

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 p.m.

**July 9, 2008
reconvened from July 2, 2008**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Sandra Dika; Vice Chairman Richard Katz; Members John Wyckoff, Tracy Kozak, Elena Maltese; City Council Representative Eric Spear

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alternates George Melchior, Joseph Almeida

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

Chairman Dika reconvened the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

7. Petition of **7 Islington Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **40 Bridge Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow an amendment to a previously approved design (eliminate parking below building, replace gates and grills with windows and doors, change footprint at west elevation to reflect lot line adjustment) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 52 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

Chairman Dika explained that the applicant requested that the application be postponed to the August 6, 2008 meeting.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Councilor Spear made a motion to postpone the application to the August 6, 2008 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wyckoff. The motion passed by a unanimous (5-0) vote.

Ms. Kozak arrived at this point in the meeting.

8. Petition of **Courtyard Condominium Association, owner**, for property located at **52 Daniel Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (add flashing, replace clapboards with different reveal) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 17 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Ernest Underwood, representing the condominium association was present to speak to the application. He explained that the front and rear of the building had clapboards that were 3 ½” to the weather. On the northwest side where there is a small alley, the clapboards are 2 ½” to the

weather. He said that in this location, some of the clapboards were rotting away as well as some of the wood facing underneath. He said that they would like to replace the clapboards, just 14 clapboards high and match the 3 1/2" clapboards on the rest of the building. They would also like to replace some pieces of the sill and put some flashing over the stone foundation to eliminate leaking into the building.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Mr. Craig Douglas, architect for an upcoming application on the agenda stated that what the applicant described was good construction.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Maltese. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that the construction was appropriate for the building. It was in an alley where it will not be seen. He added that he hoped they would apply some bevel to the material to shed the water away from the clapboards.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Dika called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

9. Petition of **Frank M. and Kiska B. Alexandropoulos, owners, and Chris Wright, applicant**, for property located at **699 Middle Street** wherein permission was requested to allow an amendment to a previously approved design (replace window on rear elevation with entry door) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 148 as Lot 35 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A Districts.

Chairman Dika explained that the applicant was going to submit another change to the plan and material was given to the Commissioners.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Chris Wright, representing the applicant stated that they would like to replace the lower right rear window with an entry door.

He added that when they began framing, it became obvious that they would have to lower the garage ceiling to leave clearance at the top of the stairway. He said they were proposing to eliminate the pet roof and lower the rear windows down to a reasonable height.

Ms. Maltese asked what this change would do to the rake of the roof. Mr. Wright replied that on the shed roof it would increase the pitch slightly.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if the change would affect the front roof. Mr. Wright replied no.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she 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 and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Maltese made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application with the amended details submitted at this evening’s meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Spear. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Ms. Maltese said that the change to the rear door on the back elevation made sense however; she was not thrilled with the second change.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Dika called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application with the amended details submitted at this evening’s meeting passed by a 5-0 vote with Mr. Wyckoff abstaining.

10. Petition of **National Block II, LLC, owner**, for property located at **111 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (construct fence enclosure) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 50 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE COMMISSION

Mr. Craig Douglas, architect for the project was present to speak to the application. He explained that the owner needed a place to put trash so they were proposing to enclose an area on the back of the building to place a dumpster. He said that two enclosures were being proposed. The enclosure on the right side would house the dumpster and the enclosure on the left side would store cardboard and other recycling materials. He added that they have sized them just large enough to house the use.

Ms. Maltese asked if there was a reason that they were not screening the condenser as well. Mr. Douglas said that the condenser needs air flow in order to work properly so they did not want to enclose it for that reason. He explained that the wall of the enclosure that will be located next to the condenser will have slats in it to allow for good air flow.

Ms. Kozak asked if the posts would be exposed to the front or would they be completely wrapped by the boards. Mr. Douglas replied that the posts would be on the inside. Ms. Kozak said that a more consistent post detail would be to have them exposed and have the tops of the posts slightly higher or capped to differentiate if from the boards. Mr. Douglas was agreeable to that. Mr. Wyckoff added that it would also be more appropriate to hinge the doors on the inside of the posts and cap the posts.

Mr. Wyckoff asked about the composite boards. Mr. Douglas said that they were a composite material, more like Azek that was impervious to water. Mr. Wyckoff asked if the composite boards would be strong enough. Mr. Douglas said that they could run another board diagonally to strengthen it.

Ms. Maltese asked what the latches would be. Mr. Douglas said they had not chosen a latch but that it would be a simple latch. Ms. Maltese said that she felt she needed more details. Ms. Kozak said that she did not see the latch as a problem. She felt comfortable proceeding. Vice Chairman Katz asked if the latches would be on the inside or the outside of the enclosure. Mr. Douglas replied that the latches would be on the outside. He suggested using a stainless steel or a black latch with a butt hinge on the door. He added his goal was to make it as simple as possible. Vice Chairman Katz replied that he was satisfied with that. Mr. Wyckoff stated that he did not think it was possible. Vice Chairman Katz replied that the Commission should not concern themselves with whether it works or not. If it does not work, the applicant would have to come back. Mr. Douglas offered to use a simple strap hinge, three of them, on the doors.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she 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 and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice Chairman Katz made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following stipulations:

- 1) That the 4” x 4” fence posts are exposed on the outside of the enclosure and are capped.
- 2) That the doors are reinforced with additional boards.
- 3) That a simple strap hinge is used on the gates.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Kozak. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Vice Chairman Katz stated that it was a very simple approach to covering up a dumpster. He felt that with the amendments proposed it would be an addition to the back of the building.

Mr. Wyckoff commented that the project was ill thought out and was not a complete application. He was in favor of covering up the dumpster but he could not support applications that were incomplete.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Dika called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following stipulations passed by a 5-1 vote with Mr. Wyckoff voting in opposition:

- 4) That the 4” x 4” fence posts are exposed on the outside of the enclosure and are capped.
- 5) That the doors are reinforced with additional boards.
- 6) That a simple strap hinge is used on the gates.

III. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **Naber Realty, LLC, owner**, for property located at **515 – 517 Middle Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (remove fire damaged area at rear of building) and allow new construction to an existing structure (rebuild area adding second story) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (reconstruct front entry). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 135 as Lot 17 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A Districts.

Chairman Dika explained that the applicant requested that the application be postponed to the August 6, 2008 meeting.

Ms. Maltese made a motion to postpone the application to the August 6, 2008 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Spear. The motion passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

B. Work Session requested by **Seaside Trust, owner**, and **Creative Investors, applicant**, for property located at **405 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace windows, doors, and siding) and allow demolition of an

existing structure (demolish existing ell, reconstruct new ell). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 68 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Anne Whitney, architect for the project and Mr. Peter Morin, owner, were present to speak to the application. She explained that the gable end of the house was on the street side. She said they were proposing extensive interior and exterior renovations to the house. The siding will be removed and all of the windows replaced. The main body of the house is structurally sound.
- Ms. Whitney said that the existing entry was in good shape so they would just be renovating it.
- Page 2 showed a two story ell that sits on the property line. They would like to demolish the ell that currently sits on a rubble foundation and rebuild a new two story 10' x 15' ell. Ms. Whitney explained that they currently had an application before the Board of Adjustment for the rebuilding of the ell. Ms. Whitney showed the Commission the front and right side elevation of the proposed ell.
- Ms. Whitney explained that on the front elevation they were proposing to replace the windows with a slightly different size window. They will be simulated divided light with a trim that matches. On the upper floor, one window would be downsized a bit.
- Ms. Whitney pointed out the garage that has a full foundation. She said that it originally had an 8 foot high door that has been reduced. She would like to bring it back up to the 8 foot height using a simple painted panel door with a row of lights.
- Ms. Whitney said that a small shed on the side of the existing ell will be removed and not rebuilt.
- The chimney, Ms. Whitney pointed out was in a very serious state of disintegration. She explained that gas piping is running up through it. She was proposing to take the whole system out. In doing so, it will allow them to fit in two bathrooms and two closets and a fireplace with a second flue for the furnace. This means that they will be downsizing and offsetting the chimney somewhat from the center line of the house. She added that the way the house sits; it will be hard to see the chimney.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked the age of the house. Mr. Peter Morin, owner, stated that he thought it was built around 1780.
- Ms. Maltese asked how the proposed chimney compared to the next door chimney. She asked if the proposed chimney was the same height off of the roof as the neighboring chimney. Ms. Whitney said that the chimneys are similar in size. From the street side, the proposed chimney would be a little smaller and on the side elevation, it will be significantly smaller.
- Ms. Kozak commented on the sill board that turns into a baseboard that varies as it extends around the building. Ms. Whitney said that she is not sure if that is original or whether it was bolted on at a later date. She stated that they would be happy to use a mud sill in that area. She added that a mopboard might be appropriate there as well. She was proposing 4 1/2" corner boards with about a 6" rake.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he could not believe that anyone purchasing a 1780 house in Portsmouth would want to remove the chimneys stack. He felt that they were taking the chimneys too lightly and trying to make it into a modern house. He added that once the siding is removed, the corner boards and other details may reveal themselves.
- Ms. Maltese said that she was comfortable with the removal of the original chimney. She pointed out that it was not a formal street facing house. If it was, she would have an issue with it.
- Chairman Dika stated that she was uncomfortable with the proposed chimney. She indicated that she would like to go to the site and take a look from the neighbors' vantage points. She added that she realizes that some chimneys are becoming a real problem as people are removing them because they serve no function anymore. Ms. Maltese said that another reason they are being removed is that they have not been maintained properly and are ruining the structure of the house.
- Vice Chairman Katz pointed out that this brings up the reoccurring conflict between the applicant's needs and the creating a museum quality house. He said that this is not a

museum quality house. He pointed out that the house was going to receive some long needed care. He added that moving the chimney had an important impact as far as the interior was concerned.

- Councilor Spear indicated that he was torn. He said that the new chimney would make it look historic but they won't be preserving the old chimney. He asked if the Commission was to preserve historic buildings or preserve a historic look. Ms. Whitney said that they would be taking the chimney completely down and rebuilding it.
- Chairman Dika pointed out that they are very close to losing this house completely. She said that at least someone is bringing something forward. Ms. Whitney pointed out that the foundation was going to need some work.
- Ms. Maltese stated that chimneys are something she fights for as they are a defining characteristic. She said that the house was not facing the street so the chimney was not part of the look of the front of the house. She said that she sees the removal of the chimney as a necessary change to achieve the usage of this house.
- Ms. Kozak pointed out that in the Zoning Ordinance; they are given a set of three criteria to judge a building. She said that this particular structure did not meet any of the three criteria; she did not think it needed to be preserved as a museum piece. She felt there could be some leeway for evolution that is in keeping with the look and details of the building. She added that moving the chimney 18" to the right does not change the character of the building.
- Ms. Whitney explained that on the left side of the building which is closely abutting the neighbor's property, she was proposing to re-side and bring back the corner boards and the roof details. She was proposing to add a skylight to this elevation.
- Ms. Whitney said that on the rear elevation, there is a bulkhead that they would like to relocate.
- Ms. Kozak asked what the proposed construction materials would be for the front stoop the bulkhead and whether any venting would be installed. Ms. Whitney replied that they would probably use foam insulation since the attic is completely open. She added that they would be doing very simple detailing but she was thinking of using hardiplank on the side of the house that was close to one abutter. She said that they hoped to be able to salvage the front the door.
- Ms. Whitney said that they might consider using the hardiplank on the entire house. Vice Chairman Katz did not think it would be good on the front of the house but he did agree to put it on the left side elevation.
- Ms. Maltese asked if the hardiplank would fade differently. Ms. Whitney said that she would look into that.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:15 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on August 13, 2008.