the shutter. Mr. Clum stated that his argument was that there were some shadow lines that showed a sill and as a Commission would think there was a sill there however the architect said that was not what he intended. He asked the Commission what they saw when this was originally presented.
- Chairman Rice remembered a discussion about bow windows.
- Mr. Clum stated that the architects' intention was to show a shutter not a window.
- Vice-Chairman Adams said that he consistently asks about window sills so when he looked at it with not just the shutter but dimensions and clapboards detailed out he ignored whatever else he saw on the drawing.
- Mr. Clum asked if the Commission was looking for all the trim details or just the sill.
- Ms. Fineberg asked why it was not recessed into the casing.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated that it could not be recessed because it was a false window and there was not enough depth.
- Mr. Clum stated that he argued there was enough detail that there was a sill and is the Commission happy with getting a sill.
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated that they had clearly outlined the window by casing as was done on all the windows and doors on the building but there was not expressed window sill and he believed there ought to be. He stated they could cut the trim off and put a sill in however the clapboards

have been lined up with the top and bottom element of the window and the new sill will be thinner. He could accept it without bands.

- Mr. Clum asked Vice-Chairman Adams if he thought they could not plant on a false sill.
- Mr. Katz asked what the relevance of the sheet Mr. Clum was referring to.
- Mr. Clum stated that they were hoping to present just a shutter. They did not intend to present a window frame.
- Mr. Katz referenced the illustration and asked if that is what they intended to submit.
- Mr. Clum said that was not what they intended. The illustration was from another project. They intended to illustrate the shutter only.
- Ms. Fineberg stated we do not have a picture of the way it looks now.
- Mr. Clum said that was correct because they hadn't built the shutters yet.
- Mr. Katz asked what the window frame consist of currently.
- Mr. Clum stated it was a picture frame.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked how many windows.
- Mr. Clum stated every one in the building.
- Mr. Katz stated that it was hard to tell what the window detail was with the elevations presented.
- Ms. Fineberg asked what the options were. It seemed like putting on a sill is not an option.
- Mr. Katz stated that it would not make sense to put a 1" sill in.
- Mr. Adams stated that there isn't a single line that points to a problem area.
- Ms. Fineberg stated that there was a picture.
- Mr. Adams stated that nothing was called out.
- Ms. Fineberg wondered if they could ask the owners to put a sill in. Is that practical?
- Mr. Clum stated that they had added fake window sills to other properties. From a distance, it looks okay. Up close it is a fake sill.
- Mr. Adams asked if they wanted a fake sill.
- Mr. Clum stated that a 1" sill on a 3" board leaves more room.
- Mr. Adams stated it would look poor.
- Ms. Fineberg does not understand the issue.
- Mr. Clum stated that planting on sill is a problem.
- Chairman Rice stated that they should pass.
- Mr. Clum stated that the architect did not intend to mislead the Board, it was a glitch that fell through the cracks.
- Ms. Fineberg stated that it would be more detrimental to approve.
- Mr. Golumb thought there was a sill on the plan.
- The Commission appreciated being made aware of the issue, but decided at this point to leave the construction as it is.

III. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:35 p.m., a motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Auger, Acting HDC Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on September 6, 2006.

