

**REGULAR MEETING
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
City Council Chambers**

7:00 p.m.

April 3, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice-Chairman, David Adams; Rick Becksted, John Golumb, Ellen Fineberg, City Council Representative Joanne Grasso; Planning Board Representative Paige Roberts; Alternates Maija Hibbard and Richard Katz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chairman John Rice

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

Due to the illness of Chairman Rice, Vice-Chairman Adams was acting Chair. First alternate Maija Hibbard became a voting member.

Chairman Adams announced to the Public that Work Session #3, Larry McManus, owner of 200 Market Street, has been cancelled.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) Petition for William and Sue Mautz, owners, for property located at 338 Middle Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (to replace three 3-over-1 double-hung true divided lites to match existing on the front façade and three 6-over-1 double-hung true divided lites to match existing on the rear facade; and to install an operable skylight to the west third floor mansard roof) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 136 as Lot 023 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

John Rummler, architect and builder for the project, spoke on behalf of the owners. Mr. Rummler inherited the project from Architect Anne Whitney, which had been before the Commission approximately one and one-half years ago. The owner is requesting the following changes to be made to the building: 1) to replace three 3-over-1 double hung windows on the South-Middle Street façade on the third floor with Brosco true divided lites; 2) to replace three 6-over-1 windows on the rear north façade to match existing; and, 3) to install a skylight on the west elevation. The previous proposal for the bathroom renovation designed by Anne Whitney did not work with the space configuration. With this proposal the fixture arrangement has been changed and the interior opened up to allow for headroom and natural light. The skylight shown on the mansard roof will have a 60-degree pitch.

Mr. Becksted asked the applicant if the window replacement would be a complete changeout and not just the sashes. Mr. Rummler replied this would be a complete

changeout, the windows will appear identical on the outside, and the trim will be duplicated. Mr. Becksted inquired if there was any leeway with the skylight. Mr. Rummler further stated he realized the Commission's primary concern is the exterior view and had tried many different layouts, but space is very tight.

Mr. Golumb reiterated Mr. Becksted's viewpoint about the skylight, and stated he was having a problem with the skylight positioned on the mansard roof.

Ms. Hibbard asked Mr. Rummler about the pitch of the skylight. He replied that the pitch is approximately 57 degrees and felt that there is no other placement for the skylight other than shifting it horizontally left to right but that would make it difficult to align with the windows below. Mr. Rummler has spoken with all the abutters and nobody had any objections to the skylight. In fact, he counted twenty-eight skylights while driving down Middle Street.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Becksted made a motion to approve the petition as presented. Mr. Golumb seconded the motion.

Mr. Becksted stated he had no problems with the changeout of the six existing windows as the applicant will be using appropriate materials that had been approved by the Commission in many previous applications. Mr. Becksted feels the skylight is in an odd location.

Mr. Golumb totally agrees with Mr. Becksted. The location of the skylight on Middle Street will be very visible.

Ms. Fineberg stated she would not be supporting this proposal if it included the skylight. Ms. Grasso stated she would also be voting against the proposal because of the skylight.

Mr. Rummler asked the Commission if the skylight is denied could he request a Work Session for later this evening to look for alternatives for the skylight. Chairman Adams said since the application had not been previously advertised as a Work Session, it would be inappropriate to hold the Work Session this evening. Ms. Fineberg stated since the application had been advertised as a Public Hearing, she felt it could be held this evening with the support of the Commission.

Mr. Rummler agreed to withdraw the skylight portion of his petition. Mr. Becksted made a motion to amend his motion to approve the application minus the withdrawn skylight. Mr. Golumb seconded the motion. All voted in favor. A Work Session for the skylight will be held at the end of tonight's scheduled Work Sessions.

* Mr. Rummler, due to a family commitment, was unable to return for the Work Session. This application will be tabled until the May 1, 2002 meeting.

2) Petition for DeNunzio Realty LLC, owner, for property located at 10 Commercial Alley wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (to replace one wooden double-hung window on the Alley side to match existing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 10 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Patrick Stevens, architect for Oak Point Associates, spoke on behalf of the owner, who is requesting to replace one double-hung window with an aluminum glass storefront window similar to the other storefront windows on the ground level located in the alleyway. On the other levels of the property the windows are wooden, 2-over-2 double-hung windows with dark brown trim. The owner has chosen to match the ground level windows on the alleyway (a fixed insulated glass storefront with a two-inch dark brown aluminum frame) rather than the upper level windows (2-over-2 wooden double-hung windows). The window treatment the owner is proposing promotes an image of a storefront rather than a residential look.

Mr. Becksted asked Mr. Stevens what happens to the sill and what is the material of the sill. Mr. Stevens replied the sill is precast concrete that will remain. None of the masonry will be disturbed.

Mr. Golumb inquired why the owner did not replace the window with a double-hung aluminum extruded frame. The owner wanted to retain the image of a storefront rather than a residential. Mr. Golumb felt it was more in keeping with the building to have a 2-over-2 double-hung window rather than a solid pane of glass. Mr. Stevens replied that on design one could go either way. The double-hung would be more in keeping with the window opening, but there is no other double-hung window at the ground level.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Becksted made a motion to accept the application as presented. Ms. Roberts seconded the motion.

Mr. Becksted agrees with Mr. Stevens in that either window could work especially because of the location. Walking down the alley from street level, there are no double-hung windows.

Chairman Adams stated his recollection of the alleyway is that there is only one other building with a first floor window. Although the storefront window would match the building across the street, there are seven other stores with double-hung windows with various shapes and sizes. He will not be supporting this application.

The motion passed as presented with a vote of 5 - 2 with Chairman Adams and Mr. Golumb voting against the application.

3) Petition for 325 State Street LLC, owner, and JSA Architects, applicant, for property located at 325 State Street wherein permission is requested for demolition of a three-story masonry commercial building and to construct a five-story brick, mansard roofed retail, commercial and residential building as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lots 1, 6 and 7 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mark Moeller, architect for JSA Architects, distributed a revised exterior material list to the Commission. While setting up the demonstration, the Commission was able to look over the sample materials that will be used during construction. Mr. Moeller walked the Commission through the changes for the submitted conceptual proposals, elevations, site plan, exterior material list and cut sheets for the project. He is proposing to use an architectural asphalt shingle, an "Oakridge 40" Owens-Corning product and the color is called Estate Gray. This is a faux shingle that will give a look of a slate product. There are a number of dormers along the top of the building and this product will break down the scale. The running cornice trim will be a heavy sandblast version that gives the scale found in granite. The masonry veneer will be a Morin brick called "Royal River Handsets", a waterstruck brick that gives a handmade quality appearance. The grout will be a Portland cement mortar that will give a warm appearance. Mr. Moeller presented the Commission with a sample of the sash and a Pella architect series 2-over-1 double-hung window will be used on all the upper floors. On the lower floors the windows will be a storefront window with a two-inch frame. The color of all the aluminum trim will be Hartford Green. Mr. Moeller directed the Commission's attention to the four sheets of black and white elevations. To end his presentation, Mr. Moeller pointed out the cut sheets of the materials that will be used in the project.

Mr. Becksted asked Mr. Moeller to give more detail concerning the grills located in the parking area. Mr. Moeller responded that the grills will be a painted metal insert with a metal frame and it has not been determined if metal or steel will be used.

Ms. Fineberg, comparing the conceptual drawings and the black and white elevations, inquired about the storefront windows on State Street. Further, she pointed out the two windows on either side of the door seem to be treated differently than the windows located further down. Mr. Moeller stated one of the drawings is from the first presentation and during the course of the Work Sessions changes had been made. The drawing has been updated to reflect the same scale of all the openings. Ms. Fineberg stated it appears that the large window openings have small panels above the large piece and some of them have the large opening divided into two uneven sections. Mr. Moeller stated that the lower portion of the two windows on either side of the front door is not subdivided and that the unsubdivided window is of similar scale to the subdivided windows.

Ms. Fineberg reminded the Commission of a previously approved application on 100 Market Street where the door and window openings had been previously approved, but were changed when retail owners rented space. Ms. Fineberg asked Mr. Moeller if his design would allow for change or would it have fixed door and window openings. Referring to the State Street elevation Mr. Moeller pointed out that the façade had been broken up quite a bit with unequal subdivisions in the inner windows and the sills would

be changed. Ms. Fineberg felt it was important to decide the rhythm of the façade now and not allow it to be changed at a later date.

Mr. Moeller referred to the entrance on the State Street perspective drawing where awnings were indicated. The awnings will not go all around the building, but just on the front façade.

At this point Mr. Becksted asked if the Commission was voting on the conceptual or perspective drawings.

Ms. Fineberg asked if the Commission would be voting on the awnings and their material. Mr. Moeller stated the awning would not be constructed of a hard material, but your typical awning fabric. Also, it would have metal supports and not be retractable.

Mr. Becksted asked Chairman Adams to consider at the appropriate time the applicant, with his approval, withdrawing the awning portion so that voting can proceed with the design of the building.

Mr. Golumb asked if the height of the State Street Building would be lower than the Customs Building. Mr. Moeller replied that the cornice is lower than the primary cornice of the Custom House. The average building height is less than 60 ft.

Chairman Adams asked the purpose of the louvered panels on the first floor. Mr. Moeller stated the parking garage would require additional ventilation and the louvered panels would ventilate the exhaust from CO₂ monitors.

SPEAKING AGAINST THE PETITION

Tom Kaufhold, of 53 Rogers Street, began his presentation by asking two questions of the Commission. First, what happened to the restrooms located on Porter Street? Chairman Adams explained that the restrooms were sold to the First National Bank, but then later dismantled for safety reasons. Second, Mr. Kaufhold asked is there any age limit that makes a building historic? His primary reason for asking this question is that part of the application requires demolition of a building. Ms. Roberts stated the drafting of the Historic District ordinance evolved in the 1970's; in fact, within a few days, due to the construction of banks and their associated parking lots.

When Mr. Kaufhold first moved to Portsmouth and saw the bank, his first thought was "This is a 'Leave It To Beaver' bank." Researching white glaze brick, Mr. Kaufhold discovered white brick failed early on and that this building represented architecture from the 1950's. He asked the Commission if they had considered saving this type of architecture.

Mr. Kaufhold referred to Article X, Section 1004 in the Zoning Ordinance which states the following: *"encourage designs which complement and recognize the City's architectural and historic character for new buildings and/or structures, additions to buildings and/or structures and the reuse of existing buildings and/or structures."*

Chairman Adams stated the Commission had been approached about the restoration of the comfort station. This project did not work out and only one building remained on this block of land as an example of international architectural style. The Commission felt that

having something that was more compatible to the rest of the City of Portsmouth was more valuable than reutilizing this building. Ms. Fineberg felt this building was not a fabulous example of 1950's architecture and much thought had been given to preserving this building as the Commission is not in favor of tearing buildings down.

Mr. Kaufhold referred to the City Manager's recent editorial concerning the HDC guidelines, "*This approach is based on the belief that it would be counterproductive to try to codify the many different uses, varied architectural styles, and numerous building materials in the city's central business district. In fact, downtown Portsmouth appears to thrive because of the organic mix of the diverse uses, styles, and materials that have arisen over the decades. I believe the historic district's value as a whole--downtown Portsmouth's value--is shaped by the interaction of this diverse variety of structures.*" Mr. Kaufhold concluded by saying that no matter how ugly this building is, it is part of the diversity that defines downtown.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Joseph Almeida, of 103 High Street, stated he has been following this project since the first Work Session. He commended the Commission for asking all the right questions. As a member of the architectural community, he gives his full support to the project.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Becksted made a motion to approve the application as presented with two clarifications:

- 1) That elevation drawings take precedence; and
- 2) That no awnings are approved.

An amendment was made to the motion that stated the following:

- 1) That prospective drawings are for illustration only; and
- 2) That the Commission approve a brick and mortar onsite mockup.

John Golumb seconded the motion.

Ms. Fineberg stated she would be voting against the proposal as the building is too tall for the space.

At the beginning of the Work Sessions Mr. Becksted was quite leery about the size of the building, but has come to accept the size of the building in its location.

Mr. Katz felt the people presenting this proposal went to great lengths to diminish the impression of one huge building. Further, Mr. Katz stated this is a city and it is an urban space, and feels this contributes to the urban space with its design.

Chairman Adams stated he has had some difficulties with some of the techniques used to create architectural interest to soften the mass and impact. In the entire project the most troubling to Chairman Adams is the corners of the building.

Chairman Adams proceeded with a roll call vote: Ms. Hibbard - yes; Ms. Grasso - yes; Mr. Becksted - yes; Ms. Roberts - yes; Ms. Fineberg - no; Mr. Golumb - yes; Chairman Adams - no. The motion passed with a 5 - 2 vote.

4) Petition for Charles Hoyt, owner, for property located at 149 Islington Street wherein permission is requested for installation of a new freestanding structure (to install three ductless air condensing and heat pump units on the rear facade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 138 as Lot 14 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Charles Hoyt, owner of the property, presented the petition. He would like to install three air condensor and heat pump units to the rear of the building. The units measure 29" X 9 1/2" X 20" height. It is a ductless system that uses 150 volts, 20 amps.

Chairman Adams asked how high will the stone wall be. Mr. Hoyt replied four to five feet above grade.

Ms. Hibbard inquired as to the distance from the stone wall to the building. Mr. Hoyt said it would be approximately 16 inches.

Ms. Fineberg asked what the units would be installed on and Mr. Hoyt replied a concrete pad.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Grasso made a motion to accept the petition as presented. Ms. Fineberg seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

5) Work Session/Public Hearing for petition of Nobles Island Condominium Association, owner, and DeStefano Architects, applicant, for property located at 500 Market Street (Nobles Island) wherein permission is requested for exterior renovations to an existing structure (to replace wood clapboard siding with vinyl siding on the rear/side facades) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 120 as Lot 002 and lies within the Central Business A and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Lisa DeStefano, architect, was hired by the management company to speak about the proposed siding on the back of the Nobles Island buildings. There is also some siding that wraps around the corners of the building. None of the fronts of the buildings will be having any siding done, just on the waterside of the building. Ms. DeStefano presented

many photos of the areas in question, dimensions of the buildings, and proposed materials to be used. On the perspective drawing Ms. DeStefano pointed out the 5" X 5" cornerboards that match existing. A fypon crown fascia molding will be painted to match the siding color. The fypon in the crown fascia that has been selected does not have dentals as shown on the existing. Fypon is molded plastic PVC that comes in nominal lengths. In the last part of the presentation Ms. DeStefano presented the selected materials with dimensions. The siding will be Restoration Classic Double 4" Clapboard Select Cedar Grain.

After presenting this application for this month's Work Session, Ms. DeStefano investigated a vinyl product used on the sidewalls that did not show the seams at the York Harbor Inn. She presented photos of the York Harbor Inn that showed shingles instead of clapboards and the product literature for the shingles (Perfection Shingle Panel). According to Ms. DeStefano, the shingles have a vertical line in them so that they hide the joints. Ms. DeStefano concluded the presentation by stating the goal is to get a siding on this building that will take care of the existing weather problems.

Chairman Adams stated he was concerned with all the little intricacies on the back of the buildings that would need to be covered.

Ms. Fineberg felt that between the two choices of vinyl, clapboards versus cedar shingles, she preferred the cedar shingles, as it will give it more texture to the back of the building.

Mr. Becksted referring to previous Work Sessions asked how water was going to be kept out of the building. Ms. DeStefano agreed water has gotten behind the siding and has not been taken care of. She proposed taking off the siding and putting a better material to withstand the weather.

Chairman Adams was concerned about using vinyl siding as a solution. He feels it is wrong solution for the client, the HDC mission and the City.

Mr. Katz referred to the criteria in Zoning Ordinance 10 that states "significant historical architectural value of the structure." Mr. Katz feels that the historical value of Nobles Island is minimal to the City. Neighboring properties such as the Chamber of Commerce and the scrap pile of the Port Authority also have little historical value. Mr. Katz reiterated that not every application before the Commission has historical value, and he feels this petition is a perfect application for this type of product.

Ms. Fineberg felt that the Commission was not ready to go into a Public Hearing mode and she would like to see this petition tabled. She suggested a Site Walk before the next meeting, then at that meeting a Work Session/Public Hearing.

Chairman Adams would like to see a 4' corner of the building with a window location that shows a sample of the vinyl shingles and one with vinyl clapboard.

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to table this application until the May 1, 2002 meeting. Ms. Grasso seconded the motion.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Voted to accept and approve the minutes for the meeting of March 6, 2002.

Before the next item of business, Chairman Adams announced to the Commission that the July 3, 2002, meeting has been changed to July 10, 2002.

III. WORK SESSIONS

A) Work Session requested by Anne Whitney, architect, for property located at 35 Mark Street. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 050 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

The owner is proposing to add a garage, which will need Board of Adjustment approval for setbacks, and a one-story addition that includes an enclosed three-season porch on the existing house. The Commission was concerned about the scale and proportion of the addition and how it sets on the side of the building. The Commission felt it is an inappropriate location for the enclosed porch. Currently, there is no onsite parking and the proposed garage will provide parking for two cars and a storage area. The Commission had some concerns about the composition of the garage and dormer and would like it to look more like a traditional garage.

B) Work Session requested by Katherine Paine, owner, for property located at 133 Islington Street. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 138 as Lot 015 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

Arnet Taylor of Arnet Taylor Associates and Ms. Paine, owner of the property, presented to the Commission plans for the property at 133 Islington Street. Ms. Paine is proposing to retain the existing brick structure (Knights of Columbus building), to demolish the function hall and its various appendages, and to construct ten residential units on the rear of the property. Parking will be available underneath each of the units and the entrance to the parking will be from Hanover Street. It will be a mansard type building with a federal style gable end and faux chimney. This will allow for a flat roof area for utilities and skylights. The overall consensus of the Commission was the façade of the rear elevation seems inappropriate for the neighborhood. The window assembly would cause a light problem that would be disruptive to the neighbors as the lights would be on 24-hours a day. Furthermore, the Commission felt the building is too huge for the neighborhood and there is a definite need to make it look smaller. Particular attention should also be made to the front corner view on Islington Street, which will be architecturally the most difficult view to handle.

C) Work Session requested by Larry McManus, owner, for property located at 200 Market Street. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 010 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

This Work Session was withdrawn until next month's meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:10 p.m., the Commission voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry L. Provencher
Planning Department Secretary