

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

7:00 p.m.

June 5, 2002

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the length of the Agenda, Old Business and Public Hearings 1 through 9 will be heard on Wednesday, June 5, 2002, at 7:00 p.m. Work Sessions/Public Hearings 10 through 13 and Work Sessions A and B will be heard on the following Wednesday, June 12, 2002, at 7:00 p.m.

I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Schedule common date for deposition for 200 Market Street

Prior to the meeting, the Commission members were given the dates of June 12 or June 19 for scheduling the deposition. The majority of the members chose June 12, 2002, and they will be scheduled hourly to meet with Attorney Bernie Pelech. Attorney Robert Sullivan will be attending as Legal Counsel for the City of Portsmouth.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) Petition for Patricia Newman, owner, for property located at 699 Middle Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (to replace one 32 ½" x 60" double-hung window on the rear façade of garage with new window of same dimensions and to install two skylights on the rear slope of garage roof) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 148 as Lot 035 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

Patricia Newman, owner of the property, spoke on behalf of the petition. Ms. Newman is requesting to replace one window on the rear façade of garage with the same size 6-over-1 true divided lite window and to add two skylights on the back of the garage roof.

Chairman Rice asked the width of the window below the proposed skylights and Ms. Newman responded 36 inches.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the application as presented; Ms. Grasso seconded the motion. Vice-Chairman Adams stated that although the skylights are located in someone's backyard, he feels they are appropriately placed and will support this application.

All voted in favor.

2) Petition for Leah Caswell, owner, for property located at 37 South Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (to replace 1st floor deck surface and railing and add railings to 2nd floor deck both being on the rear façade; to replace three windows on first floor rear façade, one window on 2nd floor rear façade, and two windows on 1st floor-right side elevation with French doors) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 52 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

Chairman Rice recused himself from this petition, and Vice-Chairman Adams became acting Chair.

Leah Caswell, owner of the property, spoke on behalf of the petition. She is proposing to put new railings on the rear deck on the first level of the house, on the 2nd level over porch roof, new decking, and install four French doors on the 1st floor to replace four Andersen windows with snap-in grills.

Vice-Chairman Adams asked if the four new French doors would be the same as the existing French door on the right side entry of building. Ms. Caswell replied yes, and she would like to add another French door to her application. The existing French door on the right side entryway is not in good condition and she would like to replace that door.

Ms. Fineberg inquired if the owner intended to replace the existing French door or window on the second floor. Ms. Caswell replied no. Vice-Chairman Adams interjected that the Commission is considering that French door as it had been installed without Commission approval.

Mr. Becksted asked Ms. Caswell to clarify how many French doors are being requested. Ms. Caswell replied there are six on the 1st floor and one on the 2nd floor.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

Ann Dahl, resident at 38 South Street, stated Ms. Caswell moved into the neighborhood a year ago and has contributed with her landscaping to her home. Ms. Caswell is also a stencil artist who is committed to American Colonialism. Ms. Dahl feels quite confident in whatever improvements Ms. Caswell will be making to her home.

Sandra Dika, resident at 333 Marcy Street, stated that she looks at the side and a little of the back of Ms. Caswell's house. Ms. Dika feels that Ms. Caswell's plan will add to her view of the house.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to approve the application as presented; seconded by Mr. Becksted.

Ms. Fineberg stated the plan for the porch on the back of the building is an improvement. Ms. Fineberg feels the number of French doors is excessive, especially the proposed French door to replace the window near the right side entry.

Mr. Becksted felt with the addition of a railing on the 2nd floor, it would seem like a three-season porch instead of part of the main house. At this point, Mr. Becksted was leaning towards approving the application.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated the railing creates a porch effect and obscures the mass of the French doors. He felt the location on the right side is inappropriate for two French doors, and it should be a window/door combination.

Ms. Fineberg asked Ms. Caswell if she was willing to keep the original plan for the window/door combination. Ms. Caswell was concerned with how it would look on the inside of her home.

Mr. Becksted said he didn't have a terrible strong feeling one way or another about the window/door combination, and if it creates an awkward situation inside the house, he could vote for all French doors.

Mr. Katz feels the symmetry and rhythm would be destroyed if the window were to remain, as it is not repeated anywhere else in the building.

Ms. Fineberg stated that one would not see the four French doors on the back and the two French doors on the side from one perspective. She feels it makes more sense to see one door, one window combination.

Ms. Roberts stated she had no problem with the proposed six French doors on the 1st floor.

All voted in favor of the application.

3) Petition for KRS Realty LLC, owner, for property located at 78 Market Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (to install a 16' 3" x 36" x 36" canvas awning on the front façade and a 10' x 36" x 36" canvas awning on the right facade of building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 036 and lies within the Central Business B and the Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

Al Silva of Greenland, NH spoke on behalf of the application. He is proposing to install two canvas awnings over both entrances of the building. The awnings will be non-retractable and there will be no graphics. Mr. Silva presented the Commission with a color sample of the canvas.

Mr. Becksted inquired if the awning would be stretched very tightly over a metal frame. Mr. Silva replied yes.

Ms. Fineberg asked if the valance of the awning was rigid. Mr. Silva said yes and that the valance comes down six inches.

Ms. Hibbard asked if the applicant had considered a loose valance. Mr. Silva said it had been considered.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the application as presented. Ms. Roberts seconded the motion.

Ms. Fineberg felt the canvas awning would be more traditional if it were not a tight valance, but moveable. It is also in keeping with what the Commission has been approving.

Mr. Silva felt the owner would approve of a moveable valance.

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to amend the motion to require the valance to not be fixed. All voted in favor of the amended motion.

4) Petition for Deborah Phillips, owner, for property located at 92 Pleasant Street wherein permission is requested for new construction to an existing structure (to add a matching third dormer to roof on south elevation) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 076 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

George Bell, who lives at 92 Pleasant Street, spoke on behalf of the owner, Deborah Phillips. The owner is proposing to add a third dormer to the backside of the roof, which will be identical to the other two existing dormers. The front of the building currently has three dormers.

Vice-Chairman Rice stated he had two issues with the project. One being that the contractor will be using 2 x 6's to frame the walls, which Vice-Chairman Adams feels there is not enough room for those materials. The other concern is that the proposed dormer looks like it is not centered between the two existing dormers. Mr. Bell said that the submitted plans were correct because if the dormer were centered it would affect the inside of the room. Mr. Becksted stated the Commission could amend the application to reflect the centered dormer.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the application with the following amendment:

- That the dormer be centered between existing dormers, rather than offset; and,
- That the dimension of the dormer match existing.

Mr. Becksted seconded the motion. He further stated that the dimensions of the dormer would require some unconventional framing to meet building codes.

All voted in favor.

5) Petition for James McSharry, owner, for property located at 244 South Street wherein permission is requested for exterior renovations to an existing structure (to replace windows in entire building with six-over-six divided light wooden windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 111 as Lot 003 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

James McSharry, owner of the property, spoke on behalf of the application. Over a period of a year, Mr. McSharry is proposing to replace all the windows in his home. He will begin with the rear of the building and will be using true-divided lite windows with permanent interior/exterior grids.

Vice-Chairman Adams asked if it was the owner's intention to re-clapboard as it now exists. Mr. McSharry replied yes, and he will not be changing the cornerboards.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Grasso made a motion to approve the application as presented. Mr. Golumb seconded. All voted in favor.

6) Petition for Lucas Kolm, owner, for property located at 35 Mark Street wherein permission is requested for demolition (to demolish existing 7' x 12' shed ell); for new construction to an existing structure (to construct a 12' x 14' one-story addition to rear of building); and for a new freestanding structure (construct a 22' x 26' detached garage) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 50 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

Anne Whitney, architect for the project, spoke on behalf of the owner. Ms. Whitney stated there were very little changes from the previous Work Sessions and proceeded to walk the Commission members through the presentation.

Ms. Whitney stated the garage will be 22' x 26' with a designer door. She was able to find a local company in Eliot who will supply the garage door for less money. The only difference will be each panel will have 8 lites instead of 4. It will be an insulated garage door with a cedar exterior.

Ms. Hibbard inquired what roofing material would be used, and Ms. Whitney replied asphalt to match the existing house. She further stated that the project received zoning approval last month and the abutters for Lots 51, 52, and 53 had stated their approval of the addition.

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. Ms. Grasso seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

7) Petition for Seth Peters, owner, and Kim Case, applicant, for property located at 112 State Street wherein permission is requested for exterior renovations to an existing structure (to install a 3' x 3' x 14.3' awning to the front façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 054 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

Kim Case, applicant and owner of Case Gallery, spoke in favor of the application. Unbeknown to her, Ms. Case stated the proposed awning had been installed that very afternoon. When receiving quotes for the awning, she was told if she made the purchase at that time, she would save \$1,000. Ms. Case presented the Commission with pictures of the newly installed retractable awning. She stated she would be willing to take the awning down if it did not meet the Commission's approval.

Ms. Fineberg stated the submitted picture of the newly installed awning looked better than the drawings.

Being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Becksted made a motion to approve the awning as installed. Vice-Chairman Adams seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

8) Petition for William and Sue Mautz, owners, for property located at 338 Middle Street wherein permission is requested for exterior renovations to an existing structure (to replace an existing 8' 6" x 5' picture window with a wood, double hung window to match existing unit on the east side of building; to replace two approved windows with three 2' 8" x 3' 4" Marvin windows on the west side elevation; and to install a skylight on the west side mansard roof) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 136 as Lot 23 in the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

John Rummler, architect/contractor for the project, spoke on behalf of the petition. Mr. Rummler stated there were three issues coming before the Commission, and he requested to have the Commission consider them individually.

Chairman Rice stated that the Commission does not normally give partial approval, but the Commission can consider each issue separately.

The first issue concerns the east elevation on Summer Street. Mr. Rummler is requesting to replace the existing 8' 6" x 5' picture window with a true-divided lite double-hung window to match existing units. Vice-Chairman Adams asked why the owner wanted to make the window smaller. Mr. Rummler stated the existing window is not original to the building, the building is being remodeled from offices to a residence, and it would afford more privacy. Vice-Chairman Adams asked if installing two smaller windows was considered. Mr. Rummler felt two smaller windows would break up the rhythm.

Ms. Fineberg inquired which replacement material would be used to repair the clapboards. Mr. Rummler stated the existing siding on the building is aluminum siding, and aluminum from the back of the building will be used to fill in any window areas.

Ms. Roberts asked the applicant if the proposed window would be centered under the window above it. Mr. Rummler replied yes.

The second issue involves the west elevation where the applicant would like to install a 90-degree "box bay" wood window.

Mr. Becksted asked if the applicant was proposing not to put in the two casement windows previously approved, but build a "box bay" with three double-hung windows. Mr. Rummler replied yes.

Chairman Rice approves of the idea for a "box bay". Vice-Chairman Adams commented this would be an appropriate solution and very common to revival homes.

The third issue of the application before the Commission is the proposed skylight. Mr. Rummler asked Chairman Rice to define the policy concerning skylights. Chairman Rice stated the Commission feels traditional architecture windows get smaller as you go up from floor to floor. When you get to a skylight, the skylight should be smaller in width than any of the windows below it. It should relate to other windows below it, and it should also be smaller in area. If it is visible from the street, the Commission could find fault with it.

Vice-Chairman Adams referred to the previous Work Session where the Commission had difficulty with the proposed height, centering and area of the skylight. Historically, skylights were used to access the roof area. Mr. Rummler stated in his original proposal he was trying to maintain the rhythm/alignment of the existing windows. Mr. Rummler's dilemma is getting light, headroom, and ventilation into the bathroom. Mr. Rummler posed the question that if the skylight were narrower would it be approved.

Chairman Rice stated he was having problems with the skylight as it is inappropriate architecturally and the position doesn't complement the character of the house. Previous to the meeting, Chairman Rice had taken a walk around the neighborhood and found it to have strict architectural preserved character. A smaller skylight on the rear façade may work, but Chairman Rice thought it would still be an intrusion.

Ms. Fineberg proposed to vote on the two parts of the application and remove the skylight portion to a work session after tonight's Public Hearings. Mr. Rummler amended his application to remove the skylight portion to a Work Session.

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

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to approve the amended application. Vice-Chairman Rice seconded the motion. The vote was 7 - 1 with Vice-Chairman Adams voting in opposition of the application.

At the end of the evening's Public Hearings, Mr. Rummler returned for a Work Session. Chairman Rice reiterated that the neighborhood is a traditional neighborhood. The owner has a need for a skylight in a very tight bathroom for light, ventilation, and headroom. Chairman Rice suggested a skylight on the rear facing the back. Mr. Rummler had looked at architectural alternatives and felt that the least obtrusive solution would be a low-profile skylight. Mr. Rummler further stated that there are 28 skylights within a five-minute walk of the property and, if the Commission were still having problems with the proposed skylight, his only other recourse would be a dormer.

In that location Mr. Becksted felt between the two options, a skylight or a dormer, the skylight is his preferred choice.

Chairman Rice suggested placing a dormer off the back. Vice-Chairman Adams stated there is a dormer off the back and wanted to know if the applicant could extend it. Mr. Rummler said it would have too much mass if it were extended. Having spoken with the neighbors prior to the meeting, Mr. Rummler said they preferred the low-profile skylight. He had proposed to install a 44" x 46" skylight, but could reduce it to 28" x 38".

Ms. Roberts stated she preferred the skylight to enlarging the dormer.

Ms. Fineberg stated she does not like the idea of a skylight but inquired if the applicant had looked into dark tinted glass. Mr. Rummler stated he had looked at solar reflected gray glass. There are three tints of solar glazing, and Mr. Rummler would prefer the gray to blend in with the roof.

Mr. Becksted stated it was architecturally wrong to have a skylight in this location, but was willing to come up with a reasonable compromise.

Mr. Golumb felt it was inappropriate to cut into the mansard roof to put a skylight.

Mr. Katz stated that a dormer was not inappropriate and showed a sketch of his that showed two dormers. The second dormer could be a fake dormer.

Mr. Rummler stated his key issue on skylights is mainly the size and proportion. He had looked at a smaller skylight and felt that the one that matched below looked better. Mr. Rummler is willing to install a smaller skylight if it means HDC approval.

Chairman Adams came back to the issue of matching dormers that are symmetrical on the mansard roof.

Ms. Fineberg inquired if the applicant would be willing to do a mock-up of the skylight on the mansard roof for a Site Walk prior to next week's meeting. Also, she would like to see a sample of the dark tinted glass and drawing of the two dormers. Mr. Rummler agreed to do so.

Mr. Becksted made a motion to table this application to the reconvened meeting on June 12, 2002. Ms. Grasso seconded the motion. All voted in favor. A *Site Walk* is scheduled for 6:45 p.m. on June 12th.

Prior to the next item on the agenda, Vice-Chairman Adams stated that he was leaning in the direction of the pair of shed dormers for this property.

9) Petition for KSC LLC, owner, for property located at 141 Congress Street wherein permission is requested for exterior renovations to an existing structure (to reduce the soffit from 12" to 6" on the front façade and to install an awning on the rear façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 005 in the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE APPLICATION

Larry Dukes, applicant, spoke on behalf of the petition. Mr. Dukes explained to the Commission a problem he entailed when taking off the blue façade on the front of the building. The soffit area is 12" x 12" with 18" between the two soffits. Mr. Dukes would like to reduce the lower soffit by 6" and feels it would improve the appearance of the front façade. Mr. Dukes is also proposing to install an awning over the rear entrance door to protect the customers from the elements of the weather. The awning will come out 40"

with a 6" slope and will be 32" high. It will extend 2-ft. on both sides of doorway. Back Channel Canvas came up with the design for the awning.

Mr. Becksted asked the applicant if he would be willing to change it to a retractable awning as it makes the appearance look less rigid.

Ms. Fineberg inquired about the incomplete panels underneath the two large windows on the second floor of the front façade. Mr. Dukes explained construction had stopped because of weather. He also wanted to get approval from the HDC to reduce the soffit area so that both projects could be done at the same time. Therefore, scheduling the staging with Public Works would only have to be done once.

Mr. Becksted asked Mr. Dukes to clarify what involved the soffit area. Mr. Dukes replied it was a flat panel going across the front of the building with a build-up of 12" bands on the top and bottom of the flat panel.

Ms. Grasso felt the soffit area would look too top heavy with a 12" soffit area above the panel and a 6" soffit below. Mr. Dukes said that was how the soffit looked on the original building when it was the YMCA.

Ms. Fineberg felt that the Public Hearing was evolving into a Work Session. Ms. Grasso made a motion to table this application to a Work Session for the end of the meeting, then possibly into a Public Hearing. Vice-Chairman Adams seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

At the Work Session, Mr. Dukes presented the Commission with two mock-up drawings, one of a 12" soffit and the other a 6" soffit. Mr. Dukes stated there is an 18" space between the two panels.

Mr. Katz requested that Mr. Dukes give a side section to explain the problem. Mr. Golumb requested this application be tabled to next week's reconvened meeting. The applicant will need to provide the Commission with accurate drawings of a side section as it involves changing the width and height and also elevation drawings of the existing and proposed building. Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to table this application until June 12, 2002. Ms. Fineberg seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the Commission acted unanimously to adjourn and meet on the following Wednesday for the reconvened meeting on June 12, 2002, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry L. Provencher
Planning Department Secretary