

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

7:00 p.m.

February 2, 2005

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman John Rice, Vice-Chairman David Adams, Members Ellen Fineberg, John Golumb, City Council Representative Joanne Grasso; Planning Board Representative Ken Smith; and, Alternates. Richard Katz and Sandra Dika

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Rick Becksted

**ALSO PRESENT:** Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

.....  
**9:00 a.m. - Saturday, January 29, 2005 - Site Walk to 206 Northwest Street**

**I. OLD BUSINESS**

Let the record reflect that since Mr. Becksted was not in attendance and first alternate, Mr. Katz sat in.

**A) Petition for Barbara Theodore, owner, and Olde Port Properties, applicant,** for property located at 121 Bow Street, Unit #C wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (erect three fixed awnings on the Bow Street façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 059 and lies within the Central Business A and the Historic A districts. This application was tabled at the January 5, 2005 meeting to the February 2, 2005 meeting

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to take the application off the table; Mr. Smith seconded and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. George Carlisle, representing Ms. Theodore who has the flu and not able to speak, stated that three fixed awnings are being proposed on the Bow Street façade of the building. The purpose of the awning is to shield the harsh sun into the offices on the inside. He presented a photograph of the building as it exists and another photo showing the awnings on the building. The awnings will be black canvas with gold pineapples on them. Originally a fixed valance was being proposed; however, we have changed the design of the valance to have a loose valance and presented photographs showing the fixed valance and the loose valance. The fasteners for the awning will be stainless steel to eliminate corrosion.

Mr. Smith stated he preferred the dome shape valance over the doorway.

Ms. Fineberg inquired why it is necessary to have two different awning designs that are dome shaped and arch shaped. Mr. Carlisle replied that the doorway lends itself to a dome shaped awning

Chairman Rice stated that in reviewing awnings in the past, the Commission has preferred a roll-up awning as opposed to a fixed awning. Mr. Carlisle replied that on a roll-up awning, the lettering wears off and the awnings deteriorate much quicker.

Mr. Katz stated that the Commission has approved fixed awnings that have the appearance of being roll-up with a loose valance; however, he is not having a problem with the two window awnings but he is having a problem with the dome shape design awning over the door.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated he agreed with Mr. Katz's comments and added that he feels the building is industrial looking and should have Industrial looking awnings. There may be another material for the awnings rather than canvas. He feels the canvas fabric is inappropriate for this area and an awning made of sheet metal would give the building an Industrial look.

Ms. Dika stated this building was an industrial building in the past and now it is office space and added that she did like the canvas look, but did not like the fixed awning look.

Chairman Rice stated he was OK with the canvas awning, but he is having trouble approving a fixed awning only because of the precedent we have set in the past. He suggested that this design be brought back and that the applicants return with another design.

Mr. Smith stated he liked the design presented because it picks up the doorways and the arches above.

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

#### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Adams stated for the purposes of discussion he made a motion to approve the application; Mr. Smith seconded.

Ms. Grasso stated she would like to amend the motion to include a flexible valance on all three awnings; Mr. Smith seconded and all agreed with a 7 – 0 vote.

Ms. Fineberg stated it would be better to be consistent with the awnings all the way across the front facade. The awnings should be as plain as possible and give the appearance to enhance this type architectural setting.

Mr. Katz stated he would prefer not to see domes on the awnings and amend the motion that all three awnings be uniform; Ms. Grasso seconded and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated the windows are all old and historical. The door is not as tall as the windows and is afraid the awnings will not be the same height. There will be a problem with elevation.

Mr. Smith stated he would vote against the amendment because these awnings will change again when there are new tenants.

The motion to approve the amendment failed with a 3 - 4 vote with Ms. Fineberg, Mr. Golumb, Mr. Smith and Vice-Chairman Adams voting in the negative.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated that he feels the industrial look of the neighborhood will be lost as well as the awkwardness of it.

Mr. Golumb stated he feels retractable awnings would be the only way to go.

Mr. Carlisle replied that he would be willing to go with retractable awnings.

Ms. Fineberg stated we really need a work session.

At this time, the Commission recommended a work session/public hearing at the reconvened meeting on February 9, 2005 meeting.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated he feels that to use a different design would be a much more appropriate way to go and that Ordinance should be cited.

Chairman Rice also felt that the Ordinance should be cited and how we interpret it.

Mr. Golumb stated a retractable awning would be the way to go. Mr. Carlisle stated we are willing to amend the application and go with a retractable awning.

Ms. Fineberg stated that she feels a work session should be recommended because there are many factors that are up in the air and there are too many questions that were not resolved. Maybe this is a totally different design.

Ms. Grasso made a motion to table the application to a work session at the next schedule meeting on March 2, 2004; Mr. Golumb seconded.

At this time Mr. Golumb made a motion to reconsider the vote; Mr. Smith seconded. Mr. Golumb feels that retractable awnings were a better way to go. The motion passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

Ms. Fineberg stated there were too many questions that have not been resolved.

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to table the application to the next scheduled meeting on March 2, 2005 for a work session/public hearing; Mr. Golumb seconded and was approved with a 5 – 2 vote with Vice-Chairman Adams and Mr. Smith voting in the negative.



**B) Request for a Rehearing on the petition for Sheila Ghamami, owner, for property located at 369/371/373 Islington Street requested by Sheila Ghamami. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 144 as Lot 022 and lies within the Mixed Residential Business and Historic A districts.**

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Ms. Ghamami reviewed her plans with the Commission members.

Mr. Katz stated that in affect, you will be painting the existing wood trim and paint over the asbestos siding. The main concern of the Commission is that vinyl siding would be placed over

the asbestos. He feels that a work session without a public hearing would be a good way to talk about the plans for the asbestos.

Mr. Katz inquired if there were any thoughts on how to approach the vinyl over the asbestos. Ms. Ghamami replied there is no point in discussing this subject because she will not remove the asbestos.

Mr. Smith made a motion to move to a work session/public hearing at the next schedule meeting on March 2, 2005 for additional information to be presented; Ms. Fineberg seconded and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.



**C) Amendment requested by Rob McDowell, owner, for property located at 379 Newcastle Avenue** on approval received at the October 6, 2004 meeting to allow a free-standing structure (a 12' x 17' s.f. storage shed to house a motorcycle on the front elevation on existing pavement. (The Board of Adjustment has required and approved the building to be rotated 90 degrees on the lot) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 207 as Lot 004 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Attorney Bernard Pelech, representing Mr. McDowell, stated this application was approved several months ago; however, at that time it was discovered that a variance was required to allow the structure at the present location; however, it is violating the front yard setbacks. It was then sent to the Board of Adjustment who denied it; however, the Board of Adjustment indicated they could support the application if the garage was moved 90 degrees on the lot. The garage was approved by that Board. We are asking the Historic District Commission to allow an amendment to the original approval to rotate the building 90 degrees on the lot.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated that on the original application the roof would have a pitch that would match the house; however, the drawings presented show a conflict and asked if there was an issue with the 11' height. He added that his calculations indicate the height of the roof will be 14'. Attorney Pelech replied that the height would be acceptable and noted on the plan submitted.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve as amended to move the garage 90 degrees on the lot; Vice-Chairman Adams seconded with the following clarifications:

- That the shed be rotated 90 degrees on the lot as required by the Board of Adjustment;
- That the roof pitch on the shed match the roof pitch on the house; and,
- That the door be moved to the center of the building or to the left of the existing doorway.

The motion passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

---

## II PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) **Work Session/Public Hearing for the petition for Melissa Bicchieri, owner and Sonny Iannacone, applicant**, for property located at 206 Northwest Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovation to an existing structure (replace all existing windows; replace roof shingles; and, to construct three front dormers) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 122 as Lot 006 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts. This application was tabled at the January 5, 2005 meeting to the February 2, 2005 meeting.

### **The Chairman opened the Work Session**

Mr. Iannacone, an owner of the property, presented photographs of the property as well as of other homes that have the type dormer he is proposing. The Commission asked if he was sticking with the original plan for the dormers. Mr. Iannacone replied that was correct.

Ms. Fineberg stated she feels two dormers would be more appropriate and three dormers would be overwhelming.

Chairman Rice stated the proposed dormers are not a traditional way of dormering an antique house and is a temporary solution to what the applicant is proposing and suggested that the applicant look at the condominiums on Middle Street because it is a glaring design and is not appropriate. Chairman Rice suggested possibly the dormers could be placed on the rear façade and suggested that the applicant look for a more traditional architectural solution; however, the applicant is looking to do a contemporary solution. He stated that the applicant should look for a solution that we can all be happy with.

Mr. Golumb feels the dormers being placed on the front of the house are totally inappropriate.

Chairman Rice stated this type of dormering would be OK if it was not in the Historic District area or if the house was not an antique. The dormers being planned are contemporary looking.

Ms. Grasso feels the proposed dormers will make the house top heavy and will be too much for that particular house.

Mr. Smith stated he liked the plan and that it was a different approach. We should work with the applicant and look at what he is presenting. He feels we owe him that and added that he liked the plan.

Ms. Fineberg stated the Commission has spent a lot of time on this application and that it should be tabled.

Mr. Katz stated we have heard from several members on the dormers and would like to hear from the rest of the members on how they feel about the dormers.

Ms. Dika asked Vice-Chairman Adams if he felt this was the original roofline on the house? Vice-Chairman Adams replied this is the way the house was built.

Ms. Fineberg feels a traditional dormer would be top heavy on this particular house. The windows would be above the ceiling height.

Mr. Iannacone stated there are many homes that have the same dormers as he is proposing and it has been done many times raising the roofline. We definitely need additional light on the upper floor of our home.

Mr. Katz stated that putting two dormers would not destroy the architectural integrity of the home.

Chairman Rice feels that the Commission should have more detailed to scale information that show measurements. The drawings are not clear enough for the Commission to make a decision on.

The motion was made and seconded to table the application to the meeting on March 2, 2005 to allow for more detailed plans and scaled drawings to be submitted showing all the measurements.

.....

**2) Petition for Chad and Laura Morin, d/b/a Goody Two Shoes, LLC, owner and DeStefano Architects, applicant,** for property located at 36 Market Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior changes to an existing building (demolish rear shed, replace awnings and side door and add two new doors on the side and rear façades) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 029 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Ms. Jennifer Ramsey of DeStefano Architects reviewed the plans submitted with the Commission members. She indicated on page 3 of the plans, that the structure to rear would be demolished and add an egress door. Replace the existing door on Ladd Street with a new door with new granite steps. New retractable awnings will be added in a seafoam color to replace the existing awnings. Page 6 of the plans show the existing view from Ladd Street and the new opening in the building that will have recessed the doors having glass with glass sidelights. Page 7 shows the new openings for the doors. Page 9 shows the new door for egress. Page 10 shows the steps for both doors on Ladd Street. The last sheet shows the specifications for the awnings.

Mr. Smith inquired if the brick header on door #1 was turned and will this be mirrored on the new doorway. Ms. Ramsey replied that it would be.

Vice-Chairman Adams inquired why the door had to be recessed. Ms. Ramsey replied that they feel this would be an improvement over what is existing.

Mr. Dodge, a concerned neighbor, inquired why the door on Ladd Street had to be removed. Ms. DeStefano replied it is the desire of the owner to remove the door and use elsewhere on the building. Mr. Dodge stated he felt very strongly about this door and it is the last one of this kind in the City and is a perfectly good and wonderful piece of architecture. There is no reason to remove it and it should stay where it is.

Ms. DeStefano stated there is a master plan for complete restorations to this building underway and will be completed in stages, this being the first.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve as presented and made an amendment to adding more detail on the new entrance doorway as discussed by Vice-Chairman Adams; Ms. Grasso seconded.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated he is having a problem with door #1 and he does not understand the reason for the door being recessed because there is a door right next door to it and feels that it is inappropriate and is a shot in the dark door in the back of the building and what is the purpose of recessing the door in this building. They will ultimately have to take a saw to the opening and will have no idea of how to blend it in. Replacing the back door and the awnings he realizes must be done; however, he is concerned about the door openings on the Ladd Street façade and will therefore, withhold his support of the application.

Ms. Fineberg is also concerned about the loss of the door on Ladd Street.

Ms. DeStefano stated she would withdraw door placement #3 as shown on the plans from this application. We will address this at a later date.

The Commission voted to approve the application as modified below:

- that the request for door replacement #3, as shown on the plan on the Ladd Street façade, be withdrawn.

The motion passed with a 6 – 1 vote with Vice-Chairman Adams voting in the negative.



At this time, Chairman Rice stated he would like to split the Agenda and have the work sessions return next week at the reconvened meeting on February 9, 2005. The Commission approved this with a 7 – 0 vote.

**3) Petition for Sheila Ghamami, owner,** for property located at 369/371/373 Islington Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations on an existing structure (construct landing stairs and handrails for two door/entrances that are currently inoperative) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 144 as Lot 022 and lies within the Mixed Residential Business and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Ms. Ghamami stated that at the last public hearing she neglected to mention that she wanted to replace the landing stairs and handrails for two door/entrances that are inoperable at this time and provided drawings to show the dimensions and the location of these items.

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; Mr. Smith seconded and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

.....

**4) Petition for 426 Middle Street, LLC, owner and Barbara MacKusick, applicant,** for property located at 426 Middle Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace existing windows with Harvey Majesty windows with permanently affixed grids on both the inside and outside) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 135 as Lot 045 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Ms. Barbara MacKusick stated that she was proposing to replace all the windows in the building with Harvey Majesty windows having permanently affixed grills.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated he visited the house and found that there were six over six lites on the second floor and six over one lites on the first floor and asked if Ms. MacKusick knew the history. Vice-Chairman Adams stated this home is an old revival and colonial building. He added that he was a little uncertain about window replacements and asked if the window sash would be replaced. Ms. MacKusick stated the window will just fit in the opening and will be exactly the same size.

Chairman Rice asked about the window light size. Ms. McKusick replied they will be the same and the exterior window will be aluminum and the interior will be wood.

Vice Chairman Adams made a motion to table the application to the reconvened meeting on February 9, 2005 and have your contractor bring in a sample of the window; Mr. Golumb seconded and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

.....

**5) Work Session/Public Hearing for Strawberry Banke, Inc., owner, and DeStefano Architects, applicant,** for property located on Marcy Street (Dunaway Store) wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to existing structure (remove two windows on side façade and the addition of one roof top mechanical unit) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 104 as Lot 007 and lies within the Museum Residential Office and Historic A districts.

**Chairman Rice opened the Work Session**

Ms. DeStefano reviewed the plans with the Commission members that explained which windows would be removed as well as the addition of the roof top mechanical unit. There were several different photographs of different elevations. The Dunaway Store is a fairly new building and has no historical merits to it. The dimensions of the mechanical unit are reflected on the plans.



Vice-Chairman Adams feels the mechanical unit is very large and it is uncharacteristic element for this particular area of Strawberry Banke.

Mr. Golumb stated that the mechanical unit will be very visible when walking down Marcy Street.

Ms. Fineberg asked if the unit could be vented differently? Mr. Clum, the Assistant Building Inspector, replied the unit cannot be vented 10' from the property line, or public way or a building opening.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated the windows that are being proposed to be removed are not balanced and feels there will be no harm to remove them.

Ms. DeStefano stated screening could be placed around the unit; however, she feels this will draw more attention to the unit since it would have to be open on one side; however, this should be discussed with a mechanical engineer.

Mr. Golumb asked where the kitchen location was on the plan. Ms. DeStefano illustrated on the plan the location of the kitchen.

Ms. Dika stated she was surprised that Strawberry Banke would allow roof top ventilation units to stick right up by the museum on Marcy Street.

Chairman Rice stated this type of unit does tend to become an eyesore and is not elegant and will affect the ambiance of the area.

**Chairman Rice closed the Work session and opened the Public Hearing.**

Ms. DeStefano stated they were proposing to erect a ventilation unit for restaurant use at the Dunaway Store.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the application as presented and Vice-Chairman Adams seconded. Mr. Smith stated the plan is to make the unit invisible; it is what it is - a vent.

Ms. Grasso also agreed with Mr. Smith's comments.

After discussion of the project, the Commission suggested a site walk to be scheduled and a mock-up of the unit be erected before the reconvened meeting on February 9, 2005. At this time, the Commission voted to table the application to the reconvened meeting on February 9, 2005 to discuss further options for the roof top mechanical unit.

Mr. Golumb stated he also agreed and is having no heartburn with the windows; however, he will not support the motion because he feels the ventilator unit will cause a lot of heartburn in the area.

Ms. Dika stated she wants Strawberry Banke to be a viable operation and it is important, but this room top ventilator will not be acceptable and belongs in a commercial district. This area is residential, a park area and a museum location and the ventilator unit is very ugly.

Chairman Rice feels the Commission is having difficulty with opposing the application for Strawberry Banke. Many vents that we have approved previously are definitely eyesores.

The motion failed with a 3 – 4 vote.

Strawbery Banke stated they would return for another work session.

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to review the vote and was seconded and all agreed with a 7 – 0 vote.

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion for a work session/public hearing at the reconvened meeting on February 9, 2005 and all agreed with a 7 – 0 vote.

.....

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:00 p.m. a motion was made to adjourn the meeting and meet on the following Wednesday, February 9, 2005 to complete the Agenda. The motion was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan M. Long  
Secretary

/jml