

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

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**6:30 p.m.**

**October 9, 2013  
reconvened from October 2, 2013**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Joseph Almeida; Vice Chairman Tracy Kozak; Members Richard Katz, John Wyckoff, City Council Representative Esther Kennedy; Planning Department Representative William Gladhill; Alternates Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** George Melchior

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nicholas Cracknell, Principal Planner

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**A. Continued discussion regarding prioritization of HDC tools request to City Council**

1) Historic District Disclaimer Statement – This statement would be signed for all real estate transactions in the Historic District so that the buyer would know that there were procedures to follow when making alterations to the exterior of any property. Mr. Cracknell said it was drafted six months before and reviewed by the Legal Department, who then recommended that it go through legislative approval in Concord to be implemented. All the Commissioners thought it was a good idea.

2) Appropriation Requests - Mr. Cracknell referenced the memo dated October 9, 2013 regarding project and appropriation proposals discussed with the City Council in May. The City Council asked the HDC to work with the City staff to prioritize the wish list of items previously presented to develop a more refined scope as to what the services rendered would be, and to also come up with estimates for doing any items. One of the top three appropriation requests was the 3D model for the core commercial areas of the District. Vice-Chair Kozak worked with the vendor to generate a scope, budget and target area. The cost depended on whether terrain texturing would be used for the 3D model and was estimated at \$25,000 to \$45,000, depending on whether the 215 buildings in the target area would be textured in the model itself. The Commission had indicated that they wanted more texturing than less. The lower cost of \$25,000 would zero in on certain landmark buildings and texture those first, then as more buildings were textured, the cost would increase. Councilor Kennedy preferred to have more details before the Commission discussed it further, and she thought the general public would appreciate more details as well. Mr. Rawling and Chairman Almeida agreed.

The second appropriation request was the Design Guideline Project for the Historic District. The Commission currently used the design guidelines from the 1970s sparingly, and some of the shortcomings were with infill buildings or substantial renovations in commercial buildings. Consequently, the Commission wanted to develop a more robust set of guidelines dealing with a

comprehensive set of building elements and situations, from minor issues like maintenance up to major issues of alterations, additions and infill development. Mr. Cracknell spoke with the architect who prepared the New Orleans guidelines, who told him that she also prepared the Newton, MA guidelines, which she thought was a good model for the HDC to use in terms of the scale of the document itself. The estimated cost range for the design guidelines that included the administrative process review criteria and an overview of each of the processes was \$45,000 to \$50,000.

Mr. Wyckoff thought the price seemed high and asked if it was just for the design guidelines document or if it included printing of copies as well. Mr. Cracknell assumed that the price included field work travel and the adoption and preparation process for the City Council and HDC, but probably did not include more than a few copies. Chairman Almeida said it was a ballpark estimate and had not been bid on yet, but was just an order of magnitude to present to the City Council. Mr. Wyckoff asked if the Newton guidelines had copyrights and Mr. Cracknell thought they must, but the HDC was starting from ground zero, and if they had an existing work product that could be incorporated into the scope, the cost estimate could be reduced. He thought the New Orleans guidelines cost was about \$150,000. Chairman Almeida reiterated that the issue was simply an order of magnitude in scope and budget at that point and would have a lot more detail later on, so someone had to respond to the request for proposal, and the sooner the better. Councilor Kennedy asked if the Newton Guidelines would incorporate the HDC's 1970's guidelines when they designed the new version. Mr. Cracknell said he didn't think so because the 1970s guidelines had limited value, but he could propose it to reduce the cost.

The third appropriation request was the Historic District Inventory Assessment and Update. Mr. Cracknell said he looked at the zoning maps and went through all the amendments from the 1970s through 2009, and it seemed that approximately 170 properties were added from 1982 up to 2009 and were not inventoried in accordance with the survey form. A few consultants gave him cost estimates of around \$50,000 to do the 170 properties. He showed a range of 175 to 200 properties in case the Richards Avenue, Summer Street and Austin Street properties were added by the City Council in the next six months, which would amount to an additional 30 properties that should be inventoried.

Vice-Chair Kozak asked if funds had been set aside from the Memorial Bridge project. Mr. Cracknell said they had, but the scope had not been set in terms of the limit of work. They were doing a National Register District and it wasn't clear whether some of the streets would be close enough to scope in.

Mr. Cracknell then discussed the zoning amendments regarding consent agendas and administrative approval and ensuring that the HDC got PDF electronic plan submissions with all applications so they could start using the projector by November. They also wanted large projects to produce electronic models when requested by the HDC. He said the Legal Department had preliminarily reviewed it and would review it in final form when the HDC decided to shift it to the City Council.

Councilor Kennedy asked if the HDC could vote on it then but was told no. Mr. Gladhill asked who the Code Official was. Mr. Cracknell said it could be anyone in the Inspection, Planning, or maybe even Legal Departments. Mr. Gladhill said he would prefer the Code Official came out of

the Planning Department. Councilor Kennedy said the details were throughout the document and thought the City was the Code Official.

## **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Mr. Wyckoff moved that the Commission **accept** the changes. Vice-Chair Kozak seconded.*

Mr. Wyckoff said the changes would be positive. Vice-Chair Kozak said the objective of the changes was that the HDC would have more time to allocate toward large projects. The small projects that were minimal in scale and clearly in compliance could go through the process much quicker.

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

The last document Mr. Cracknell presented was the Draft Set of Review Procedures for major projects in a work session. He had updated the previous version for the Commission to review. The organization of the four steps was tricky, so he suggested that they go back to the 18 Congress Street project and pull examples out of it for each step and make sure the steps made sense. The HDC was trying to build a better process to be ready for a public hearing without going through ten meetings to do it.

Mr. Rawling thought it would be more appropriate to study massing before taking Steps 2 and 3. Vice-Chair Kozak commented that Footnote 1 defined a major project as anything that exceeded \$50,000, but a lot of minor projects exceeded that amount, so she thought the figure should be higher. Mr. Cracknell said they could define the threshold differently or amend the Ordinance. Vice-Chair Kozak said Footnote 2 talked about a more limited duration than within the formal public hearing, and structured public input would be offered during the informal work sessions. They should highlight that issue and apply it to each of the four steps.

Chairman Almeida asked if they could discuss the subject of public comment at work sessions. He would have liked it formalized right then because of all the work sessions they had scheduled that evening. He asked Mr. Cracknell if he had confirmed whether or not an official policy change was required. Mr. Cracknell said he looked into the rules and zoning and found nothing that banned public input from a work session. It was an informal process, and the Commission would have to decide how public comment could be limited. They could use the public podium or a stopwatch so that the work sessions didn't last all night. Chairman Almeida said he wanted it resolved that night because applicants, speakers and the Commissioners needed time limits. The City Council had a 3-minute time limit, so maybe the HDC could also do that. He suggested using the memo as a draft and assigning time limits on each of its steps.

## **I. OLD BUSINESS (PUBLIC HEARING)**

1. Petition of **Roland and Mary A. Routhier, owners**, and **Ryan Reed, applicant**, for property located at **50 New Castle Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove porch windows, construct open porch with composite columns, decking, and rails) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 33 and lies within Single Residence B and

Historic Districts. (*This item was postponed at the October 2, 2013 meeting to the October 9, 2013 meeting.*)

Vice-Chair Kozak recused herself from the discussion and vote.

### **SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

The project contractor, Ryan Reed, wanted to discuss the porch recommendations from the previous week's meeting. Through some investigation, he found that the wood paneling in the porch was a façade covering wood clapboard that was in good shape. The owners were agreeable to keeping the wood look inside the porch and painting over the wood clapboards. Meranti hardwood would be used for the decking and railing material. He had complications with the outside corners of the building where the wood siding would tie in with the aluminum siding. He proposed putting a small detail where the columns on the porch melded into the building's corner to help disguise the fact that the siding lined up on both sides of the building. The other post was cedar and painted white.

Mr. Rawling said the siding butt could be placed flush into a piece of flat stock on the sheathing and the column detail could overlay it. If the columns were overlain as shown, there would be gaps on either side. Mr. Reed thought it would work on the wood side, but the aluminum side did not have an end grain to it, so he could do it on the side of the porch and then do a small overlay on the aluminum side. Chairman Almeida asked if it was an amendment or just a clarification, and Mr. Rawling said it was a clarification.

Mr. Reed also mentioned that the existing window on the porch had the traditional band molding around it, and the door was a solid wood that had a flat stock to it, so he would end a back element to it and make the window and door trim match.

### **SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

There was no one to speak to the petition so Chairman Almeida closed the public hearing.

### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Councilor Kennedy moved to **grant** a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented. Mr. Wyckoff seconded.*

Councilor Kennedy said the application preserved the integrity and historical significance of the District and maintained the special character of the District.

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

## **II. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)**

A. Petition of **Peter Cass and Mara Witzling, owners**, for property located at **33 Hunking Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (remove existing porch) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new porch and new

rear addition). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 38 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the September 11, 2013 meeting to the October 9, 2013 meeting.)*

Mara Witzling and Peter Cass were present. Ms. Witzling said they decided to start with something small and manageable and just do the south face renovation. They wanted to remove the existing porch and replace it with an entrance way and a full bay window. They would install a walkway similar to the original one proposed. They made a few changes to the original conception by doing a full bay instead of the oriel window, and they also put a hip roof over the porch in front. Consequently, the project was shrunk down considerably.

Mr. Cass said their drawing had a few things that were not strictly accurate. The windows were shown as 2/1 windows, but they were existing 1/1 windows that would not be changed. The inside of the porch was the original clapboard and was in good condition. There were no renovations above the porch line. They would build out the entryway to the porch and the bay. They would remove the rest of the vinyl siding to uncover the clapboards and paint them brown to match the siding on the front façade. The front door step was 54" above street grade and the footprint of the approach was up to the front lot line, so the designer had proposed a low landscaping wall along the front so that only four steps would be needed. He built a wide walkway to get to the entry that wasn't high enough to require a railing, so landscaping would provide a visual border. There was a 25" step out to the bay that left 4' to the edge of the porch. The side elevation had a small hip roof with a short ridge pole and column to the side view of the bay and a hip roof over the bay.

Councilor Kennedy asked what the material of the wall and the steps would be. Mr. Cass said the steps would be granite and there would be a stone wall along the boundary.

Mr. Wyckoff said the porch roof over the door looked like there were 4'x4's under it and he needed more details on the posting of the roof. He did not understand the posting at the bottom of the stairs because it didn't work with the floor plan. The railings were offset in the floor plan, but everything was straight on the elevation. He asked if the siding on the area under the bay window was clapboard. Mr. Cass said paneling may be appropriate.

Vice-Chair Kozak said she had seen evidence of a fancy detailing on some of the siding and trim under the gable, so if they pulled off the vinyl siding they might see shingles, and it would be nice if the new section tied into what would later be revealed. Mr. Cass said they were not prepared to tear the vinyl siding off at that time, but he knew there was foam under the siding.

Councilor Kennedy said there were two houses on lower Gates that had a similar look and panels underneath the window. Mr. Cass said they could plan it out like the houses at the top of the street and then amend the application if necessary. Mr. Wyckoff asked if the foundation was brick under the bay and was told yes.

Ms. Ruedig said the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor windows had not been replaced and asked if Mr. Cass was proposing a 2/1 window. Mr. Cass said that a 2/1 would look best and they would do a full window replacement at a later time. Ms. Ruedig suggested that they switch to a 2/2 window because it was more appropriate for the style of the house. Mr. Cass said they had seen a lot of

2/1 windows in the neighborhood. Ms. Witzling said 2/1 windows were common with the bay windows in the area. Councilor Kennedy said she would take a look at the other homes.

Mr. Cass said they were making the changes consistent with neighboring houses. Chairman Almeida told him that at the next work session, the Commission would need specifications on windows, doors, dimensions, and materials as well as details on the roof, posts, railings, and steps.

### **SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Hugh Jencks and Dennett Page of 25 Hunking Street said they were direct abutters to the west of the home. Mr. Jencks said he commended the applicants for working with the Commission, but the agenda had not reflected the change in the application, even though there were legitimate reasons why the project was broken down into smaller increments.

Chairman Almeida told him the changes were only for the front porch and bay window. Ms. Page asked if the project was just Phase 1. Mr. Cass said the project was what they wanted to do at that time and he wasn't sure about future changes. Ms. Page worried that the small version of the original plan might be offered to gain permission for changes to style, which would then later be used as a precedent for more change. Chairman Almeida told her it was a valid concern, but the HDC was only considering the current small piece of the project.

### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*The Commission **recommended** another work session.*

B. Work Session requested by **Dale W. and Sharyn W. Smith, owners**, and **Green and Company, applicant**, for property located at **275 Islington Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish building) and allow a new free standing structure (construct new building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 144 as Lot 8 and lies within Central Business B and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the September 11, 2013 meeting to the October 9, 2013 meeting.)*

Steve McHenry of McHenry Architects, Brandon Holben, project architect, and Attorney Bernie Pelech were present.

Mr. McHenry passed out a new submission to the Commission and said that Attorney Pelech would discuss the demolition of the 1900 New Englander on the site. Attorney Pelech said the New Englander was similar to three adjacent New Englanders that were not in the District. Many older structures from the 1880s were demolished, but the New Englander was allowed to remain because it was part of the 275 Islington Street land parcel. The Historic District was one lot deep on both sides of Islington Street, and the New Englander became part of the District while the other three New Englanders did not. The primary point that Attorney Pelech wanted to make was that the project could not go forward without the demolition of the New Englander and the brick house due to their location. He applied the Ordinance criteria to the demolition of the two structures and found that the criteria were met, such as preserving the integrity of the District and assessing the historical and architectural value of buildings and structures. The criteria of

national significance in terms of the representative time period did not apply to the New Englander.

The Commission had a balancing test of considering whether sacrificing the New Englander was of equal or more value if it allowed the monolithic brick structure to be demolished. The test should say yes, get rid of the brick structure, and if the New Englander went too, the District would be better for it. If the New Englander stayed, then the brick building stayed. The site abutted the residential neighborhood in the rear and was in the transitional zone where building heights were limited to 40', 60% of lot coverage, and 15% open space and setbacks. The project was specifically designed to take into account the three remaining New Englanders, even though they were not in the District. They had taken steps to step down the proposed structure to be consistent with the remaining three New Englanders. If the Commission took into account the criteria and site and realized that there were three New Englanders adjacent to the demolished one, they would benefit the overall good of the District by allowing the demolition of the New Englander and the brick structure.

Mr. McHenry took the Commission through the design package. The cover sheet had an extra item, the product design intent, which was important since the discussions concerned the pattern, rhythm, scale and matrix along Islington Street. The project was consistent with the master plan that had gone forward on Islington Street and they had used it as guidelines for their project. Pages 2 and 3 showed contextual information regarding the site, such as the dimensions of eave lines and roof heights of nearby properties. There were also new photos and more dimensional details. Page 4 was information already given to the Commission.

Pages 5 and 6 showed a series of eight modalities, which were simple building massings. The Commission had preferred a combination of Modalities #6 and #7 and also Modality #8, which left two choices. Page 5 had diagrams representing street patterns and proportional sizes of the neighborhood and streetscape to show rhythm and pattern that were either consistent or quirky. The proposed new footprint was similar in scale and type to the primary and secondary street pattern modules on Islington Street. It was a sincere effort to make the design fit into the neighborhood, even though it had distinct characteristics due to its scale and site. There was also a note about green improvements in reference to the Islington Street Action Plan allocating at least 8' of setback from the sidewalk for green space. They had also aligned the facades of Islington Street with the adjoining buildings in other blocks and on the side streets.

Chairman Almeida asked Mr. McHenry to give a definition of the word modality so the public would know what it meant. Modality was a 3D unit of measure, and the point of most building designs was to incorporate a concept, which was a modality and images of 3D massings, or building volumes.

Page 6 showed a 3D representation of the massings extruding from the building footprints, and a 3D elevation streetscape of Islington, Cornwall and Rockingham Streets that showed essential straight-on elevation views with shadow lines. It showed how the distinct pattern of elevations and bays came forward and pushed back and how they were similar in scale to the neighborhood elements.

Page 7 was a Modality #8 Master Plan study showing recommended setbacks to an adjoining property on Islington Street with green space up to the sidewalks and building. Page 8 was a 3D

representation in block form and in plan showing the three streetscape elevation views with massings and shadows and some landscaping to give it scale.

Mr. Holben presented his slide show to the Commission showing creations in a 3D modeling program called Sketch Up. The model created and set up views that could be seen in sequence, similar to an animation, but allowed a person to look around the 3D model. He showed different views of the proposed building and site with added fenestration and eave line details to give it the feel of an actual building. Mr. McHenry said their goal that evening was to get feedback from the Commission to determine which of the two versions they preferred so that the team could return with more specific elements.

Vice-Chair Kozak thanked them for the presentation and said she would love to see it on every major application because it was very informative. Mr. Rawling liked the first scheme showing the neighborhood scale. As to the loss of the existing building in the back, he thought it would be better if it were shifted back more in line with the existing house. He liked how the street edges were adjusted with the setback of the adjacent structures. The side street rhythm seemed to be shift forward but was compensated for in the second scheme where the two Islington Street structures matched the adjacent buildings. He would appreciate it if the architect worked more with the gable roofs of the neighboring residential structures.

Mr. Wyckoff said he liked Form 1 better because the massing on the top was better than the massing in Form 2. On Form 2, the 4<sup>th</sup> floor was very pronounced. He suggested that they change the design from the left-hand side of Form 2 to the right-hand side. Mr. Katz liked the concept of establishing rhythms and found that the side streets were successful. The mass version on Form 2 acknowledged the park across the street and even extended the park energy into the center of the structure. He thought both masses could be worked on but felt they were on the right track. Mr. Gladhill preferred the massing and scale of Form 2 because he liked the open space concept. He still thought they were large buildings. The arguments for the demolition of the New Englander hadn't convinced him but he was open to it if a great design replaced it.

Mr. McHenry said he was not trying to get the Commissioners to choose one design over the other but rather wanted them to pick out desirable features from both forms. Mr. Katz said, in that case, he liked the second design's open concept.

Vice-Chair Kozak thought both schemes were successful in a horizontal sense and responded to the neighborhood patterns, but neither one responded vertically in terms of a square top roof with a penthouse. Sloped roofs were a prominent feature on Islington Street that she didn't see in the designs. Another prominent feature was the front entrances with steps to the doors, which the design alluded to but didn't really show. Those features were critical elements that they should incorporate into their schemes. She also had trouble with demolishing the New Englander because it formed a substantial piece of the street's character. The Master Plan had two goals to consider, 1) discouraging demolitions of buildings that contributed to the street character, and 2) discouraging intrusions of large buildings into existing residential neighborhoods. The Islington Street pattern was one of larger or commercial buildings fronting smaller residential houses behind it and was one building deep, while the project was two buildings deep. Consequently, the project was reading as going further back into the neighborhood than it should.



Councilor Kennedy thought Vice-Chair Kozak said it well. It was a neighborhood with commercial buildings on the street that backed up to a neighborhood. When she went door to door and talked to the residents, they were concerned about the project. She was not in favor of the New Englander's demolition because it was part of the neighborhood.

Ms. Ruedig thought both designs did a great job of breaking up a huge parcel and she appreciated the study of the rhythms to help it fit in with the neighborhood. The vertical faces lined up with the gables on Islington Street and they were throwing in some angles that would help draw the building in and make it more contextual. Doorways were important on Islington Street, and lining up the setbacks with the other house facades was a great idea.

Chairman Almeida said the success of the schemes was the depth in separating the masses and giving them a distinct form so it didn't appear as one large building. However, in both schemes there should be a drastic change on the side streets from the Islington Street corridor to the neighborhood mass as one turned the corner. Also, the rooflines in both schemes continued back at the same scale and would need to be stepped down to a more residential building. The Commission was not considering style or design at that point, but the project was a contemporary interpretation of Islington Street and he wanted to see more traditional details. He agreed with the comments about the steps facing Islington Street and about the gable roofs. He liked the visual extension of the park, but the scheme of the two identical buildings being a mirror image of one another in mass and design created a problem. He had no issue with the building height but hoped to see more traditional building materials in the future.

Mr. Katz said there was a lot of objection to demolishing the New Englander in the District because of the effect it would have on certain structures outside of the District. He asked whether it had ever been explored that structures outside the District could determine the appropriateness of structures inside the District. Chairman Almeida said that was a great question. Mr. Gladhill said the Ordinance stated that it was just surrounding properties.

Mr. Rawling said that the space between the two separate buildings was important as well as anything that brought the park into the area. Chairman Almeida said he could be convinced to remove the New Englander but it would depend on what replaced it.

Mr. McHenry said he got a lot of great input and he would look at the configurations and layouts on a schematic level so that the developers could say whether it was economically feasible. He hoped to come back with a single design option instead of choices.

### **SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Mr. Jean Laurent of 249 Islington Street said that the scale of the proposed building was very different from the surrounding buildings and warned the HDC to be careful because they did not want another 'monster' on the street.

Ms. Mary McDermott 40 Rockingham Street said she had lived there for 30 years, and in that time, the New Englander had been an integral part of the neighborhood. Traditionally the neighborhood started behind the buildings facing Islington Street because the people who lived in those buildings did not interact with the neighborhood behind them. Removing the New Englander would make a huge difference by putting a big project into the middle of the real

neighborhood. She said the plans were missing a house because there were three houses on the left of the proposed building on Islington Street. (Attorney Pelech said there was no data on it). She was against taking the house down because it was a buffer from the noise and congestion. As far as the successful rhythm of the building, it was top-heavy, and the homes near it were no bigger than 3 stories. The proposed building also had flat roofs, whereas the houses had gable roofs. She thought separate doors in each building section would make it look more like the row houses on Islington Street, but at that point, there was little to like about the project.

Ms. Katherine Williams Kane of Pleasant Street said she was shocked and impressed by the building's division and thought the massing width was important because it broke up the building effectively. She suggested that the architect show how the building aligned with the park because there were no 3D visuals of the geometric forms in the park, such as the walkways, and she thought they could enhance the building.

Clare Kittredge of 27 Franklin Street did not think the HDC should be in the business of trading quaint 100-year-old homes for a large building that would dominate a residential neighborhood, even if it took down an ugly commercial building.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Kozak moved to **continue** the work session to next month's meeting. Mr. Gladhill seconded.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

C. Work Session requested by **143 Daniel Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **143 Daniel Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (add second story to gymnasium section, construct multi-story building at rear of lot). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 19 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. (*This item was continued at the September 11, 2013 meeting.*)

Carla Goodknight and Bill Bartell of CJ Architects presented, along with the owner Steve Wilson.

Ms. Goodknight said they would present the application in three separate sections:

Section 1 – Army Navy Building Renovations and Updates  
 Section 2- Chapel Street Structure  
 Section 3- Gymnasium – Daniel Street Option

### Section 1: Army Navy Building Renovations and Updates:

Ms. Goodknight showed photos of the existing conditions of the building that included the front entry door, the entry vestibule showing the original interior panel configuration, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows with original sash and storms, the rear entry door, and the upper dormer windows that had been replaced. She showed an example of an existing basement window with the iron screening.

They had restored the dormer windows by putting new sashes, frames and half screens on them. They restored the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> window sashes and replaced the existing aluminum storms in kind. They restored the original and replacement windows on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor they restored a low-quality fixed window unit that not original to the building. A new rear entry door was proposed that would be a fiberglass unit. The existing panel condition was documented and she identified the area to be rebuilt. Notes of door dimensions and materials were included.

Chairman Almeida asked if the sash replacement would be a pre-hung unit with its own jambs. Mr. Wilson said it was a replacement sash on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor dormer level with historic trims inside and out, and they would be hung in existing jambs. They were proposing a high-energy historic-looking Pella sash in the same configuration, which would eliminate having a bulky storm screen. It was not pre-hung but would fit in the opening.

Councilor Kennedy asked if the front and back doors were wood or fiberglass. Ms. Goodknight said the front door was custom hardwood. Mr. Wilson said an 8' door was not readily available, and the door should emulate a heavy historic door. The glass was a safety factor, and the transom above appeared to be original. Councilor Kennedy asked if he would consider making a wooden door for the back. Mr. Wilson said a wood door without a storm door would shrink the material so the seal would not be good. The Thermotru door would look identical to a wooden door and would be painted.

Mr. Wilson said he would like permission to do storm window work. He could not restore the window paint and trim without removing the old storms first. The storms were clear aluminum with no finish, and once they were taken off to restore the wood, he would have a difficult time putting them back on because they were in bad shape. He wanted to put a Pella storm window on.

Councilor Kennedy said when the project team first put the scaffolding up, she got ten calls from the public wanting to know what was going on. She asked Mr. Wilson if he could tell the public what they were doing so they would know. Ms. Goodknight said they were just restoring and repairing, not altering anything yet. Mr. Wilson said he had a building permit issued to restore the building the way it currently looked, with an Order of Conditions to guide them. The front and back door, and the storms and replacement sashes were four items listed on the Order that were non-contributing and should be changed. Councilor Kennedy asked if he had a website showing his progress, and Mr. Wilson said he had a website but had nothing on it yet.

Mr. Wilson mentioned the lower basement windows and said the original configuration of 4/4 double hung windows with screens were old, but he had the inventory to reuse the screens and create the appearance of new. If he could not replace the sash, then he would have a thermal integrity problem and could not use the screens. If he restored the windows and put the screens on, the property would suffer over time due to the thermal setbacks. Mr. Wyckoff believed that the screens were added after the original windows were installed and that it was not important that they be maintained. Mr. Wilson thought the screens served a good function by protecting the windows that were right on the sidewalk. Chairman Almeida agreed with Mr. Wyckoff.

## Section 2: Chapel Street Structure height, scale and massing

Ms. Goodknight showed the relationship of the proposed Chapel Street Building to the Army Navy Building. She showed the porch with the built-out bay on the top, the central entry stairs that were typical to the block, the square column and some features of the original house.

The south elevation illustrated a separation between the masses of the building as it went to the back of the site. There was a small porch on the back as an egress piece with a balcony above, and the roof was set back to create the depth between the two roof masses. She said she had integrated the Board's suggestions for the window pattern on those elevations to include the shutters, and she went with a more symmetrical window pattern. She showed the PVC trim, composite shutter panel, hardwood siding, asphalt roof shingles, copper downspout accent, double hung units, and the glass block infill on a brick foundation base.

The elevation backing up to the Wright Avenue building left little space, so the elevation would not be seen. She showed a mirror image of the south side elevation with the addition of the garage entryway. She also showed a photo of the original house on the property and said they replicated much of it on the new structure, and she showed a view of the Chapel Street neighboring houses.

Mr. Gladhill asked how the height of the Chapel Street building was in relation to the buildings across the street. Mr. Wilson said it would not be the tallest building on the street because it would be lower with a high sill but a low slope.

Councilor Kennedy said she noticed a 2/1 window in the front of the building and thought all the windows were 2/2. Ms. Goodknight said the windows were all 2/2 except for the ones on the porch units, which she made 2/1 because they matched the doors better.

Ms. Ruedig thought the building façade was too busy due to the fenestration and seemed out of place compared to the other buildings. The façade with the porches seemed to be a southern design. The combination of the balusters and the front part of the 1<sup>st</sup>-floor porch with the lattice work beneath it gave it a variety of textures and patterns.

Mr. Rawling asked how the gutters would be handled. Mr. Wilson said they were using copper gutters and downspouts, and on the front porch the roof infill between the two bays would catch the runoff. Vice-Chair Kozak asked if the gutters were on the far end of the porches or crossing the front of the building and thought there would be a lot of water coming down the rear steps. Mr. Wilson said he would show it on the next plan and would probably use the gutter system that was on the Army Navy Building and build it into the roof.

Vice-Chair Kozak said the front entrance looked lost and suggested that they bring up the bottom step of the front steps to wrap around the corner. There was no hierarchy or sense of a front door. She also thought there was much more glazing on the building than on the other buildings. It was wall-to-wall glass and did not fit the street pattern. Ms. Goodknight showed her a few examples of a box bay articulation that had more of a window look and an entry interpretation with trim similar to that in the historic photo. Chairman Almeida said he had the same fenestration concerns and thought two windows would be a more successful pattern. He wished that the Chapel Street front side of the building echoed some of the historic photo's details that were on the side street.

Chairman Almeida also thought the sidewalk level elevation looked excessive in relation to the neighboring buildings and assumed it was due to the underground parking. Ms. Goodknight said it was and that they would discuss it in the next presentation. Chairman Almeida noted that the building in the photo was high off the sidewalk but set back, so he was concerned that the pedestrian relationship would be off and asked how they could solve it. Mr. Wilson talked first about the simplicity of the building's front side and thought a reduction of windows would be positive. One of their study plans had multiple dormers like the blue building across the street, and he had a sketch of a single gable with a lower slope that covered right and left sides and the entry at a higher level and gave it a more traditional look. As for the pedestrian experience, he was working with the valance of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor level and the ramp steepness to make it as steep as practical but within Planning Board guidelines. He said it would be easy to lower the skirt board above the brick down to the porch skirt board.

Ms. Ruedig said she appreciated that Mr. Wilson was trying to emulate the historic photo, but she didn't really see it. She suggested that he take his cues from what the District currently contained and not limit his cues to only the photograph. He had to make it fit what was across the street. Mr. Wyckoff thought the two box bays with gables above were very successful and hoped that Mr. Wilson would not case them out just because a few people thought it was busy. He thought there was a lot of fenestration and that Mr. Wilson should cut it down with more trim. Mr. Katz agreed. Mr. Rawling said he would not like to see the fenestration reduced to paired windows. There were too many paired window in the District, and he wanted to get back to the rules of classicism and thought three windows mulled together would be better. Councilor Kennedy said she would like to see all 2/2 windows like the other ones on the street.

### Section 3: Gymnasium and Daniel Street Option

Ms. Goodknight showed the Commission the site plan with and without the gymnasium. She related some of the HDC criteria as she described the options. The restoration of the Army Navy Building would contribute to the integrity of the District, and the new construction would be in keeping with the historic photo. The civic space was less desirable than the proposed commercial space, so it would enhance the property values. The new building would contribute to the special character of the District by fitting into the landscape better, and the new window pattern and styling would emulate the historic windows from the photo. The underground parking would give additional open space to pedestrians and would promote their pleasure and welfare.

Ms. Goodknight showed a streetscape illustration with the separated building that would free the space around the old Army Navy building and give it the plaza area as well as additional landscape and pedestrian access ways. Another illustration showed the concept of retaining the existing structure and providing a residential use on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor with balconies coming out to Daniel Street and Wright Avenue and working within the existing footprint. They would work with the existing parking level or the lower level basement of the gym that was 4' down from the grade and would drive the Chapel Street building up to 3' from the ground so the two parking areas could relate. The updates included reducing the corner window, returning the brick into the openings to make the separation between the volumes, adding a granite base to the storefronts, and adding a corner door and corner stairs.

Chairman Almeida mentioned the scheme of the gymnasium being demolished and the photo showing the Army Navy façade. He asked if the façade was intact and if they were prepared to

put it back the way it was. Mr. Wilson said the interior wall was intact and the structure was there and was basically a mirror image of the other building.

Mr. Wyckoff thought it was more successful without the horizontal band. Mr. Rawling thought the two curved corner pieces were in competition with each other and a little busy. He liked the balconies because they broke up the mass, but he was concerned that the balconies would be filled with furniture and barbecue equipment and would be seen from the downtown area, so he thought the railing could be opaque.

Mr. Gladhill said he would like to see an image of the project as it would look to someone coming off the Memorial Bridge. Mr. Wilson said he would bring one for the next meeting. Vice-Chair Kozak said the illustrations were done in Sketch Up so he could bring a mobile viewing. Ms. Ruedig thought the massing and scaling needed to be smaller and subservient to the actual historic building they were trying to preserve. The heights were technically shorter, but the higher cornice line made the building look higher. Setting the building back would help. Mr. Katz said the space between the two buildings made the streetscape more successful.

Chairman Almeida said he also liked the space between the two buildings because the separation, the alley and the inviting paths were interesting and good for the pedestrian experience. The design could be fine-tuned but was very nice, and he liked that it would be next to the future Wright Avenue project. He thought they were going in the right direction. He wondered if the separation and experience of walking through the buildings would feel like it was a Commercial Alley, and he asked if they could increase the windows and openings in the alley. He also asked if they could take the corner off the ramp opening. Mr. Wilson said the Chapel Street elevation and solving the problem of showing too much foundation would help with the corner. He would make the ramp steeper so that it would eventually disappear.

Mr. Rawling mentioned that the sidewalk dead-ended into a planter and asked if it could be tied into the Wright Avenue property so it would flow continuously. Mr. Wilson said they could put another radius stair on the corner instead of the planter, or they could slope it like a wheelchair ramp. Vice-Chair Kozak said she was still opposed to removing the existing building because it was a nice design and it was contributing. She thought the removal of it would erode the District's integrity.

Chairman Almeida said they would take public comment. Mr. Wilson said he didn't know that public comment would be taken during the work session, and he hadn't advertised it or invited anyone. Mr. Katz said they would have public comment but would not engage in discussion.

### **SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Clare Kittredge of 27 Franklin Street thought the new building was not subordinate to the historic building and was much too busy. Some of the older residents felt that the gymnasium was an intruder from the 1940s and was a chopped off, odd-looking structure, but most residents were attached to the gymnasium because of its past. A lot of people were upset that the Connie Bean Building was even sold. She saw the gymnasium as one of Portsmouth's visual oddities. Some people were appalled that the buyer wanted to tear it down or replace it with a new building and add floors to it. She strongly felt that the HDC should not be in the business of permitting the demolition of old buildings in the Historic District.

Peter Loughlin of Thaxter Road said he had done work for Mr. Wilson but was there on his own. He related to the gymnasium because it had been in Portsmouth three years longer than he had. For 20 years, he had pictures of all his sons playing ball in the gymnasium, but so what. If the building was redeveloped, people would say it 'used' to be a gym and that in itself would be a distraction like the building was now. The City sold it with no restrictions because they wanted to maximize their return, and he could not see how it could be developed in a way that would add to the Historic District. The proposed design was one he would be proud to be involved in, and removing the gymnasium would be in the best interest of the City and the Historic District.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Gladhill moved to **continue** the work session to next month's meeting. Ms. Ruedig seconded.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

Mr. Katz and Mr. Wyckoff left the meeting.

D. Work Session requested by **Thirty Maplewood, LLC, owner**, for property located at **30 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (construct new, mixed use, four story structure) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lot 2 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the September 11, 2013 meeting to the October 9, 2013 meeting.)*

Jennifer Ramsey of Somma Studios told the Commission that she had some replacement sheets and a rough sketch of the models. She was almost starting anew with the exception of the building massing and design that had been well received. She had made changes to meet the current zoning height requirement. She would focus on the building style and elevation studies.

The site plan showed the building pulled in closer to Maplewood Avenue. It was still one lot with multiple buildings on it to allow outdoor spaces and walkways. Since the building on the left was presently underway, she would focus on the building on the right. It was pulled back from the street edge on the corner. She had two versions that showed the elevation sketch studies of what they could do.

Option A was similar to the 2011 version minus the mansard roofline and separate townhouses. The building now had three stories with a setback penthouse feature on the roof that would be developed similar to the corner. It was a brick building with pronounced bay structures, residential styling and overhangs. There was a panel material with protruding brick structure trimmed in solid panel that created an, a,a,b rhythm. The building was 112' long, less than the existing structure on Maplewood Avenue, and might change a bit on the inner sides.

Option B was a more simplified façade, all brick from top to bottom, with metal louvers on the top floor and deepened metal overhangs with cable ties on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. It was a warehouse style, and the storefront had a lot of glass. She said she might explore the headers of the windows to expose the steel and show the connections. The subtle eave line was similar to ones on Bow

Street and the implication of the piers was also subtle. It was a simple brick building with modern features.

Mr. Gladhill said he was leaning toward Option B because he liked the unique columns. He thought the projecting bays in Option A were inappropriate. Both options seemed very repetitive, though, and he could not tell where the front door was.

Vice-Chair Kozak said the drawings were beautiful. Her primary reaction was that the penthouse did not work and the building was better without it. She said a pitch roof could be done if it had to be built higher. The flat box with another flat box on top of it was not a form that had real historic precedence. She liked Option A because of the townhouse rhythm and the proportions.

Ms. Ruedig told Ms. Ramsey that she had a tough challenge with the building because there was not a lot of historic context around the area into which the building could fit. She asked where the referenced warehouse buildings were because she thought Bow Street was too far from the area. The flat roof had no context and she could not see Portwalk being used as context because there was a backlash against that project to make it different. Breaking up the façade a bit more would be desirable, but she didn't know if the massing or shape of either form would be good.

Mr. Rawling preferred Option A because of the relief and texture it gave to the building, but he was troubled by some of its components. The scaling around the entrance of the units was anemic and difficult to locate. The rhythm of the bays was too small for the scale. He was troubled by the flat roof appearance with the penthouses on the top and suggested that parapet walls could be used and some units grouped together. Entrance pieces into the building could be defined. Some height variations would be appropriate. He thought Ms. Ramsey should play up to the building next to it because it was a large building and a good way to transition was with something in between small and large.

Councilor Kennedy rejected the flat roofs and the penthouse. She knew what Ms. Ramsey was up against, but there was a 1960s 1-story building across the street. She would choose Option A if she had to pick an option, but they could not have another box like the one they currently had on Maplewood Avenue. She wanted to challenge the architects to switch it up a little and make it more historical, like the old library. She suggested that Ms. Ramsey work on Option A because it had more variety and definition and that she just skip Option B.

Chairman Almeida asked how far the penthouse was set back and was told 15' on Maplewood Avenue and Deer Street and 18' on Bridge Street. He asked which elevation was considered the formal entrance to the building. Ms. Ramsey said it was Maplewood Avenue, but there would also be storefront access on Maplewood Avenue and Deer Street and on the alleys between the buildings. Chairman Almeida said he was also concerned with the building's flatness and asked if the mechanical units would be within the roof and the penthouse. Ms. Ramsey said there was a bumped-up area for the elevator override, but everything else was contained or shrouded by the roof structure. He said he had similar comments to the other commissioners and was leaning toward Option A. He thought the pilasters on Option B were interesting and classical, but they went up too high to the roof edge and did not support anything. They would have to be brought down. He liked different items in both schemes, especially the canopies in Option A.



Ms. Ruedig said the Commission would have to figure out the massing and scaling before getting into specific details. Vice-Chair Kozak said she would pay close attention to the top of the building and the relation of the windows to the eave lines. In Option A, the boxes looked upside down. Chairman Almeida said he did not fully understand the height in relation to the other buildings and needed the dimensions. They had a potentially controversial project on a large site where 95% coverage was allowed, so they had to wrestle with it, but there was a lot of open area on the site. The issue was that projects with large sites were difficult to compare with adjacent sites that were a fraction of the size. Mr. Rawling suggested breaking down the building into different masses and volumes. He cited the Congress Street project as a large block but not a giant block of a building because it was an assemblage of various sizes. Vice-Chair Kozak said it was all about context.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Councilor Kennedy moved to **continue** the work session to next month's meeting. Mr. Gladhill seconded.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 6-0.*

## V. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

E. Work Session requested by **Donna P. Pantelakos Revocable Trust, owner, G.T. and D.P. Pantelakos, trustees**, for property located at **138 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (demolish rear addition, reconstruct two story addition, remove two chimneys) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (reconfigure misc. windows, replace windows, install new siding, trim, shutters, lighting) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 124 as Lot 6 and lies within Central Business A and Historic Districts.

Chris Crump, the project designer, and George and Donna Pantelakos, owners, were present.

Mr. Crump told the Commission that he wanted to restore the skin coat of the existing building and would not tear down the back side but would build off the existing porch. The front of the house was vinyl siding with vinyl shutters, and he would remove the vinyl siding and replace it with Hardiplank. The vinyl windows would be replaced with Andersen 400 series windows to improve the quality and visual appeal of the front of the house. The back had a 1-story level that had been added 15 years before, and he would build out the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of it and extend it 7-1/2' to make a roof deck. It would still read as an enclosed porch with a roof deck above. He would use the paneling underneath and would continue the use of the siding and the shutters. He had to increase the window size for egress measures on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, and he would continue the roof lines and eave lines. There was a small increase of the building that needed an infill. The house was currently a 4-unit building but would be decreased to two units.

Chairman Almeida saw no representation of the infill piece and said the plan needed it, even though it was out of view. Councilor Kennedy asked if the infill already existed. Mr. Crump said there was a hip roof on the back side of the house.

Mr. Gladhill asked Mr. Crump if he was removing the chimneys. Mr. Crump said he had planned to remove them because it was not feasible to save the insides and they had to be redone. He wanted to take them out from the inside and build a faux chimney for aesthetics. Chairman Almeida said the HDC had allowed them, but some commissioners were dead set against them. Faux chimneys had been successful when they had real brick and a lot of detail and flashed into the roof. Mr. Gladhill said the existing chimneys were painted and iconic. The house was on a major thoroughfare in a historic neighborhood, so he would not like to see them removed. Mr. Rawling, Ms. Ruedig, and Councilor Kennedy agreed. Chairman Almeida said if the chimneys were done properly, he would not say no. Councilor Kennedy thought the chimneys were an important part of the house and should remain for consistency.

Vice-Chair Kozak asked if he was changing the fenestration on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor on the south side by making the windows larger. Mr. Crump said he needed to increase the size of the windows to meet the egress code. Vice-Chair Kozak said none of the houses in the District met the egress requirements. There were exceptions in the code that Mr. Crump could look at. She thought the windows should stay as they were because they were seen from Maplewood Avenue. Mr. Gladhill agreed. Chairman Almeida said he had no issue with the change in window on that particular side, but the corners were highly visible and the proportions were correct and he asked if the egress requirement could be met with one or two windows. Mr. Crump said he wasn't concerned about the window in the back, but he wanted to keep the windows on the front bedroom the same size for uniformity. Chairman Almeida asked him if the pane size of the proposed larger window was the same as the 6/6 window. Mr. Crump didn't know. Ms. Ruedig told Mr. Crump that he should try to get the existing building bypass in the code because making all new windows larger on the side would look odd.

Councilor Kennedy remarked that the addition was not in the plan. Mr. Crump said it had been advertised as a 2-story addition.

Mr. Rawling thought the detailing on the back porch had a suburban look to it due to the factory mulling of the windows with wider molds between them, and the porch rails and posts looked undersized. The door units on the floor above were the narrow factory suburban molding with a thinner trim. The light fixtures shown were not consistent. The panels on the base did not align with the windows, and he thought they needed some texture relief or detail because it looked like plywood with panels.

Ms. Ruedig asked if the siding and shutters had original clapboard beneath them. Mr. Crump thought it may have been stripped off and hadn't been touched in 45 years. Ms. Ruedig said it was worth looking into because if it was the original clapboarding, it should be preserved. She preferred wood shutters, but the composite ones could be painted. Mr. Crump said the purpose of buying composite shutters was because they did not have to be painted. Chairman Almeida asked if the shutters were the proper width and if they would be hung and operable. Mr. Crump said they were the proper width and would be hung correctly. Councilor Kennedy was concerned about painting composite shutters, deck and railings because she didn't want them to be glossy or look like plastic.

Vice-Chair Kozak said the aluminum-clad windows on the front as well as the siding were a tough sell because Maplewood Avenue was a primary entrance to the City and was a busy

pedestrian street. She was not as concerned with the sides or the back of the house because they had no public impact, but she recommended using an all-wood window on Maplewood Avenue. Mr. Crump said she had a valid point, but using two different window styles did not usually align. A vinyl-clad window on the side and a wood on the front would have different frame exposures. Chairman Almeida wanted to make sure Mr. Crump was putting in pre-hung and pre-cased windows if he was removing siding. Mr. Gladhill asked if the windows had interior and exterior grills with a spacer bar and was told yes. Vice-Chair Kozak asked what type of sills the window had and was told that they were historic sills on the outside.

Chairman Almeida said he applied the “back of the house” rule for back renovations. He had driven by the house for 20 years and had not seen the back of the house, so he was less sensitive to the back side but felt that the front was prominent and important. Ms. Ruedig said the improvements were positive. Councilor Kennedy did not want to see plastic on the house. Chairman Almeida thought Mr. Crump was moving in the right direction. Mr. Crump said he would preserve as much as he could and would let them know if he found the original clapboard.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Councilor Kennedy moved to **continue** the work session at next month’s meeting for a work session/public hearing. The motion was seconded.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 6-0.*

F. Work Session requested by **Harbor Place Group, LLC, owner, and Optima Bank, applicant**, for property located at 2 Harbor Place, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace windows, replace window trim with composite material) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 2 and lies within Central Business A, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

*Chairman Almeida recused himself from the discussion.*

Mr. Mike Wood of Two International Construction Company told the Commission that he wanted to replace the exterior windows of the house with Andersen A series and would use AZEK composite material to match the existing color. He said 60% of the windows were rotted out and the new windows would be 8/8 simulated divided light windows.

Councilor Kennedy asked how old the windows were. Mr. Wood said they had been installed in 1981 and had removable grills, some of which were missing. Ms. Ruedig asked if the sills were rotted out. Mr. Wood said the rot was mostly in the sills but was getting up into the trim areas. Mr. Gladhill asked if the AZEK would be painted, and Mr. Wood said he would paint it to match the existing color. Vice-Chair Kozak asked if the Andersen windows were wood, and Mr. Wood said they were aluminum-clad windows of new construction, and all the sizes would match. Mr. Rawling asked what color the jamb liners were and was told they were traditional white. Vice-Chair Kozak thought a darker color would better match the window and thought the simulated divided light window would be an improvement over the existing windows. Ms. Ruedig said that she was usually concerned about using AZEK on anything historic but since the surround of the window was not wood, it may be okay.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Councilor Kennedy moved to **continue** the work session to next month's meeting for a work session/public hearing. Mr. Gladhill seconded.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 6-0.*

G. Work Session requested by **Kenneth C. Sullivan, owner**, for property located at **40 Howard Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct second story on existing one story rear addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 61 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts.

Sarah Hourihane of DeStefano Architects and the owner Ken Sullivan presented.

Ms. Hourihane said the house was an antique colonial built in the late 1850s. Looking down Pleasant Street, one could see the ell piece that was added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and a hip roof that returned. In the 1980s, a 1-story addition was placed in the rear of the house. She wanted to add a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor addition to the 1-story portion. She would need variances from the BOA but had wanted to see how the HDC felt about the massing. She showed the shaded footprint and photos of the house and the view of it from the public right-of-way. One of the unique things about the property was the footprint of the building itself and how the 1-story addition chamfered in the rear of the house.

The preferred option was to square off the existing chamfered corner and return the hip on the back side to make all elevations cohesive with one another rather than have separate additions from different time periods. The roof would hip back and have a widow's walk at the center.

If they were not allowed to square off the corner, the similar option was to get rid of the shed roof with the skylights over it and treat it as an infill piece with more trim rather than have the clapboards extend, with maybe a flat roof on top. The image showed a lot of glass, but in reality, there would not be as many windows.

The third option was to have a gable end return on the back side. The challenge was that there were two different eave lines, so it would not be consistent.

Chairman Almeida said the application was very clear and straightforward. Mr. Gladhill did not like Option 1 because it did not respect the house. It looked like a Georgian style because it was larger and symmetrical and totally changed the house. Option 2 had too much glass. He preferred Option 3 because it was truer to the house, but he would be okay with Option 2 if there were less glass. Ms. Hourihane showed the image for Option 1 and agreed that it didn't seem fitting, but if looked at from the opposite side of the house, the house looked like it had two faces and they wanted it to look consistent. If viewed from the rear, there was more massing on the back. From the front, it would have the same hip roof appearance as Option 1 from the street.

Ms. Ruedig agreed with Mr. Gladhill. Turning the corner and creating a full square hip roof would turn the house into something it was not. The gable end should be kept. Any addition

should be subordinate to the historic form of the house. She thought that Option 2 would be better with a more subdued infill piece on the back and maybe even setback slightly.

Councilor Kennedy asked Ms. Hourihane if she had done an historical investigation of the house, and Ms. Hourihane said she had not. Councilor Kennedy said she might find something that would give her ideas. Mr. Rawling said he supported the comments and that the HDC had the responsibility of protecting the form of the house. Vice-Chair Kozak said it was not such a bad thing to maintain the added-on forms because the language of the neighborhood was the ells and additions on the buildings, so it was alright to allow it to maintain the expression.

Chairman Almeida's initial reaction to Option 1 was that the wide corner board and formal balustrade on the ridge sketch made it look very Georgian. Without those features, it would appear more like the existing view from the opposite direction. Any one of the schemes could be successful and details like that would determine whether it was appropriate or not. There was a way to make Option 1 work, but the safest and least challenging option was Option 3. All three options could be fine with the right detailing. Ms. Ruedig said Option 2 would be good if Ms. Hourihane was allowed to square off the corner.

Mr. Sullivan said he sensed that the majority of the Board did not like Option 1. Councilor Kennedy asked if the other side that was more like Option 1 was an addition or if it had burned down and gotten rebuilt. Mr. Sullivan said he had the plan from 1985 and believed the house used to be a Colonial with a center fireplace in the 19<sup>th</sup> century before the ell was put on it. A section was also put on the opposite corner for the kitchen. It was a hodgepodge of architectural additions. Chairman Almeida said the foundation would tell the story. Councilor Kennedy said she would be more open to Option 2 because of the history of the house.

### **SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Richard Nylander of Franklin Street agreed with the Commission that the integrity of the existing building needed to be protected. The gable end and the hip end were appropriate because of the way the house grew. Option 1 was too Georgian for the neighborhood. The existing structure gave the neighborhood character, and the Commission should do everything in its power to protect that character.

### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Councilor Kennedy moved to **continue** the work session to next month's meeting. Mr. Gladhill seconded.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 6-0.*

H. Work Session requested by **General Porter Condominium Association, owner**, for property located at **32 Livermore Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow amendments to previously approved designs (changes to rear stairs, railing, entryway, foundation) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (installation of HVAC equipment and removal of fence) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 109 as Lot 20 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts.

Jim Noucas, attorney representing the General Porter Condominium Association restoration project, told the Commission that he was there to wrap up a few items and gave them an outline of the issues. He said that he and Mr. Cracknell have viewed the property a month before and he had pointed out some differences from the original plan that had been presented to the Commission.

Item 1 was the back stairway. The Commission had approved a spiral staircase but it didn't work when they turned the stairway because it was a narrow area and had a bulkhead that required access. Also, the steps were too narrow to be deemed safe. Consequently, they restored and repaired the existing stairway. He showed some photos of it restored with a granite slab at the bottom to be consistent with the other design aspects of the house. The balusters would have a wood stain finish, and the step treads were metal.

Item 2 consisted of the utility panels and condenser on the alleyway side of the building. As part of the project, the utility lines were placed underground and they needed a new utility panel that would replace the old one in the same spot. An air conditioning unit was put in and the condenser was located next to the utility panel on the side of the building. They were previously going to use a lattice wooden fence to provide screening for it, but they decided to fix up the alleyway with a brick driving track in stone and installed a plastic lattice screening area that was not noticeable unless it was seen up close.

Councilor Kennedy asked if the lattice screen was really plastic instead of wood. Attorney Noucas said it was plastic because the panels were removable, so the plastic was easier to deal with. She asked if the Commission had approved the plastic lattice work. Attorney Noucas told her that what he used to replace the wooden lattice made it look nicer.

Item 3 concerned the old fence that was removed in the front of the house. The owner decided not to restore the wooden fence because it was in disrepair and not salvageable, so the fence was destroyed. They updated the area with landscaping between the curbing and the house. He mentioned that he had a photo of the house from 1898 that did not show a fence in the front.

Item 4 was the solid crisscross 2'x'4' railing on the upper deck that they replaced with a solid cloth railing for more privacy.

Item 5 was the upgrade to the back entryway to Unit #1. He installed a wrought iron railing with sculpted wood on the post, which was an upgrade from the original plan. Mr. Rawling asked if the stonework was new. Attorney Noucas said it was in the original specification. Attorney Noucas said that the original plan had lattice work, wood steps and balusters. The lattice work was replaced along the back side and porch side with granite steps. The foundation on the driveway side was deficient so they put in a new foundation.

Chairman Almeida said that in his 20 years on the HDC, this was one of the most unique situations he had been placed in. Although the building restoration was of the highest quality he had ever seen, the number of things that were done outside of the HDC approval was staggering. There were so many things removed and in place without their participation, and it was very concerning.

Mr. Gladhill seconded Chairman Almeida's comments. It sometimes happened with new homeowners who didn't realize they were in the Historic District and could not make changes without HDC approval, but Attorney Noucas knew better. The changes were major. Item 4, the cloth railing, was troublesome to him because he had never seen a cloth railing in the District. It looked like canvas and was not appropriate.

Chairman Almeida asked if they should stick with Item 4. Mr. Rawling said they should start with Item 1, but he changed his mind because he was concerned about the fence, so they discussed Item 3 first. Mr. Rawling said the official HDC ruling had been to replace the fence, and they could not hear petitions for the other work until the fence issue was resolved. The historic photo showing the house without a fence was not the issue. The fence was a contributing feature to the house and the District and had historical significance, and part of the application was in the National Register. It was a deliberate move on the condominium association's part to remove the fence and destroy it.

Attorney Noucas said the fence was in a state of disrepair. Once the work was completed on the rest of the project, his client determined that the landscaping was the best situation for the house and he did not want to block the house with the fence. The lack of a fence did not have any historic significance on the house or the neighborhood. The National Register was simply a listing of historical places around the country. He had researched it and found no regulatory control. The fence was mentioned in the property description but not in any of the parts in the application that described issues of significance. The fence was not an issue in the Historic Register. If they relocated boundaries or the building, then they have to apply for a re-nomination, but a change like the fence was permitted. Mr. Rawling said he didn't see how Attorney Noucas could say it was not a character-defining feature of the streetscape. Attorney Noucas told him to look at the Statement of Significance in the National Register.

Chairman Almeida said the fence was listed on the application as a contributing feature, and he had brought up the National Register to support the HDC review criteria. The HDC did not base their decision solely on the Historic Register, but the fence spoke to the consistency of special and defining characteristics of the house and surrounding properties and historical significance.

Ms. Ruedig said she wasn't present when they originally passed judgment on it, but she felt that having an 1898 photo that showed nothing there did not mean the change was more correct than having keeping the existing fence. However, what was there now was appropriate because it was minimal and did not create a new stylistic addition to the house.

Councilor Kennedy said she had a bigger issue with the client going ahead and doing things without the HDC's knowledge or permission. She had voted against the spiral staircase and was more against some of the other items, but the HDC had to go by the rules and the game was not played right because the fence was taken down. There was no coming back and saying it was going to be replaced. She felt jilted. She was also not in favor of the plastic lattice work.

Chairman Almeida said that, immediately after the removal of the fence, he compared the old fence to the fences at other historic homes in Portsmouth, like the Moffatt Ladd House and the John Paul Jones House, and the importance of that wooden fence was equal to the other fences. The wrought iron railing that replaced the fence was a very informal treatment on the house and

was becoming the standard in the District for houses of much less formality. He could not accept the loss of the fence.

Vice-Chair Kozak said it was worrisome that changes were made without their approval, but she did not see anything that was objectionable. Restoring the existing back stairway and the lattice and screening was not highly visible, and the fence was not original to the house. Both arguments were valid. The back solid deck with the canvas panels were seasonal and fell into the umbrella category. The solid railing did not change the house's character, on the back and was not visible. The back entry way was odd but the top granite step was a minor change and did not detract from the significance of the building. The foundation under the side ell being granite instead of lattice was something they had talked about on the site walk as an option. Therefore, she couldn't find any reason for the application not to go forward.

Chairman Almeida asked if they wanted to discuss the other issues. Mr. Gladhill said he was wary of the canvas railing and the plastic lattice. Mr. Rawling said he did not think the Commission could move forward until the fence issue was resolved.

Chairman Almeida asked Mr. Cracknell if a violation had been placed on the property after the fence was removed. Mr. Cracknell said he didn't think so. A decision had been made to deny the removal of the fence, but it was not followed up with any action other than the client coming back to the HDC to present additional information as to why the fence would be removed permanently. Other things have happened since then, but he felt that it was not inappropriate that it all be bundled together in a public hearing. The HDC may want to deal with the fence first, though. Attorney Noucas said he had not seen anything in the Ordinance or statutes that would allow the Commission to refuse to hear other issues based on problems with a single issue. Mr. Cracknell said the Ordinance did require all property owners to resolve outstanding issues. There was a zoning violation that occurred with the fence that barred anyone coming back before any Board without remedying the defect. The fence had to be resolved first because it preceded the other four infractions. Attorney Noucas said that the process may not have been followed on the fence but should not be an issue on the merits of the other items. Mr. Cracknell said the HDC could not open the hearing for the other four items unless the fence issue was resolved.

Chairman Almeida said they would have to have more discussions before the public hearing was posted, but it was getting late, so he suggested that they briefly address the other items.

Chairman Almeida said the most troubling item after the fence was the solid railing around the deck. The lattice enclosure design was not offensive but the material was.

Councilor Kennedy said she would like to hear from their legal team before moving forward, in fairness to the applicant and to the Commission. She thought that Attorney Sullivan should be apprised of the situation so he could tell them how they should respond. Chairman Almeida agreed and said the situation had come before them many times, but not in the sheer quantity it had that evening. The fence situation was especially troublesome.

## **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*The Commission moved to **continue** the work session to next month's meeting. It was seconded by Vice-Chair Kozak.*



*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 6-0.*

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

*At 11:35 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to **adjourn** the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
Acting HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on April 2, 2014.