

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

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**7:00 p.m.**

**March 14, 2007  
reconvened from March 7, 2007**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Sandra Dika, Vice-Chairman John Golumb; David Adams, Richard Katz, Ellen Fineberg; Planning Board Representative Jerry Hetjmanek; and Alternate John Wyckoff

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** City Council Representative Edward Raynolds

**ALSO PRESENT:** Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

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**I. OLD BUSINESS**

Approval of minutes – February 21, 2007

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

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Chairman Dika stated that she would like to bring the last work session to the beginning of the agenda. Mr. Adams made a motion to open the floor to a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hetjmanek. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

**II. WORK SESSIONS**

H) Work Session requested by **Fifty-Five Congress Street Condominium Association, owner, and Jim and Mary Weisheit, applicants**, for property located at **55 Congress Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (attach valance to exterior windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 9 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts. (*This item was tabled to a work session at the March 7, 2007 meeting.*)

Mr. Jim Weisheit, the owner of Portsmouth Spa, spoke to the application. He stated that he had revised the proposal for the sign by reducing the length to 38” and the width to 30”. He also proposed that bracket A, shown in the submitted plans be used to affix the sign to the building. He said he would like to get approval for these two modifications.

Mr. Weisheit said that he would like to discuss the valance next month and would come back with more specific plans and drawings. He explained that he was looking to have “Hair Care and Day Spa” on the two angled sides and “Portsmouth Spa” on the front portion of the valance with four inch lettering.

Mr. Adams stated that this was a more simplified and appropriate plan.

Chairman Dika explained that they would be separating the two proposals. She asked if the Commission had any questions for the applicant.

Mr. Wyckoff asked Mr. Weisheit where he planned to line up the brackets. Mr. Weisheit replied that the bottom edge of the sign would line up with the horizontal brick header on the building.

Chairman Dika asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, she declared the public hearing closed.

Mr. Adams made a motion to amend the application to include only the sign with its new dimensions with the use of bracket style A and aligning the bottom of the sign with the brick header on the building.

Mr. Hetjmanek asked Mr. Adams if the proposed alignment would look alright given that the façade is shorter than other buildings in the area. Mr. Adams replied that it does make it lower than some of the other signs on the street. He said that they are to seek some sort of architectural feature for alignment of signs, be it the top or the bottom of some element. He continued to say that the windows align with the top of the beam. Mr. Adams stated that it was low, but it was still way above head height.

Mr. Hetjmanek seconded Mr. Adams motion.

The motion to amend the application to include only the sign with its new dimensions with the use of bracket style A and aligning the bottom of the sign with the brick header on the building passed by a unanimous vote (7-0).

Chairman Dika explained that Mr. Weisheit would be coming back to the April 4, 2007 meeting for approval of the valance.

Mr. Adams made a motion to close the public hearing and recess to the work sessions. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Golumb. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

D) Work Session requested by **Jeannette E. Hopkins Trust, owner**, for property located at **39 Pray Street** wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (one story rear addition to existing ell and kitchen bay, window changes to ell and bay). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 38 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Anne Whitney, architect for the project, spoke to the application. She stated that they are proposing to put a small, one story addition on the residence. She mentioned

that they were recently granted a variance for the project. Ms. Whitney pointed out that there is an existing kitchen bay and small ell on the back of the house. She said that they would be adding on in the area between the kitchen bay and the ell. The dimensions would be 9' x 6' with a hip roof. She stated that they would be changing the windows also. They plan to eliminate one skylight and keep the other one. The windows on the ell will be changed also. Ms. Whitney said that they would be relocating the existing door. She added that it was a very tight lot and that they were trying to get some light into the structure. Ms. Whitney showed the Commission a sample of the fiberglass Marvin windows called The Integrity, which she was proposing. She said that it can be painted and would come with an applied muntin.

- Mr. Adams asked if there was filler. Ms. Whitney replied that there was not a spacer bar. She said that given the scale of the windows, there would not be a big expanse of glass.
- Mr. Golumb asked about the removal of the existing patio. Ms. Whitney said they would be losing a couple feet of patio but would reconfigure it once the addition was complete.
- Ms. Whitney said that the corner boards and the clapboards would match the existing house. She added that the roofing material would be asphalt.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he was concerned with how the existing ell was constructed with the rake boards, some being right on the sheathing. He said that he hoped Ms. Whitney would not be using the same detail on the addition. Ms. Whitney said that was a fairly common detail to keep the rake tight.
- Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions. Ms. Whitney said that she would be back next month for a public hearing.

E) Work Session requested by **Parade Office, LLC**, for property located **195 Hanover Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish building) and allow a new free standing structure (mixed use building of retail, hotel, office, and residential units). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lot 1 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

- Ms. Lisa DeStefano spoke to the project. She stated that the plan was still continuing in the same direction with the same four buildings, in the same location, and all with first floor retail space. She mentioned that they would be showing the Commission the materials that they were proposing. They were also looking for acceptance of the design direction and materials for three of the four buildings proposed, the residential building and the two office buildings.
- Mr. David Manfredie of Elkus Manfredie Architects reviewed the site plan with the Commission. He said that the site makes connections to Vaughan Way and Hanover Street. He stated that the newly created street would have wide walkways that were 22 feet wide on one side and 12 feet wide on the other. Mr. Manfredie stated that they would like the stores to spill out into the streets. He said that in the last meeting, it was pointed out that focus needed to be given to the relationship of the storefronts to the building above. He added that the overwhelming character of the buildings is a strong look, simply designed with brick and stone heads and sills.
- Mr. Manfredie showed the Commission new sets of elevations. The first elevations showed the office building and the residential building. He said that the base is ariscraft (cast stone) with variation in it. The typical size of the stone is 12"x 24" and is laid by

masons. Mr. Manfredie stated that they were trying to create a base for the building that framed the retail frontage. He said that within the masonry frames, the glass was large, the sills low, and there was signage while separate for individual tenants. He added that the upper three floors of those buildings are a combination of red brick and metal. He said that across the street was the residential building where the scale changes. The building material for the residential building would also be ariscraft. He said that on the corner and top floor of the building, they would use a zinc shingle. Mr. Manfredie stated that zinc will weather and change color so there would be diversity and variety in the shingle. Chairman Dika asked if the change of color was to a darker hue. Mr. Manfredie replied yes but that it was very subtle.

- Mr. Manfredie pointed out that the streets around the site are all important passageways. He said that the front door of the residential building was on the street facing the Harbor Hill Condominiums.
- Mr. Manfredie talked next about the entrances to the two office buildings and the materials that would be used. He said in some areas the brick would come down to the street which creates some diversity.
- Ms. DeStefano spoke about the streetscapes. She said that she brought three additional renderings for the Commission to look at. The first one was looking toward the broad walk. She said this rendering showed the view through the Vaughan Mall and how the building connects to other parts of the City. She said that the second image was of a corner of the residential building looking into the sight and into the broad walk. The third image was of the corner of Deer Street and the private way. It showed viewpoints of coming into the private way. The image showed some of the materials that were proposed for the buildings. She said that the materials that are being introduced are not new to the City. Ms. DeStefano showed the Commission a sample of the metal. She felt that it was not a bright shiny metal but instead in warm earth tone colors.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he was concerned that he did not see any drawings for the Maplewood Avenue side. He pointed out that the drawings showed trees but the plans show that they are building up to the property line. He also wondered about the parking which was proposed to be below grade. Ms. DeStefano replied that there was 8 feet of grade change. Mr. Wyckoff said that he was concerned that the sidewalk would be reduced in size. Ms. DeStefano assured Mr. Wyckoff that they would not be reducing the size of the sidewalk. She added that they would be working with City staff to plant trees where they will flourish the best. She said that they would be addressing the Maplewood Avenue side at the next meeting.
- Chairman Dika asked the Commission how they felt about the massing. Ms. Fineberg stated that she felt the pavilion area of the office building needed reworking. Mr. Wyckoff stated that he agreed with Ms. Fineberg. He felt that maybe it should be more symmetrical. Mr. Adams felt that it did not blend in with anything.
- Mr. Adams stated that identification of the corners of the buildings helped to reduce their mass. He said he was not uncomfortable with the scale of the buildings since it was an enormous lot. He added that he did not like metal siding although he understands that it provides some angle, texture, and roof activity. Mr. Adams explained that he was concerned with the sameness of it. He also said that he appreciated the storefront changes and he pointed out that the historic storefronts in the downtown are after-the-fact additions. Mr. Adams stated that he liked the cornice lines. He pointed out that on the

office building toward Hanover Street, the brick columns looked uncapped and without bearing. He also felt that the windows on the building facing Deer Street were too large. The upper windows are larger than the ones below it and Mr. Adams felt that that was contrary to the general rule of architectural work. He pointed out that there was a similar theme going on with the corner of the residential building. Mr. Adams felt it created a mass of glass.

- Mr. Hetjmanek felt that the big windows were a plus to add a lot of light. He said that he liked the roof on the residential building.
- Mr. Katz stated that he did not have a problem with a four story building. He felt it would be helpful if an aerial view with these perspectives were available for them to look at. As for materials, he felt that the windows were fine. He pointed out that in this day and age, the most desirable place is the top floor.
- Ms. Fineberg had a question about the zinc siding. She asked if they had seen it used in areas where there was salt in the air. Mr. Manfredie stated that it has been used a lot in Boston. He said that he would get back to her with specifics.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he preferred the zinc shingles to the metal siding.
- Mr. Golumb said that there has been a lot of exciting dialogue. He felt that this was an area in the City where new materials could be introduced. He asked about the size of the entrance to the office buildings.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he was uncomfortable with the tower of the residential building.
- Chairman Dika and Vice Chairman Golumb said that they agreed with Mr. Adams about the windows. Mr. Golumb felt the banding of the storefronts was too massive for the base. Mr. Adams felt that part of the problem with the windows was the lack of a strong cornice line.
- Chairman Dika stated that she thought the corner of the residential building looked awkward. Mr. Adams agreed. Mr. Wyckoff said it looked like a clock tower that someone knocked the top off of.
- Vice Chairman Golumb asked if it would be possible to have a couple sets of drawings. Ms. DeStefano replied that they would provide those at the next meeting.
- Ms. DeStefano asked if it was time to schedule a site walk. Ms. Fineberg replied that one more work session would be helpful before a site walk.
- Chairman Dika asked if anyone from the public wished to comment on the project.
- Ms. Sharon Somers, representing The Hill Condominium Association spoke. She thanked the Commission for the time to speak and the development team for taking the time to meet with the condominium association. She said that she was looking forward to having discussion about the materials, particularly the materials that will be facing the condominium association. She stated that it would be helpful to have perspectives looking down from the Hill so that they will know what it will look like from their vantage point.
- Mr. Dan Rawling, a resident of Portsmouth spoke next. He stated that on the Hanover elevation of the office building, he wondered if the façade makes the building look massive. He mentioned that maybe there could be more distinction with the residential building on the east elevation. He had concerns about the flatness of the skyline. He would like to see a variation with regards to the skyline.

- Mr. Brad Halstead of 77 Hanover Street stated that he would be directly across from the project. He said that he was excited about it. He thought the introduction of new materials was great.
- Ms. DeStefano said that she hoped that the agenda would be light enough next month so that they could be on for the first Wednesday of the month. Vice Chairman Golumb mentioned that it might be a good idea to have a separate night just for the Parade Office Mall project.

F) Work Session requested by **Eric D. Peterson, owner**, for property located at **43 Sheafe Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing ell) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new ell). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 20 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

- Mr. Eric Peterson thanked the Commission for their comments last month. He said that it helped him to refine his proposal. He said that the east elevation was unchanged.
- Mr. Peterson stated that on the south elevation he has lowered the roof line. He has also removed the sidelights and has adjusted the width of the doors to get more light. He said the he thought the doors were about 30" each.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked if the windows would line up with the doors. He said that it was his hope to get them to align by selecting a width of the doors that would match the standard width of the windows. He said that the windows are matching the 6 over 6 on the second story of the original structure.
- Mr. Wyckoff cautioned Mr. Peterson about the ceiling height in relation to the doors.
- Mr. Adams did not think the three windows would line up appropriately with the doors. He felt that two windows would provide symmetry and uniformity.
- Mr. Peterson talked about the west and north elevations. He said he met with the Planning Department to discuss the possibility of openings on the north elevation. He was told that since the house sits on the boundary, he cannot have fenestration on that side. So he would not have any northern light. He stated that he would like to propose two small skylights and he thought the Planning Department would not have any problem with that.
- Mr. Adams asked about the use of spruce clapboarding. Mr. Peterson replied that he was looking at a fireproof durable material.
- Vice Chairman Golumb asked about the windows on the west elevation. Mr. Peterson replied that he was using 6 over 6 and 9 over 6 windows.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that Mr. Peterson would need to be more accurate with the plans for the south elevation. Mr. Adams added that he would appreciate a floor and ceiling plan.
- Mr. Peterson asked if the Commission would have a problem if the transom were removed from the proposal. Mr. Adams replied no but he might want to think about a cap on the double doors to give the top some presence. He said it should look like it is carrying weight.
- Mr. Peterson said that he would like to move forward with a public hearing. Mr. Adams mentioned that manufacturer's cut sheets for the doors, windows, and skylights as well as details of materials would be required.

G) Work Session requested by **82-86 Congress, LLC, owner**, for property located at **82-86 Congress Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (add one story structure to existing building, add rooftop HVAC equipment, renovate storefronts and existing windows). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 45 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

- Mr. Steve McHenry of McHenry Architecture spoke to the application. He walked the Commission through the plans. The first page of the plans showed the context of the neighborhood. Page two showed a straight on elevation view showing the streetscape and elevation.
- Mr. McHenry said that at the last meeting, there was discomfort with the window on the north elevation. He said that they have changed that and the window is now the height of the other windows.
- Page 3 showed the streetscape view on Congress Street. There was also an overall elevation view on Chestnut Street. It also showed a different treatment and window over the door on Chestnut Street.
- Page 4 was an elevation view that faces up toward Market Square. The gray band represents the top floor. He pointed out that it was without windows because of code compliance. This view also showed the continuation of the parapet edge that continues around the building.
- Page 5 was a perspective view with more developed storefront systems. The right hand upper portion window has changed.
- Page 6 showed the massing down the street. He pointed out that the colors have been toned down since the last meeting. He said that the piers would be granite along with an 8" banding of granite that goes up Chestnut Street.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he appreciated the windows being the same height as the proposed third story windows. He said he did not like the look of the plain cornice with no window heads. Mr. McHenry replied that that concerned him also but it looked to heavy if they were put in.
- Mr. McHenry said that Page 7 showed a roof top view that would have mechanical equipment.
- Mr. Adams asked if the curved portion of the third story roof was pitched. Mr. McHenry replied yes and it was visible on Page 10.
- Mr. McHenry stated that the parapet around the roof and the corner element are all copper.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked if the Commission was comfortable with the rounded corner of the third floor. Mr. Adams stated that he was comfortable with it. Mr. Katz said that it does not seem to be a modern element. He was comfortable with it. Chairman Dika felt it was a very interesting and creative new element. Mr. McHenry said it seemed to liven it up.
- Page 8 showed that the addition worked well with the scale. Mr. McHenry stated that Page 9 showed a blank wall that he was not sure what to do with.
- Page 10 showed the enlarged view of the storefront detailing as well as the materials to be used.
- Page 11 showed the actual profiles of the areas that are detailed.
- Ms. Fineberg asked about the round window on the Chestnut Street entrance. Mr. McHenry said that the owner wanted something different there. Mr. Adams felt that two vertical mullions would enhance it.

- Mr. McHenry said that an engineer has to make a judgment about whether the mass of the project can be added to without doing a complete seismic mitigation. He said that there are certain weight restrictions.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he was not in favor of using efis material. He feels that it is overused.
- Ms. Fineberg said that the blank wall on page 8 was the most difficult part of the project for her. Mr. McHenry replied that he could probably do a recessed outline of window openings part way down to disguise the wall.
- Mr. McHenry showed the Commission a sample of the efis system. He said that according to the literature, there has been over a billion square feet of it installed. He added that because it was everywhere, it was a material that has been tested. Mr. McHenry said that he was looking at a red color.
- Mr. McHenry stated that he does not have a good detail for the awning yet. They are certain that they want to clad it in copper. He said that they are still determining how the sides will be treated.
- Vice Chairman Golumb stated that the rounded element on the proposed third floor complemented the rounded brick on the Kearsarge building across the street. He felt it softened the corner.
- Mr. McHenry said that he felt he was ready to move forward with the public hearing. The Commission was agreeable to that.
- Mr. Dan Rawling, an interested person from the public, had an idea about the soffit. He wondered if it could be treated as a pier cap. Mr. McHenry replied that there was always a battle between the horizontal and the vertical. He felt this solution resulted in big horizontal treatments and a big vertical treatment would fight with it.

### **III. OTHER BUSINESS**

Comments concerning Draft HDC Rules and Regulations document

Ms. Fineberg suggested that they have a separate meeting for this. Mr. Clum mentioned that the changes to the document were very minor. Ms. Fineberg felt it might be an opportunity to add something if necessary. She also suggested that they could meet before a regularly scheduled meeting. The Commission thought that was a good idea. Mr. Adams asked Chairman Dika if she would work out a date with the Planning Department. She replied that she would.

### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:50 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 April 11, 2007.