

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 p.m.

February 4, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Sandra Dika; Vice Chairman Richard Katz; Members, John Wyckoff, Tracy Kozak; City Council Representative Eric Spear; Alternates Joseph Almeida, George Melchior

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Planning Board Representative Paige Roberts; Elena Maltese

ALSO PRESENT: David Holden, Planning Director

I. NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of Officers – Chairman, Vice Chairman

Chairman Dika and Vice Chairman Katz were unanimously re-elected to their respective positions for another year.

II. OLD BUSINESS

B. Approval of minutes – December 10, 2008

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to approve the minutes as presented.

Approval of minutes – January 7, 2009

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to approve the minutes as presented.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Petition of **1827 Sheafe House Condominium Association, owner**, for property located at **159 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove existing slate roof on front elevation and replace with asphalt shingles, add snow guards) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 46-3 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Ben Careno, representing the condominium association, was present to speak to the application. He stated that they were proposing to replace the existing slate shingles as they are deteriorating and becoming brittle and loose. He said they would like to replace them with an asphalt shingle to match the existing roof on the back.

Councilor Spear asked how old the slate roof was. Mr. Careno thought that it was possible that it could be original. He was asked the age of the building and thought it was probably built in 1827.

Councilor Spear asked if they had looked into a new slate roof. Mr. Careno explained that the existing slate roof would have to be stripped as there was not much there to salvage.

Mr. Careno told the Commission that in the recent ice storm the copper gutter fell off of the building and took the masonry crown with it. He said all of that would be replaced in kind.

Mr. Wyckoff asked for details about the snow guards. Mr. Careno explained that they were an aluminum guard that would add protection for those coming and going from the building and for those walking on the sidewalk. He said that it would be nailed onto the shingles.

Mr. Wyckoff pointed out that two courses of shingles had been removed. Mr. Careno said that they have done some exploratory work to try to find out why the roof section collapsed.

Ms. Kozak asked if the aluminum snow guard had a finish. Mr. Careno stated no, but that it did come in stainless steel, copper, and aluminum. She wondered if he had considered any more historic materials for the snow guards. Mr. Careno said the condominium association was looking at the use of copper as a possible upgrade. Vice Chairman Katz asked if they would be averse to making the copper snow guard a stipulation. Mr. Careno said that they would be willing to use copper.

Mr. Almeida asked about the existing asphalt roof and wondered if anyone on the Commission had any recollection of it. He said he was having difficulty letting the slate roof go. Vice Chairman Katz commented that when the decision was made to allow the slate roof on the North Church to be replaced with asphalt it was not done without grave trepidation. At that time, the Commission came to the conclusion that to cause a building owner the crushing expense of maintaining slate would be unreasonable. He pointed out that that was not the only place where slate had been removed and replaced with asphalt in the heart of the Historic District. It is not done lightly. Chairman Dika said that they allowed it to happen on the old City Hall building. Mr. Holden pointed out that the shingle on the North Church is a "slate like" shingle.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that there are heavier shingles than what the applicant was proposing. Mr. Careno said they brought an upgrade shingle to show the Commission. He showed the Commission a sample of the slate line shingles for their review. Mr. Wyckoff commented that it was a much heavier shingle. Chairman Dika pointed out that she thought the same shingle replaced a slate roof on Pleasant Street and it has a nice appearance.

Mr. Almeida asked if a simulated slate was considered. Mr. Careno replied no, that the cost was quite a bit higher. Chairman Dika said that cost should not be a factor but she wondered if he had priced a slate roof. Mr. Careno said that he did and the cost was around \$25,000. Using the slate line shingles would cost about \$13,000.

Mr. Dennis Grofielder, a condominium owner, spoke from his experience as a contractor. He said that the roof has already been structurally supported from the inside with steel beams. To put the load of slate shingles on that roof would put people on the sidewalk at risk because the shifting and movement of the roof over the years has probably created a lot of loose shingles. He explained that slate shingles start degrading after 100 years. He also said that as for an artificial slate shingle, most of them do not have a high enough fire rating for a multi-family dwelling. Mr. Grofielder pointed out that the asphalt shingles they were proposing were a fire class A and

much lighter in weight. In Mr. Grofielder's opinion, he thought that going back to slate would cause a hardship in terms of the structural long term effects of the weight on the roof.

Councilor Spear asked about the cost compared to the longevity of the two products. Mr. Grofielder said that the asphalt shingle was a lifetime shingle and was transferable from owner to owner. His concern with a slate roof was the security issues.

Mr. Holden asked if the applicant was proposing the heavier shingle. Mr. Grofielder stated that they were proposing the slate line shingle which was an upgrade from what was originally being proposed. Chairman Dika asked about the existing shingles on the back roof of the building. Mr. Careno explained that the back shingles were a more residential grade shingle. Chairman Dika asked if they go with the slate line shingle then the front shingle would be different from the back shingle. Mr. Careno said that was correct.

Mr. Holden asked if they were planning to replace all of the shingles with the slate line shingle. Mr. Careno replied no, they were just replacing the front. Mr. Holden asked what was known about the history of the shingles on the back section of the roof. Mr. Careno said that there is no record of it.

Mr. Almeida asked what the name of the shingle they were now proposing was. Mr. Wyckoff said that it was GAF Grand Slate.

Mr. Almeida asked what the material would be for the step flashing. Mr. Careno said that it would be either copper or lead.

Hearing no other questions, Chairman Dika asked if there was anyone from the public wishing to speak to, for, or against the application.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Ms. Kathleen Boduch, a condominium owner, had a concern about the copper ice guard. She wanted to make sure that it would be strong enough to avoid any additional avalanches.

Mr. Basil Richardson spoke next. He explained that he grew up at 148 State Street and could see the roof quite readily. He said he could not count the number of times he had seen an avalanche come off of the roof and has been amazed that no one has been killed. He said that he likes slate but in this case, anything that they can put up there that would avoid more friction and slippage would be good. He added that he sat on the Historic District Commission for three years.

Mr. Stan Boduch, another condominium owner, mentioned that about a year ago, two pieces of slate did come down and almost hit him and another person.

Hearing no other comments, Chairman Dika declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application with the following amendments:

- 1) That GAF Grand Slate asphalt shingles are used.
- 2) That the snow guards are to be made of copper or have a copper finish.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Katz. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that it was a shame that the building has gone through the trouble it did considering the amount of money that was put into it four years ago. He felt the slate was partly responsible and there are structural problems that need to be addressed. He thought the GAF shingles were a very heavy lifetime shingle and they would look appropriate from the ground.

Vice Chairman Katz added that sometimes the slate appearing shingles can be very persuasive. He pointed out that the library has a slate like shingle and the tower has actual slate that was salvaged from the old recreation center. If it is done right, it can be very believable.

Mr. Almeida said he would be supporting the motion; however, it was difficult seeing a slate roof disappear in the Historic District. He said it was the Commission’s responsibility to protect these roofs and he did not want to set precedence. He added that he has put in many slate roofs on projects over the years and the reason they fail is that the nails rust and disintegrate. He did not want the Commission to think that slate is not a proper material because it certainly was. In this case, he said he would support the motion.

Chairman Dika commented that her experience has been that for most projects, slate is prohibitively expensive and it adds no value to the exchange or transfer of title to the property. A homeowner cannot recoup the investment in the slate in their lifetime. She added that a mortgage lender will not stand behind a loan to put on a slate roof so it becomes difficult to preserve them as much as she would like to see them preserved.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Dika called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application with the following stipulations passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote:

- 1) That GAF Grand Slate asphalt shingles are used.
- 2) That the snow guards are to be made of copper or have a copper finish.

2. Petition of **OAL Properties, LLC, owner, and Pesce Blue, applicant**, for property located at **103 Congress Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove door at left of building on front facade, relocate door to right of building on front facade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 6-106 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Tom Hammer, representing the owner, spoke to the application. He stated that they were seeking approval to move the entrance door from the left side of the building to the right side of building. Most of the work would be done using the existing materials. He explained that the existing storefront glazing system had 1/4” tempered glass with seals. He said that the reason for the change was to make the ingress and egress easier.

Mr. Almeida asked if this would be a mirror image of what was there now. Mr. Hammer said they would have to add a sidelight but they would glaze up to the header that was existing. The door would be a standard 7' door. Ms. Kozak asked if the glass panels in the middle and the panels at the bottom would remain. Mr. Hammer replied yes.

Hearing no other questions, 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 and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice Chairman Katz made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Almeida. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Vice Chairman Katz stated that the application was pretty cut and dry.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Dika called for the vote. The motion passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

3. Petition of **51 Islington Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **51 Islington Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing building) and allow two new free standing structures (construct two multi-story buildings, one with a retail and residential component, and the other with residential units only, and where the applicant proposes to construct the structures in three phases) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 33 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Ms. Jen Ramsey of Somma Studios and Attorney Paul McEachern were present to speak to the application on behalf of the applicant. She stated that they brought with them a number of materials for their review. They were displayed on the conference table in front of the dais. Ms. Ramsey said that she had a handout showing the materials on the building.

Chairman Dika asked Ms. Ramsey to point out any changes to the design that have occurred since the last work session.

Ms. Ramsey stated that they have been having work sessions with the Commission for the past year. As a result, the two buildings on the site have been diminished in mass and scale. They have also been able to suppress all of the parking below grade. She said that although they were proposing the project to be built possibly in three phases, they were seeking an approval this evening for the project as a whole.

Ms. Ramsey walked the Commission through the plans page by page. She told them that the back building on Tanner Court had been pulled back 11'6" and they also pulled the building in on the sides of both buildings to lessen the overall massing and to allow for sidewalks and green space.

Ms. Ramsey pointed out that the Islington Street building plans were in the front of the packet and the Tanner Court building plans were in the back of packet. Mr. Almeida asked if they

would be looking at the buildings with their roof top units and mechanicals in place. Ms. Ramsey replied yes.

Ms. Ramsey explained that the front building would have a pre-cast base. The middle layer would be a Genest block product and the top layer would be brick. The glass storefronts would have punched openings. Also proposed was architectural asphalt shingles, hardboard siding and trim material, powder coated metal railings, Centria wrapped metal bays, and Eagle or equal aluminum clad windows. She said the Tanner Street elevation contained the same materials.

Mr. Almeida stated that he was uncomfortable with the "or equal" clause. Mr. Holden suggested that if the applicant changes from the Eagle brand, then they should come back before the HDC. Ms. Ramsey agreed to that.

Ms. Ramsey explained in detail the proposed materials. The Commission went down to the conference table to view the materials up close. There was detailed discussion regarding the materials. Ms. Ramsey also gave the Commissioners copies of the color scheme set for their review.

Chairman Dika asked about the clay pots on the chimneys that were previously discussed at the work sessions. Ms. Ramsey said that the spec sheets concerning the pots were included in the packet. She added that the pot intended to go on the front building was 36" tall. Mr. Wyckoff asked if there would be any metal showing from the top of the pot. Ms. Ramsey stated that they were hoping to use the pots as venting. Mr. Almeida asked if that included plumbing venting as well. Ms. Ramsey replied yes.

Mr. Wyckoff pointed out that there was no spec sheets submitted for the retail doors on the Islington Street building. Ms. Ramsey explained that they would be a metal door with an extruded metal panel and would be custom built.

Ms. Ramsey noted that on the Tanner Street elevation, one of the two meter banks would be located there. Also, on the back of the Islington Street building, what was one dormer has been changed to two dormers connected with a shed and an inverted deck. She said that was the only change that has come to light since the last work session.

Mr. Almeida commented that between Phase B and Phase C he assumed there would be a very large vertical control joint going straight up from the base to the roof. He wondered what the material would be. Ms. Ramsey said it would be a neoprene product but she did not anticipate it being incredibly large. She said they were looking for it to be as low profile as possible.

Ms. Ramsey explained that on the Parker Street elevation they would be installing actual windows and treating it as if it was a complete building. She said they would remove and reuse the windows when they built Phase C. Mr. Almeida asked if they would be treating the backs of the windows or leaving the clear glass. Ms. Ramsey said that they would probably be treating the backs of the windows with a painted plywood or something else that might be a better fit.

Mr. Almeida asked about the transformer on this elevation. Ms. Ramsey explained that they have moved it up the street to a location just below the parking ramp. She said it would not be impeding anyone's view. She added that it appeared that the abutters were pleased with the move.

At this point in the meeting, there was considerable discussion concerning the details of the Islington Street building. Mr. Almeida asked if there would be aluminum venting under the eaves. Ms. Ramsey pointed out an area where there would be a small venting break and it would be painted to maintain a low profile to match the underside of the eaves.

Mr. Almeida asked what material would be beneath the balconies. Ms. Ramsey said that bead board would be used. Mr. Almeida also asked about lighting. Ms. Ramsey told him that they would be coming back to them for that approval.

Ms. Ramsey said that the windows would be Eagle clad windows and the French doors on the balconies above would be wood custom doors. She also said she had made a mistake when describing the retail entry doors. They would be wood custom entry doors along the storefront.

The discussion continued with the Tanner Court building and what was Phase A of the project.

Ms. Ramsey reminded the Commission that this building was set back 11'6" to allow for sidewalks and planting beds. She was hoping that maybe it would allow for a wider street. She said that the entire building would be in clapboards with a brick foundation. They were also proposing to use Eagle clad windows, the same architectural grade asphalt shingle as the front building, and the chimney pots. She added that there were a couple of notes that were cut off by the printing which said, "brick veneer chimney with pots typical" and "elevator override."

Ms. Ramsey pointed out that the lower elevation on the sheet was the Parker Street elevation. She said that there was an entry on the side which they have eliminated and replaced with a window bay.

On page 11, Mr. Almeida commented that there seemed to be a huge amount of brick along the base of the building. Ms. Ramsey said it has always been presented as brick and she pointed out that the brick only appears on the sections that are recessed between the two prominent gables and a small section on the gable to the right.

Mr. Wyckoff had a concern about the lighting in the ramp area. Ms. Ramsey said that they could have the lighting on a motion sensor. She said they could look at different options as well.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if there would be a garage door for the underground parking garage. Ms. Ramsey explained that it would be a commercial type door with a key pad where the driver would enter a pass code to open the door.

Mr. Wyckoff asked how wide the ramp leading into the underground parking would be. Ms. Ramsey said she thought the ramp would be 16 feet wide. There would be a pedestrian walking space along the right side of the ramp. Ms. Ramsey pointed out that page 4 showed a section of the ramp. Chairman Dika asked if there was a spec sheet for the garage door. Ms. Ramsey replied no but she could submit that. Mr. Holden commented that they would want to make sure that the ramp was in compliance with zoning regulations. He suggested that they prepare that detail so that they can assure compliance.

Mr. Almeida stated that an argument could be made that the garage door was an internal feature. Ms. Ramsey said that one would have to walk down the ramp to even see the door. Mr. Holden said that if that is the case then when the motion is stated, then it should be disposed of by indicating how the Commission is handling it.

Mr. Wyckoff said that he did not want an urban look of a long ramp plunging down into a basement with 10-15 feet of brick on the left hand side with a garage door at the bottom. He thought it would look foreboding. Mr. Almeida added that he was wrestling with that too. Mr. Wyckoff asked about the possibility of an iron gate at the top. Ms. Ramsey explained the decision behind the current design of the ramp. Mr. Wyckoff would like to see something to block the view of the ramp. Ms. Ramsey explained that the ramp starts 20 feet off of the new sidewalk and ramps down at a typical pitch. Mr. Wyckoff stated that Ms. Ramsey's explanation

mitigated his concern. He liked the idea of the large flat area. Mr. Almeida pointed out a discrepancy between the elevation drawing and the site plan. Ms. Ramsey said that the site plan would override the elevation drawing.

Ms. Kozak asked what the material would be on the right side wall. Ms. Ramsey answered that it would be brick as well.

Mr. Almeida asked about a door at the top of a stairs on page 11. He did not see a spec sheet in the packet for it. Ms. Ramsey said that was an egress door that would be painted out to match the trim of the windows.

Mr. Holden stated that if there was still a concern about the ramp, they might want to have an elevation of it. Mr. Wyckoff felt he was the only one who had an issue with it.

Ms. Ramsey pointed out that page 11 showed the details of the back of the building. Page 13 showed railing, deck, balconies, windows and header details.

Mr. Almeida stated that detail #5, the window header sill, showed a window that was so far forward that it was almost flush with the siding. Ms. Ramsey said they could adjust that. Mr. Wyckoff agreed that on the masonry opening that the window should be set back a minimum of two inches but on the clapboard structure, the way it was shown was standard. Vice Chairman Katz asked if it was the intent to give the building a residential feel. Ms. Ramsey responded yes. Vice Chairman Katz said that he would lean toward Mr. Wyckoff's suggestion. Mr. Almeida stated that he would drop the issue.

Ms. Ramsey explained that detail #9 was mislabeled as the "bird's nest." She said it was a window box. Detail #4 was a traditional "bird's nest" that one would see on the gable end of a New England style home. She said that the detail added some richness. She added that some of the ones she has designed are homes for birds but they would probably not want to encourage that with this application. They would screen it from the inside to keep the birds out.

Mr. Almeida asked if there was a spec sheet for the standing seam metal roof. Ms. Ramsey replied no but said it would be a standard standing seam metal roof that would be painted gray.

Ms. Ramsey explained that the Genest block piece was a full CMU block unit as was the Easy Brick. Both are full deck blocks. She said the only place they were using a brick veneer was on the foundation of the back building. They would use corner blocks on both buildings.

Ms. Ramsey suggested the Commission review the color options for the front building. She was proposing three options. She explained that the block product and the Easy Brick product remained the same on all three options. What changed were the base, the window colors, and the metal cladding colors. She said that exhibit 1 was more in the red tones, exhibit 2 was more in the gray tones, and exhibit 3 was a more monochromatic scheme in cocoa colors. Chairman Dika asked Ms. Ramsey which option was her preference. She stated that she preferred exhibit 1. The Commissioners were in agreement.

Ms. Kozak asked about some of the long lengths of some of the pre-cast bands. Ms. Ramsey said that if they had to put joints there, she would suggest flanking the joints to either side of the column caps.

Chairman Dika commented that she felt there were a number of details lacking. Mr. Holden said he had been trying to keep a running list and he hoped that the Commissioners were keeping their own lists. He said there seems to be some issues out there where the Commission is saying if it is done this way, then the Commission will be happy. He told the Commission to remember

that the building inspectors will be trying to decipher what they have approved. Mr. Holden said that his list included concerns with the windows in the masonry structure, the standing seam roof, the clapboard width, the drip edges, and the ramp/gate. Mr. Wyckoff interjected that he originally had concern about the ramp but has since pulled back on that concern. He also said that he thought they had settled on the 4" reveal. He reiterated that he had a concern with the windows on the masonry structure and suggested setting them in a minimum of 2." Mr. Almeida stated that the drip edge could be addressed. He also added that they might want to address the "or equal" language in the plans.

Mr. Holden reminded the Commission of what they were retaining jurisdiction over – lighting, garage controls, and the mortar samples. He said he was assuming that the applicant was seeking approval of the project without regard to phasing. Attorney McEachern said Mr. Holden was correct. Mr. Holden said that the phasing had nothing to do with the exterior approval, so they should be clear that they are approving the project as presented. He urged them to address all of the outstanding issues.

Chairman Dika asked Mr. Holden for clarification that the fact that the applicant plans to build one building before they build another was not within the Commission's purview. Mr. Holden said that was correct. He said that the Commission was approving it as presented and that Attorney McEachern has indicated that he was not asking the Commission to approve a phasing plan but to approve the project as a whole.

Attorney McEachern stated he agreed with Mr. Holden. He said that the Commission has been presented with a façade, building B, if it is not built in conjunction with building C and so that issue has been resolved by how that façade would look if C is not built at the same time. It is anticipated that building A would go up first then building B, and possibly B and C together.

Mr. Almeida asked for clarification by the Commission on the issue that there was no fear that this building would ever be constructed in such a way that there was a façade left completely blank. Mr. Wyckoff said that was correct.

Hearing no more questions, Chairman Dika asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak to, for, or against the application.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Mr. Chris Comtois and Ms. Katie Barko, owners of the property at 324 Hanover Street spoke. Mr. Comtois stated that they felt this project would be great for the value of the area. He did have a concern with the demolition and the construction side of it since their house was located about 100 feet away.

Chairman Dika told Mr. Comtois that the HDC does not deal with that side of the project. She deferred the question to Mr. Holden.

Mr. Holden explained that if a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted for the project, the applicant would then proceed through site review. There would be two hearings, one by the Technical Advisory Committee and one by the Planning Board. He said that notices would be sent to abutters for those meetings.

Mr. Comtois asked if a timetable had been established. Ms. Ramsey replied that they were looking to move straight toward an approval by the Technical Advisory Committee. Once all of the approvals are in place, the developer would make the decision as to when to start the project. She said a best case scenario would be to start demolition in the late summer.

Mr. Almeida asked if the Commission was treating the demolition as part of the same request. Mr. Holden responded and said that they were approving the changes as proposed and those changes contemplate the demolition.

Chairman Dika asked if anyone else 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

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented with the following amendment:

- 1) That the windows are set back a minimum of 2” on the Islington Street structure.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Katz.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that the project has been reviewed extensively and they have considered the phasing in their discussions. He felt the applicant has done a good job of picking up details from the surrounding buildings. He also felt they were very sensitive to the Tanner Court neighborhood.

Councilor Spear said that he would like to include an amendment concerning the removal of the “or equal” clause pertaining to the materials from the application.

Mr. Wyckoff was in agreement with that change to the motion. He restated his motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented with the following amendments:

- 1) That the windows are set back a minimum of 2” on the Islington Street structure.
- 2) That the “or equal” clause pertaining to the materials is removed from the application.

Vice Chairman Katz seconded the amended motion.

Chairman Dika suggested adding that the approval was for the project as a whole. Mr. Holden said it would not hurt to mention it since it was confirmed by Ms. Ramsey and Attorney McEachern.

Mr. Wyckoff was agreeable to adding that stipulation. Vice Chairman Katz agreed also.

Chairman Dika asked if there was any further comment. Vice Chairman Katz commended the applicant for drawing a very nice balance between traditional influences and injecting a note of something new into this structure and onto the street.

Mr. Almeida commended the applicant and the owner for putting forth such a nice, quality building. He also thanked them for the patience they displayed with the numerous work sessions and giving anyone who might have had issues with the project many opportunities to come a speak to it.

Mr. Holden asked the Commission if exhibit 1 was their choice of color. The consensus of the Commission was to approve exhibit 1.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Dika called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as presented with the following amendments passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote:

- 1) That the windows are set back a minimum of 2” on the Islington Street structure.
- 2) That the “or equal” clause pertaining to the materials is removed from the application.
- 3) That Exhibit 1 from the submitted color schemes set is used.
- 4) That this approval was for the project as a whole.

IV. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **Walter G. Ziebarth and Michelle White, owners**, for property located at **3 Marsh Lane**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing garage and mudroom) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct two car garage with living space above). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 123 as Lot 6 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A Districts.

- Mr. Bob Gray, representing the homeowner was present to speak to the application. He explained that they were at the beginning stages of the project and wanted to get feedback from the Commission. He had just the front elevation to show the Commission.
- Mr. Gray said that they would like to remove the mudroom and one car garage and build a whole new structure.
- Mr. Almeida stated, with regards to the drawing of the front elevation, that he did not see anything overly out of place. He felt it was a good size and scale. He said he would have questions about the choice of door and windows when those are proposed. Mr. Melchior agreed and felt that the applicant was moving in the right direction.
- Ms. Kozak asked if the rear elevation would be similar to the front elevation. Mr. Gray said that the roof style would be similar. He added that he understood that the Commission would need more information.
- Mr. Almeida asked if the rear elevation could be seen from the water. Mr. Gray explained that the water wraps around almost the entire property.
- Ms. Kozak asked if the front elevation was the street façade. Mr. Gray replied yes.
- Chairman Dika said that the windows and the cupola on the side elevation needed some discussion.
- Mr. Almeida pointed out that it would be a prominent view from the water.
- Ms. Kozak commented that she felt the addition fit the spirit of the area. She thought it was appropriate.
- Ms. Dika stated that the addition was very similar to the garage on her own property. She said the windows are mullied in the same way as the proposed left side addition and she did not think it made for a good appearance. She would like to see the windows arranged in a different pattern. She thought the windows tucked under the eaves looked very awkward.
- Mr. Melchior said that he agreed with Ms. Kozak and thought the windows were fine with the structure. He felt enough of the primary elements from the original structure showed continuation from the old to the new. Vice Chairman Katz added that he agreed

too. He felt that any place that this elevation would be seen would be over quite a distance.

- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he agreed with Chairman Dika. He thought five double hung windows in a row looked awkward. Vice Chairman Katz stated that they needed to determine whether it was appropriate.
- Mr. Almeida suggested that a good solution might be to remove the center window. Chairman Dika agreed and Vice Chairman Katz thought that might be a good solution for those who were uneasy with it.
- Ms. Kozak said she disagreed. She thought it was fine the way it was. She said it was looking out over the industrial waterfront. It was not a part of the formal historic old view of the house that faces the street.
- Vice Chairman Katz suggested a site walk.
- Mr. Gray stated that the elevations have been drawn with a white cedar shingle for siding. He wondered what the Commission thought of that. Mr. Almeida thought it was appropriate.
- Mr. Gray asked if the overhead doors had to be made of wood or could they be of a composite material. Mr. Almeida replied that they usually approve wood doors. Vice Chairman Katz suggested bringing some spec sheets to the next meeting for discussion.
- Mr. Almeida recommended that the applicant bring drawings of all four sides of the building as well. Vice Chairman Katz added that photos are always helpful.
- Mr. Almeida asked if a change to the lower windows on the left side elevation helped. Ms. Kozak cautioned that they do not want to make it into a house, it is a carriage house.
- Vice Chairman Katz reminded the Commission that they were not curators. He said their duty was to look at it in the 21st century situation and see how it lives with the structures around it in a historical sense. Chairman Dika replied that was why they needed a site walk.
- Mr. Gray pointed out that the intent of the five windows on the left side elevation was to get the views of the water. He also added that he would probably be proposing Marvin windows.
- Mr. Almeida said that it was not the number of windows that was a problem for him but the layout. Chairman Dika reiterated that having the windows right under the roof line made it awkward.

C. Work Session requested by **Brent Schmitt and Alexandra A. Chan, owners**, for property located at **300 Cass Street, Unit 2**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (add second story deck to rear elevation, install spiral staircase from deck to grade, replace existing window with door). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 147 as Lot 21 and lies within Mixed Residential Office and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Anne Whitney, representing the applicant was present to speak to the application. She explained that she was proposing a deck coming out of the second story with a metal spiral stair from the deck down to grade. She said that currently there was only one egress out of the unit and this will provide the second egress. The project would also include removing a window and replacing it with a door. Ms. Whitney pointed out that there would be 16 feet from the deck to the ground. She added that a porch could be added to the space below the deck if the other owner chose to move forward with that in the future.
- Ms. Ramsey said that the columns would be 4”x 4” posts wrapped with Azek. Mr. Almeida asked if cross bracing was needed. Ms. Whitney said that she would probably do some metal angle bracing at the post tops.
- Ms. Whitney explained that the deck would extend out 10 feet.

- Mr. Wyckoff asked Ms. Whitney if the spiral stairs would meet code regulations. Ms. Whitney replied yes, and she added that she has done several of them in town. She said that the stairs would be welded and assembled on site. It would have a metal handrail.
- For the decking, Ms. Whitney was proposing to use 5/4" Trex or some type of manufactured decking as it would not be seen. She was also proposing a fifteen light, simulated divided light clad door. Mr. Almeida asked if this door would be the only divided light in the building. Ms. Whitney said that it would be but explained that in the dining room where the exterior door is off of, there are two other interior doors that are true divided light French doors. She felt they should match.
- Vice Chairman Katz felt it was a pretty straight forward application.

C. Work Session requested by **Alison J. and Christopher J. Pyott, owners**, for property located at **774 Middle Street, Unit #4**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new two-story addition on west elevation). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 153 as Lot 9 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A Districts.

- Mr. Chris Redmond, the designer of the project, and Mr. Christopher and Mrs. Alison Pyott, homeowners, were present to speak to the application.
- Mr. Redmond explained that the first three pages of the plans were photos of the existing structure. He said that the challenge for him was to work with a structure that had no historic qualities. He added that he was looking for some good feedback from the Commission.
- Mr. Redmond explained that the addition would be coming off of the left of the existing structure. He walked the Commission through the plans and explained the project.
- Mr. Almeida stated that he thought the building had good form with some nice features. He felt Mr. Redmond carried them forward in all of the schemes presented.
- Mrs. Pyott said they were planning to keep the existing slate on the original house but were exploring other roofing materials for the addition. She added that they were looking into a metal roof or a composite slate material. Mr. Almeida thought it would be difficult tying a new roofing material into the existing slate but he thought that the choice of metal might be appropriate. The rest of the Commission was in agreement. Vice Chairman Katz pointed out that there was another metal roof on the same block.
- Chairman Dika asked what the building was originally. Mr. Pyott said that it used to be an old carriage house.
- Mr. Redmond pointed out the existing front door that is not currently used. The owners did not want to keep it so they would like to remove it and put in a stationary barn door. There was currently a track in place for it. He said that this was the only side of the house that anyone sees.
- Ms. Kozak asked if they were planning on replacing the existing windows. Mrs. Pyott said that they were still debating that. Mr. Redmond said that if they did, they would keep them the same size.
- Mr. Wyckoff suggested replacing the double casement windows on the visible side of the structure if they were trying to get the historic look. Ms. Kozak thought that was a good idea. She said that when you look at the building, it's like looking at two different buildings.
- Mr. Almeida suggested having the ridges on the same plane.
- Vice Chairman Katz asked the Commissioners how they felt about the new shed addition with the sliders and the skylights. Ms. Kozak replied that if it were visible, she would have a hard time supporting it but since it was not, it not such an issue for her.
- Chairman Dika suggested that a site walk might be useful.

- Mr. Pyott stated that they were thinking of eliminating the skylights from the new addition to avoid problems with snow and potential leakage.
- Mr. Redmond indicated that they wanted to come back next month for a public hearing. Chairman Dika said that they could hold the site walk before the next meeting. Vice Chairman Katz felt another work session was in order. Mr. Almeida suggested a work session/public hearing at the next meeting.
- Councilor Spear commented that the side with the proposed carriage house door did not blend with the other sides of the house. There was considerable discussion on how deal with the various sides.
- Chairman Dika stated that depending on what they see on the site walk, she said that she might have a concern about all of the glass on the back side of the structure.
- Chairman Dika told Mr. Redmond that they typically do site walks just prior to the meeting and in the winter months, the site walks are normally done on a Saturday. She told Mr. Redmond to be in touch with the Planning Department to set one up.

Mr. Holden stated that the Economic Development Commission wished to invite the Historic District Commission to a viewing and work session on the Islington Street Improvement plan on Wednesday, March 25 from 7-9 p.m. in the Levenson Room at the Portsmouth Public Library. Other boards that would be in attendance would be the Planning Board, Art-Speak, and the City Council. He said that additional information would be forthcoming.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:10 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 March 4, 2009.