

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

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 p.m.

**January 10, 2007
reconvened from January 3, 2007**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: City Council Representative Ned Reynolds, Planning Board Representative Jerry Hetjmanek

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

I. OLD BUSINESS

A) Approval of minutes – December 13, 2006

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

B) Petition of **Harbour Place Condominium Association, owner**, for property located at **135 Bow Street** wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace wood siding of dormer areas with vinyl siding) as per plans on file with the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 2-1-00 and lies within the Central Business A, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts. (*This item was tabled at the January 3, 2007 meeting.*)

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Ms. June O'Neill, representative for the condominium association spoke to the petition. She read the original letter that was submitted in August of 2006 to bring the Commission up to date about the proposal. The letter stated that they were requesting permission to cover the wood siding on the third floor dormer section of the building with vinyl siding for easy and less expensive maintenance. She said that the color of the siding would be white and would retain the current look of the building. Ms. O'Neill mentioned that the last time she was before the Commission; they had questions concerning how the vinyl would be cut to fit around the curved windows. Ms. O'Neill

introduced Mike McKenzie of Mike's Home Improvements who would be performing the job.

Chairman Rice asked if they had a sample of the vinyl siding. She replied that they did not have a sample with them.

Mr. McKenzie stated that he has been doing vinyl siding installations for 27 years. He felt that this job was a fairly simple one. He said that in this case they would use a restoration panel to keep the aesthetics that are there now. He said that he would scribe aluminum trim that would go tight to the roof line. They would use a high grade silicone sealant on the existing wood to apply the trim and then use a few nails down at the ridge line edge. On the bottom, where the siding would come in to the archway, they would use a vinyl flex "J". He added that the only other application to be considered would be to use azek trim. Mr. McKenzie said that the problem with using that is that it would still need to be painted and it would be a maintenance issue. He felt that the aluminum trim wrap and the vinyl siding was the best option.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any questions for Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. Katz asked what the longest run on the on the side of the sheets of the dormers. Mr. McKenzie replied it was maybe four feet. Mr. Katz asked if there would be any overlaps and joints. Mr. McKenzie replied that there would be no need to make a seam.

Mr. Golumb asked if he had considered using a cementitious product instead of the vinyl siding. Mr. McKenzie said that that product would require painting, caulking, and sealing. He said the vinyl will not peel and that from the river and the boardwalk, no one will see it.

Ms. Dika asked how long a vinyl product lasts these days. Mr. McKenzie replied that it would last longer than he or she would. He said that today's vinyl is made of a poly vinyl.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if he intended to remove the wood trim. Mr. McKenzie replied that they had not had that discussion yet. He said that if they wanted it removed, he would not have a problem with that. Mr. Wyckoff wondered if there would be enough rake. He felt that if he applied the vinyl over the wood trim, that the "j" channel might project out. Mr. Katz interjected that they could make that a stipulation in the motion.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any more questions. Hearing none, he asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to approve the application with the stipulation that the old siding be removed before applying the new siding. The motion was seconded by Mr. Katz. Chairman Rice asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that with the wood siding being applied up against the casings of the windows results in everything ends up being pretty much flush. He said that when the vinyl is applied over the wood siding, then the j channels and the vinyl siding are projecting out further than the trim. He felt that that was not a good look and it was not anything they were used to seeing.

The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

C) Petition of **414 State Street Condominium Association, owner,** and **Timothy S. Wheelock, applicant,** for property located at **414 State Street,** wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (repoint chimneys, install stainless steel chimney caps, apply chimney saver water protection to both chimneys) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 13-2 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was tabled at the January 3, 2007 meeting.)*

Vice Chairman Adams made a motion to remove the application from the tabled status. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

No one was present to speak to the petition.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Vice Chairman Adams made a motion to table the application to end of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Petition of **Market Wharf Condominiums, owner,** and **Thomas Magruder, applicant,** for property located at **33 Deer Street,** wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (new siding, trim, railings, and windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 119 as Lot 1B and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was tabled at the January 3, 2007 meeting.)*

Vice Chairman Adams made a motion to remove the application from the tabled status. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Ms. Wendy Welton, architect for the project, spoke to the project. She stated this is building two and they are doing almost the same application as building one. She pointed out what was different from the first project. She stated that building one had a tower. This building has the same concept but slightly different details. She said that building two will have a punched opening look. The back of the building has railings that are much simpler in design with no strange angles. She said that they planned to use the same railing system as the first building. Ms. Welton pointed out that with building one, the eve sits down lower than building two. Building two will have a little more fascia.

Ms. Fineberg asked about a notation at the bottom of page HDC one. Ms. Welton replied that she wanted to give the contractor to freedom to compare prices and use whichever hardi trim they felt was best. Ms. Fineberg asked if it would match what is on the other building. Ms. Welton replied that even if they don't, you will never be able to tell the difference. She said that they both have a square profile, are the same size and thickness, and the same surface texture.

Vice Chairman Adams asked when she refers to surface texture, is she meaning none. Ms. Welton replied yes.

Mr. Wyckoff asked about the aprons under the windows. He said that she had them as 6 ¼" with the casings around them at 5 ½". He wondered why? Ms. Welton said she is going with the hardi fiber cement siding because it holds paint much longer. She said that the hardi cannot be notched. She felt the width was preferable to have a bigger apron and to use a product that was not vinyl. Mr. Wyckoff asked if this is what they approved for building one. Ms. Welton replied yes. She said that 5" is the maximum.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that he thought the 1" window sill was a little on the thin side. He asked if it would be better to use a 2 ¼" sill which is a more historic size window sill. He also wondered why the windows needed an apron underneath the sill. Ms. Welton replied that they are proposing this application on this building because there is a slight variation on the heights of the two buildings. She said that she would not have any opposition to using a 2 ½" sill.

Ms. Welton suggested that she will use a 2 ½" sill and no apron but if the builder has a discrepancy they are to consult with Ms. Welton and use the apron. Mr. Wyckoff said that he has just not seen this application done on the exterior. Aprons are an interior application.

Vice Chairman Adams stated that the building next door had the difficulty with the rounded side of the building. He said that the choices for siding materials were very finite. He said that cementitious siding was approved. He said that the problem with it is that it has an increment to it. He continued to say that Ms. Welton demonstrated that one previous building, which that increment was not working with the windows and so they had to tweak them up or down. He said that he agreed with Mr. Wyckoff that this is not something that they are used to seeing in classical architecture but given the options of having the building sided with a material that has lines that are reminiscent of clapboard materials. Mr. Adams agreed that a 5" or a 6" apron is excessive and increasing the sill extension to 2" would allow them to make the clapboard work but it is just a guess.

Ms. Welton suggested that they will use a maximum of a 3" sill as the first option with no apron. If the 3" sill does not bridge the gap, then they will use an apron.

Ms. Dika asked if she would notice the difference visually if they use a 3" sill on one building and not on the other. Ms. Welton said you would probably see the difference. She pointed out that they are sister buildings, not twin buildings. She added that the

building was not well constructed so she really is hesitant about giving up the apron idea entirely.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if the photo on HDC page 7 was a current photo. Ms. Welton said that she believed that it is. Mr. Wyckoff pointed that there is no apron underneath the third story windows. He added that he is not against the idea of using an apron; it is the size of it. In total it would be 7" of trim and looks awkward.

Ms. Fineberg asked if they needed to specify the total width of the apron.

Ms. Welton suggested that the apron be no more than 5". She added that if an apron is not required in an area, then she will not use one.

Ms. Fineberg asked if the demolition of the project is done all at one time or in sections. Ms. Welton replied that it was done in sections with the first building.

Ms. Dika asked if they could specify that she not exceed 4 1/4" for the apron.

Ms. Welton stated that she wanted to amend her application to read that the exterior sills will be between 1 1/2" and 3" and aprons will be only used if necessary and will not exceed 4 1/4".

Chairman Rice asked if there were any more questions. Hearing none, he asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Ms. Dika made a motion to approve the application as amended – that the sills be between 1 1/2" and 3" and that aprons be used only if necessary and not to exceed 4 1/4". The motion was seconded by Mr. Katz. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

III. WORK SESSIONS

A) Petition of **KRS Realty, LLC, owner, and Kim Buxton, applicant**, for property located at **78 Market Street** wherein permission is requested to a exterior renovations to an existing structure. Plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 36 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was tabled to a work session at the January 3, 2007 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Vice Chairman Adams made a motion to table the application to the February 7, 2007 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

B) Work Session requested by **Jeannette E. Hopkins, owner**, for property located at **39 Pray Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (remove one-story structure (replace with larger one story ell at rear of structure)). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 38 and lies with the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Vice Chairman Adams made a motion to table the application to the February 7, 2007 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

C) Work Session requested by **Charles L. Thayer Revocable Trust, owner**, and **Jerry Thayer, applicant**, for property located at **21 Richmond Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition (remove existing house) and allow a new free standing structure (new 2 ½ story house). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 108 as Lot 16-2 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A Districts.

- Mr. Jerry Thayer, applicant, spoke to the project. He said that his family has owned the property for 40 years. He has lived in the house since February 2006. He submitted pictures of the condition of the house for the Commission to review.
- Mr. Thayer stated that the condition of the property is poor. He it was not in sound condition when it was purchased. He said that he has done some electrical work but he felt it did not make any sense given the condition of the structure.
- Mr. Thayer submitted a building inspection with the application. He stated that the main carrying member has broken and failed. The foundation continues to settle.
- Vice Chairman Adams asked when the building was built. Mr. Thayer replied he thought it was built right after the Civil War. He felt it was built with recycled materials. He said that the lolly columns hold the first floor up. He said that if he were to remove three of the lolly columns, the house would collapse. He felt there may be some materials that could be salvaged like the fieldstones and the wide pine floorboards. Other than that, the rest is not worth anything.
- Chairman Rice stated that Mr. Thayer presented a convincing case that the house has multiple problems. He asked him to present his proposal for the new structure.
- Mr. Thayer introduced Mr. Brad Covert, architect for the project. He presented the plans for the new structure. Mr. Thayer said that the style of the house is early Georgian with single end chimneys.
- Chairman Rice asked what the door treatment and light fixtures would look like and the pediment over the door. He mentioned that these would be the kind of details that they would need to have for final approval.
- Chairman Rice also pointed out that they would want to see cut sheets on all of the windows and they would have to be true divided light windows.

- Mr. Thayer said that the front of the building is early Georgian style. The pitch of the roof is what is has been built many times.
- Chairman Rice asked the Commission how they felt about replacing a very small, humble home with a traditional Georgian style new home that is considerably larger.
- Mr. Thayer pointed out that it is not really a large house. It has a footprint of 900 sq. feet. It is 36 feet wide and 25 feet deep.
- Ms. Dika stated that they would be dealing with the grade. She wondered what the appearance would be with a two and a half story house.
- Mr. Thayer replied that you have to get a certain distance away from the building to see the top pitch of the roof.
- Mr. Covert stated that they tried to minimize the vertical height. He said that the first floor is 8 feet; the second floor and attic are 7'6".
- Vice Chairman Adams said that he appreciated their sensibility with the dormers. He added that he was concerned with setting the house back from the street. He continued that most of the earliest structures were set on the street.
- Mr. Thayer said that the lot has southern exposure. He said that the lot is small but he can accommodate his parking. He added that if he moves the building structure forward, then he loses the southern exposure and he starts to interfere with the sunlight for the neighboring houses. Mr. Thayer stated that the house will be set back 40' and it would allow them to have a lawn, some gardens, and a fence.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked if they would have to get a setback to build in that location. Mr. Thayer replied yes.
- Mr. Thayer presented some 1/8 scales on transparencies.
- Mr. Katz felt that they should wait until they get BOA approval before they move ahead. He stated that the design of the proposed house was very nicely done.
- Chairman Rice asked about the windows on rear and the right elevations. He felt it looked a little awkward.
- Mr. Wyckoff suggested that they check with the building department. He said if they are removable sashes then the City is willing to work with the windows.
- Chairman Rice said that windows tend to get smaller when you up in height. The rear and right elevations are troubling to him. Mr. Covert said they could do something to clean up the look.
- Mr. Thayer asked if the Commission was comfortable with the smaller window in the kitchen. Vice Chairman Adams replied that he was comfortable with it.
- Mr. Covert said they would strive for more symmetry.
- Chairman Rice said that they would see them again on a site walk. He said they would need to go before the BOA for the setback and the HDC for the demolition.
- Mr. Clum stated that the applicant will have to apply for a building permit first.
- Ms. Janet McCracken, an abutter, stated that she is highly in favor of the project. Mr. Blair McCracken felt the design was fitting to the neighborhood.

B) Work Session requested by **68 State Street, LLC, owner, and Somma, applicant**, for property located at **68 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to

allow demolition (remove existing building) and allow a new free standing structure (5 story mixed use brick building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 13 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Jennifer Ramsey, architect, spoke to the project. She explained that last month they presented three options with three different roof schemes. She said that some of the Commissioners had concerns with the massing. She stated that they still feel that the five stories is comparable to the district. And it conforms to local zoning and land use.
- Ms. Ramsey stated that Option A and Option D are the remaining choices. Suggestions from last month's meeting mentioned simple design features for Option A. For Option D, mentioned the eve line at three stories and how that design is carried down State Street. It is still five stories. She added that Option A was slightly taller than Option D. She also said that in Option A they do not need to overbuild the firewall.
- Ms. Fineberg asked if they eliminated the chimneys in Option D. Ms. Ramsey said that there would be flues.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked if there would be an elevator in the building. Ms. Ramsey replied yes, but it is not shown in the views. In Option A it is beyond the ridge and set back quite a bit. In Option D it is back quite a ways in the major mass of the building. She said there would be a +/-14 foot override.
- Ms. Ramey pointed out the page 3 of the plans showed how the proposed building is in context with the street. Chairman Rice interjected that none of the adjacent buildings are as massive as the one she is proposing.
- Ms. Ramsey pointed out that on page 4 shows the length of Court Street and State Street and how the proposed building fits in that streetscape.
- Ms. Ramsey said that they have two options for Court Street. She said that massing stays the same. She said that she prefers Option A. She stated that the building is currently being proposed for a hotel.
- Chairman Rice asked the Commission about the overall concept of the project.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he preferred Option A.
- Vice Chairman Adams agreed with Mr. Wyckoff. He thought it more in keeping with the area. He felt it looked much less like a converted building than Option D. He added that he may not be on board with a building of that size.
- The Commission was in agreement with preferring Option A.
- Chairman Rice said that what jumps out at him with Option A is the amount of windows and glass, as well as the dormers that look contemporary in design.
- Vice Chairman Adams felt that the architect did a good job in dealing with the dormers. He asked Ms. Ramsey about the repetition of the window spacing.
- Ms. Ramsey said that they are also working with the plan for a hotel. She said they were looking to simplify the approach with regards to windows. She felt that shutters on the windows made it look too busy. They are proposing to incorporate simple details.
- Mr. Katz pointed out that the Commission has nothing to say about shutters.

- Mr. Wyckoff asked if there would be two windows to the hotel rooms. Ms. Ramsey replied yes. She said that they could simplify it with only one window per room. She added that they were trying to do something different and special.
- Vice Chairman Adams asked if the room pattern would continue up to the dormers. Ms. Ramsey replied yes.
- Chairman Rice asked for clarification about the Eagle clad windows. Ms. Ramsey replied that those were the type of windows that were approved at 58 State Street.
- Vice Chairman Adams asked about the floor to floor height. Ms. Ramsey are assuming an 8 foot floor to ceiling height. She said that right now they have 18” of floor structure.
- Vice Chairman Adams asked about the window sizes on the third and fourth floors. Ms. Ramsey replied that she thought the windows on those two floors are the same size.
- Mr. Wyckoff wondered if maybe a storefront look on the first floor would be an option. He thought that might break up the massing of the windows. Ms. Ramsey said that that was an interesting idea.
- Vice Chairman Adams and Mr. Golumb both said they would be interested in seeing something like that.
- Ms. Fineberg asked if the entry doors were there as place holders. Ms. Ramsey said that that entry is a recessed entry with two sidelights.
- Ms. Dika stated that she liked the first floor as drawn.
- Chairman Rice suggested that they look at the Court Street elevation. He pointed out that they were looking at two options concerning this elevation. Ms. Ramsey added that the size of windows vary on this elevation. She also said that they are proposing brick but they would entertain the idea of clapboards as well.
- Vice Chairman Adams said that they do not have a side view. He asked Ms. Ramsey for details of that. She pointed out that page 4 of the plans show two gables with shed dormers. She added that they were holding the edge of 58 State Street and 449 Court Street with a large hip roof that sweeps up to the interior courtyard. There will be a second floor courtyard with first floor parking. All of the internal rooms look into the courtyard.
- Mr. Katz pointed out that it does not look like a garage area.
- Chairman Rice asked the Commission what back view option did they like. The Commission was not in agreement as which option they preferred. Mr. Wyckoff thought Option 2 was simpler. The Commission said that they could be comfortable with either option.
- Ms. Ramsey asked the Commission about the varying sizes of windows on the on the back from right to left.
- Chairman Rice stated that the massing was going to be critical with this project.
- Mr. Golumb asked Ms. Ramsey if she could bring a head on elevation to help him better understand the massing. She replied yes.
- Mr. Katz stated that no one ever sees an elevation. Mr. Golumb disagreed. He said that it could be taken in context. He said that he would find it helpful. Mr.

Katz said that it might be a tool but it does not reflect reality. He added that you cannot discount perspective.

- Ms. Dika asked Ms. Ramsey if she could present a rendering of Option A as a four story building. Ms. Ramsey replied that their preference is five floors but it would not be difficult to present it.
- Ms. Ramsey said they would like to have one more work session with a public hearing in March.

Chairman Rice reminded the Commission that there is a public hearing for the Sheraton/Westin project on January 31, 2007.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:55 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
HDC Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission Meeting on February 21, 2007.