

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

CONFERENCE ROOM "A"

7:00 p.m.

May 14, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Sandra Dika; Vice Chairman Richard Katz; Members John Wyckoff, Elena Maltese, Tracy Kozak, Alternates Joseph Almeida, George Melchior

MEMBERS EXCUSED: City Council Representative Eric Spear

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector, David Holden, Planning Director, Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Program Manager

Prior to the meeting, from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., the Commission heard a presentation from Richardson and Associates regarding the Islington Street Corridor project. Also in attendance for the presentation were Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Program Manager and David Holden, Planning Director.

Chairman Dika stated that a site walk was held at 51 Islington Street on Saturday, May 10, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. in preparation for a work session on the evening's agenda.

Chairman Dika reconvened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Petition of **Jonathan Watson Sobel Revocable Trust, owner**, for property located at **49 Sheafe Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (partial demolition) and new construction to an existing structure (repair and reconstruct garage with residence above) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 21 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts. *(This item was tabled to a work session/public hearing at the May 7, 2008 meeting.)*

Ms. Maltese made a motion to move to a work session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wyckoff. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- Chairman Dika explained that part of the presentation was given at last week's meeting so she asked Mr. Sobel to just present the design qualities of the project for this evening's presentation.
- Mr. Sobel stated that the project has been developed over about a year's worth of work sessions and has evolved into a mercantile stick style theme which is found commonly in Portsmouth. He pointed out that during the work sessions there were concerns about massing and height. In response to that, Mr. Sobel said that he was returning this evening with a building which has been reduced in width by eight feet, that has been simplified in

design, reduced and simplified some of the fenestration, and have reduced the cupola by six feet.

- Chairman Dika opened the discussion to questions from the Commissioners.
- Ms. Kozak asked Mr. Sobel about his decision to go with a stick style design. Mr. Sobel explained that their initial designs were rejected by the Commission and that they were asked to come up with a design that was common to Portsmouth. He added that the architect they hired suggested the stick style and said that it would be most appropriate to reflect the general elements of Portsmouth. Mr. Sobel pointed out that the site on Custom House Court contains a variety of pre-zoning mix of architecture. He said that architect felt that the stick style design would serve to unify the elements in the area.
- Mr. Sobel read a letter from the architect explaining his approach to the stick style design.
- Mr. Wyckoff said that it was his suggestion to explore some elements from carriage houses which were typically of stick style design. He felt that proposed brackets were what drove the design initially. He stated that he was just making a suggestion but it has now driven this elaborate plan.
- Chairman Dika asked if any of the Commissioners find the stick style design objectionable.
- Mr. Almeida stated that he needed to ask a couple more questions. He asked Mr. Sobel to explain the decision to go with the horizontal bands that are trimmed out with a vertical element. Mr. Sobel replied that the banding has been present from the very beginning and is an element that has been present from the turn of the century in the stick style. He added that 3/4 of the building is surrounded by other buildings and the only façade that will be seen is 2/3rds of the front projection. Mr. Almeida thought that the banding was out of character with the area. He said that he did not have trouble with the mass and size of the building or the break of the roof.
- Mr. Almeida asked about the salvaging of the brick wall. Mr. Sobel said that the brick wall is completely obscured by the attached building.
- Mr. Sobel stated that in response to the concern about the banding, there are a number of houses on State Street that have strong banding elements that the design was taken from. He added that the horizontal banding could either be accentuated by color or neutralized by a solid color.
- Ms. Maltese stated that she was present on the Commission at the end of the prior process. She asked Mr. Sobel that when the building was a glazing shop, was it a one story structure. Mr. Sobel replied that the entire building including the restaurant is a three story building of which the glazing shop was attached to. The glazing shop was one story and its current height is 16 ½ feet. Mr. Sobel pointed out that included in the Commissioners packet was a listing of adjacent building heights. He said that 80% of the buildings surrounding the proposed building are 2 ½ stories or greater.
- Chairman Dika explained that Custom House Court is an alley that services the businesses along the two streets, Daniel and State Streets. She said that usually there are not such tall structures behind residential buildings. She added that the proposed building seems to be growing out of a very small lot and seems to be propelled by the number of square feet of living area that the applicant requires. She asked what the square footage of living area was. Mr. Sobel replied that the footprint is 30 feet by 30 feet. The approximately living area is about 1,300 sq. feet.
- Mr. Sobel said that Custom House Court is a conglomeration of two story build outs that are attached to three story buildings. He added that the architectural theory is that the end of Custom House Court should be a façade which represents a terminus to the Court rather than a continuation of small, one story or two story bump outs.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that one of his concerns from the beginning has been the cupola. He said that he noticed that the proposed cupola has been simplified and made smaller in size. He said that last week, he suggested that he might be willing to work with skylights. He wondered how important the cupola was. He thought that the current height was 6

feet above the ridge. Mr. Sobel clarified that the actual height of the cupola was 4 feet 6 inches above the ridge line. He added that the original cupola stood 8 feet above the ridge line. He pointed out that there is almost an identical project on High Street that was approved by the Historic District Commission.

- Mr. Wyckoff asked if the cupola was negotiable. Mr. Sobel replied that he would not say that it was not negotiable but he said that they were trying to present a design that was reasonable and is reflective of the mercantile and historic stick style theme. He said that one will see dozens of cupolas around Portsmouth.
- Vice Chairman Katz stated that he would like to hear from some of the other Commissioners.
- Chairman Dika said that she felt that this building was a story too high. She added that she thought it was too tall and looks distorted as you try to fit 1,300 sq. feet into a postage size lot.
- Ms. Maltese stated that she felt a two story structure would be more appropriate.
- Mr. Melchior also said that he had a problem with the height. He felt that if a story was knocked off it would be more to scale with the area. He disagreed that the proposed design was representative of the stick style proportion.
- Mr. Almeida disagreed that the building was too high. He said that the ridge line of the proposed building barely rises two feet above the gutter line of the buildings on Sheafe Street. He thought that the location was a formal location in that it terminates Custom House Court. He felt the cupola adds just enough formality. He added that it deserves to be a tall building.
- Ms. Maltese said that she would challenge that the drawings were in proportion. Mr. Almeida felt it was very close to the right proportion. Ms. Maltese said the bottom floor appears to be but it was the second and top that does not appear to be. Mr. Sobel responded by saying that the image in the streetscape was an exact digital rendering scaled down exactly to scale and slid into place in an overlay image. He felt it may be a trick of the eye.
- Ms. Kozak stated that she felt the scale was right on the money. She felt that the proposed building is a vignette. She said that that was the magic of a small town. When one walks down the street and looks down the narrow alleyways, one should see something. She thought it would be a lost opportunity to repeat what was done there. By having a strong terminus at the end of this view it gives the alley way importance. She supported the size and massing of the structure, however, Ms. Kozak said that she was struggling with some of the stylistic detailing. She said that she realizes that there is stick style designs in Portsmouth, however, in this area all of the buildings are connected and pretty similar. She did not think that it was unreasonable that this structure is different but she advised to keeping the details simple.
- Vice Chairman Katz stated that the height of the building should take its cues from the ring of the brick buildings that surround it on both sides, not from the utilitarian add-ons of the existing buildings that were put on as an afterthought. He added that if the Commission insisted on taking a story off of the structure, they would be torpedoing the project because it does not leave enough living space.
- Mr. Melchior felt there would still be enough room for someone to live in it if a story was removed. He pointed out that the end of the alley flares out. He felt that the building was out of scale – it flares out and then there is a gradual increase back up to the height of the surrounding buildings. He said that looking straight down the alley way, that perspective might be in scale but when you shift over to the right or the left a little bit, you see a three story building with a significant drop off down to a one story protrusion off of the back of a building. Mr. Sobel pointed out that the Ceres bakery is a one story building attached to a three story building. He also added that a neighbor, Mr. Peterson, received HDC approval some time ago to build an addition what would be butting up to Mr. Sobel's project, filling that space.

- Chairman Dika stated that the differing opinions of the Commissioners seemed to do with size, specifically height.
- Mr. Sobel reiterated that the architect stated that Custom House Court is a pre-zoning mix of many different styles, heights, and buildings. So to try to adapt the design to each of those varied elements would be an architectural mistake in his opinion. He said that the architect has designed the structure to be a stand alone viewscape which might neutralize many of the elements in Custom House Court. Mr. Sobel added that the design has been reviewed by two additional architects who have submitted letters of support.
- Chairman Dika stated that she did not have a problem with the design, only with the size.
- Mr. Almeida asked what the actual height of the structure was. Mr. Sobel answered that it would be 35 feet to the ridge line, not counting the cupola which is 4 feet above the ridge line. Mr. Wyckoff disagreed with the measurements. He felt it was 38 feet to the ridge line and 42 feet to the top of the cupola. Mr. Sobel said that he used what has been previously approved in Portsmouth as to determining the height of his structure. He pointed out the property on High Street, which is almost identical in terms of sizing, mass, and cupola that was approved by the HDC with very little scrutiny.
- Chairman Dika explained that High Street and Custom House Court are two different places.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that if the cupola were removed it would be a more acceptable building. He did not have a problem with the three story building. Mr. Sobel said he would consider removing the cupola if that was the Commission's desire. He had a rendering of the building without the cupola that he showed to the Commission.
- Vice Chairman Katz said that he had no problem with the cupola and the way the project is presented. He pointed out, however, that the cupola may result in a denial of the project. Ms. Kozak stated that she thought the cupola was great and defined the view. Mr. Almeida agreed. Chairman Dika said she liked it as well.
- Mr. Sobel explained that there was some element of hardship because the rear wall of the structure is collapsing. It is causing his neighbor to be unable to sell his house and he cannot get contractors to come in and tear down the end of his house because of the wall is collapsing onto his property.
- Chairman Dika mentioned a similar project on Langdon Street that was approved and she has always felt it was a mistake. It did not fit into the surroundings very well.
- Chairman Dika asked what the use would be for the building. Mr. Sobel replied that they would not be subdividing it but would use it for their personal use. He added it might be possible to use the first floor as commercial space. He felt that it would be in keeping with the town Council and by the Commission.
- Ms. Kozak asked the reason for the different vertical trim widths. Mr. Sobel said that the large corner boards were to outline the structure and the trim around the bay was used to scale down the bay. Mr. Almeida agreed that the trim work seemed awkward. He pointed out that in the packet was a list of all of the trim boards and their dimensions. Mr. Sobel explained that some of the detailing would be obscured by the surrounding buildings.
- Chairman Dika asked if they had all of the details needed for the Inspection Department. Mr. Wyckoff said that if the cupola was removed and no skylight was put in its place, then they would have enough detail.
- Vice Chairman asked Mr. Wyckoff if it would be a deal breaker with the cupola. Mr. Wyckoff responded that he believed it would be.
- Mr. Almeida said that he supports the project but that there would need to be some details worked out. He pointed out that the cupola had an awkward flat board. Mr. Sobel replied that that was an error of omission. There should be a 2 ½" board on top of the fascia board with the drip edge sitting on the 2 1/2" board at all locations.
- Mr. Almeida stated that the glazing of the garage doors seem to interfere with the arched trim on the top. Mr. Sobel said that the glazing is a square glazing and the top of the arch should be just at the upper edge of the most lateral glazing.

- Mr. Almeida pointed out that the window on sheet A7, the W7 window, appears to have no header. Mr. Sobel did not know the intention with that window but he was willing to adjust the design to be similar to the W2 windows
- Mr. Wyckoff mentioned that by simplifying the cupola has taken away its charm. He said that it does not seem to belong.
- Ms. Maltese made a motion to move to a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Chairman Dika explained that they would take public comment but she asked the public to limit their comments to three minutes each. She also asked that they not repeat what has already been said.

Chairman Dika then asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Mr. John Russo, who owns property on Daniel Street and which abuts Mr. Sobel's property spoke in opposition to the application. He stated that the building height will overshadow the entire alley. He explained that the differing building designs on Custom House Court are the backs of the buildings so that is why they are not more uniform. He felt that the design of the building does not fit. There is an overhang approximately 4 feet over Mr. Russo's right of way. There is no turn around for the garages. In addition, he had a concern about the well being of Karen Wiese's building which abuts the property. Mr. Russo stated that he would not grant a construction easement over his property. There is a water problem and will only be made worse by the project. He added that there was an abutter's petition that was signed by many neighbors in opposition to the project. He felt that letters of support that Mr. Sobel submitted were a joke as no one in the neighborhood signed a letter of support. He said that he would support a two story building, similar to the one that is there now. He closed by saying that it would disrupt ten to twelve families.

Ms. Diane Giese of 121 Daniel Street spoke in opposition to the application. She stated that part of the joy of her house was that she could look out and see the roof lines. The recently constructed garage on the Sobel property has impacted her life. She pointed out that she did not see any stick style designs on her street or cupolas also. The neighborhood is a small congested neighborhood with wonderful lines that were proportional to the different houses. She did not feel that the proposed building belonged there and would spoil the character of the neighborhood.

Ms. Maryka Ford of 61 Penhallow Street said that she agreed with Ms. Giese. She lives in the old Custom House building from what she has heard the height of the proposed structure would be as tall as or taller than the old Custom House building. She felt that the proposed structure would ruin the character of the neighborhood. She would approve of a roof line no higher than the ell of Colby Restaurant building. Ms. Ford presented a petition signed by people who live adjacent to Custom House Court. She also suggested that since there are new members on the Commission, a site visit would be in order.

Mr. Mark Bodi of 121 State Street spoke next. He explained that from his living room, he is able to see the Sobel home as well as the new garage. He said that he did not share the views of the neighbors. When the garage was built, he was concerned about its size but it is a pleasant design. With the current proposal, he felt it would be difficult to find a solution that will be acceptable to everyone. He said, in general, the proposed plan will be an improvement to the

neighborhood. Mr. Bodi added that some sensitivity needed to be given to Mr. Sobel's right to develop his property as others around him have. Mr. Bodi mentioned that there are individuals in the neighborhood who do support the project and he hoped that they could come up with an acceptable compromise for the common good.

Ms. Stephanie Lane of 99 Daniel Street said that Mr. Bodi did not express his true opinion of the neighborhood because he lives on State Street. She felt that the people of Custom House Court were in jeopardy of losing their accessibility to their own businesses. She pointed out that there was no place to park in the alley way. She said that she spoke to the Police [sic] department concerning the site. The policeman [sic] said that the old equipment would be able to squeeze down Custom House Court but they would never bring it down there. They do not put equipment closer than one block from the fire. Vice Chairman Katz reminded Ms. Lane that this had nothing to do with the design of the building.

An abutter at 73 Daniel Street stated her back porch overlooks the alley way. She said that she would like the building to look better but the height concerns her, especially with regard to her views. Chairman Dika informed the abutter that the HDC does not have control over views.

James Russo stated that he manages the buildings of 95 – 99 Daniel Street. He said that he could not see the modifications to the design from the last meeting. He added that the brick wall needs to be examined because it will be dangerous to take it down. Mr. Russo said that he provided the Commission with a rendering of what the building should look like, a two story building with a garage under it. He felt it should be a brick structure. He closed by saying that he supports the project to improve the alley but a three story structure is just too much.

Mr. Jim Ziesig of 31 Sheafe Street spoke in opposition to the application. He stated that his back driveway would be blocked by whatever is moved in there to do construction. He asked if Mr. Sobel gets his approval this evening, where do the neighbors go from here. Mr. Clum replied that he would appeal the decision of the HDC to the Board of Adjustment. If the Board of Adjustment upholds the HDC decision, then he would appeal to Superior Court. Chairman Dika thought Mr. Ziesig was referring to traffic and safety issues. Mr. Clum said that Traffic and Safety Committee does not get involved with single family homes. Mr. Clum added that once he appeals, no building permit would be issued. There was considerable discussion at this time about the appeal process. Mr. Clum suggested that the concerned neighbors speak to the Planning Department concerning what recourse they would have. Mr. Ziesig felt that the pictures presented to the Commission could have been more accurate.

Mr. Dennis Casey of 61 Penhallow Street spoke next. He stated that they go through this every time a new owner or developer comes in. He asked the Commission to come to the site and take a look at it.

Ms. Amy Spencer of 37 Sheafe Street spoke in opposition to the application. She agreed with the neighbors who said that the structure was too large and that a two story structure was more appropriate.

Chairman Dika asked if anyone else wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

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

- 1) That the fascia details be adjusted to include at the drip line 2 ½” molding stepped back to the larger fascia board
- 2) That the glazing of the garage doors not be obstructed by the arched trim
- 3) That window W7 on sheet A7 include a head detail that matches the W2 windows.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Katz.

Vice Chairman Katz asked and received clarification as to the procedure if the first motion does not pass and someone wants to make a second motion.

Vice Chairman Katz stated that Mr. Almeida’s amendments to the project were needed and will improve the final product.

Ms. Maltese said that a lot of emotions have been heard around easements, vehicular traffic and safety all of which cannot be considered. She said that she respects the right of someone to develop their property but with this particular location, she can not get past the fact that this was a commercial glazing house and not a residential property. She added that she was not against the building having a residence; she just felt that a three story structure was too big.

Vice Chairman Katz indicated that one of the challenges that the Historic District Commission faces is whether to approach this from a museum aspect, saying that it was wasn’t here before and so it should never be or to realize that cities and neighborhoods sometimes progress. He explained that life is change, respectful change and so he was going to support it.

Chairman Dika commented that she has spent a lot of time looking over the property and this alley with regards to this project. It is an alley and she did not feel that it was an appropriate place for this structure. She cited Section 10-1004 B (1) as her reason for not supporting the motion.

Ms. Kozak stated that she believed that the structure fits in with the context of the neighborhood. She felt it was in scale. She added that it is in an alley way but it was not flanking the alley way. It is a focal point and she would support it.

Mr. Wyckoff did not think that the scale of the building fit in with the surrounding buildings. He had hoped to reach some sort of compromise with the cupola. He felt that this structure was very similar to what was built on the back of the old police station and it towers above the station. That addition has bothered him and this proposed structure, if it were built, would bother him in the same way. Mr. Wyckoff believes that the applicant has a right to build there and that the traffic problems are not the Commission’s problem. He did feel that the mass was a little excessive and would be more comfortable with a 2 ½ story building so for that reason he would not be supporting the motion.

Mr. Almeida asked for clarification about the number of stories on the building. He did not think that it was a three story building, but instead a 2 ½ story building. Mr. Clum stated that the proposed building would be considered a three story building according to the Building Code.

Mr. Almeida pointed out the aerial photo that was submitted with the packet. He said that when looking around the perimeter of the proposed building, the height is not out of context with the neighborhood. Mr. Wyckoff pointed out that the floor to ceiling heights in the existing homes on Sheafe St. and Daniel St. were not 12 feet on the first floor and 10 feet on the second floor. He thought that along with the high pitched roof, it was giving it the extreme height of 41 feet. He felt that that was excessive for the alley way.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions. Hearing none, she called for a roll call vote.

The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application with the following stipulations **failed** by a vote of 4-3:

- 1) That the fascia details be adjusted to include at the drip line 2 ½” molding stepped back to the larger fascia board
- 2) That the glazing of the garage doors not be obstructed by the arched trim
- 3) That window W7 on sheet A7 include a head detail that matches the W2 windows

Mr. Almeida, Ms. Kozak, Vice Chairman Katz voted in favor of the motion. Chairman Dika, Mr. Wyckoff, Ms. Maltese, and Mr. Melchior voted in opposition.

B. Petition of **Frank M. and Kiska B. Alexandropoulos, owners**, for property located at **699 Middle Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct 26’ x 26’ garage addition with living space above) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 148 as Lot 35 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A Districts.

(This item was tabled to a work session/public hearing at the May 7, 2008 meeting.)

Ms. Maltese made a motion to move to a work session for this application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- Mr. Frank Alexandropoulos, owner of the property was present to speak to the application. He stated that he would like to improve the overall appearance of his house by adding an addition. He was planning to match all of the existing details to make it appear like the addition has always been there.
- Ms. Maltese stated that the size of the addition seems to humble the original house. She said that she had a reaction to a garage of this size with its own entrance that is connected to a house of this size. She was wondering what her fellow Commissioners thought of that.
- Mr. Wyckoff said that he agreed and thought that having the ridge continuation of the existing garage in parallel and extending outward was awkward. He added that having the large space above the garage added to the height of the structure. He suggested turning the whole addition 90 degrees.
- Mr. Alexandropoulos explained that there was beautiful Japanese maple tree that would have to be removed if the structure were turned. He said he would like to preserve the tree if possible.
- Chairman Dika thought that there did seem to be a long expanse of plainness with the structure.
- Ms. Kozak stated that the biggest element on a site is usually the simplest and the fancy house has all of the details. She said that that makes it work. She felt what the applicant has done was appropriate. She added that she would hesitate to start embellishing it with residential features because it will compete with the primary house.
- Ms. Maltese commented that the planes are very different. She asked what the line difference was from the front of the main house to the front of the garage. Mr. Alexandropoulos stated it was 36 to 40 feet. Ms. Maltese pointed out that 95% of the weight of the original mass of the house sits on its own. She said that knowing that made her more comfortable with the structure.

- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he did not see a barn. He saw a two car garage that has been stretched upward. He said that if he was going for a barn look he would suggest sliding garage doors.
- Ms. Kozak said to keep in mind that this is located on Middle Street, the land of carriage house barns.
- Mr. Almeida stated that he liked the idea of the barn but he was having trouble figuring out the space above the garage. He felt that space needed to be broken up.
- Ms. Kozak thought it was fine the way it was.
- Mr. Melchior stated that he agreed with Mr. Wyckoff in that there needed to be some continuation of the horizontal element of the existing structure.
- Vice Chairman Katz pointed out that the structure sits back and that will affect the way the addition will look.
- Mr. Almeida commented that the addition might look much better in reality.
- Vice Chairman Katz asked Mr. Alexandropoulos if he could do a photo paste up that will show the addition on the house. He wondered if they needed a streetscape to help them.
- Chairman Dika stated that it looked like they might need another work session.
- Mr. Alexandropoulos replied that his goal was to match every detail of the house to make the addition look like it has always been there. He was very comfortable with the design.
- Mr. Wyckoff gave Mr. Alexandropoulos some suggestions on how to break up the horizontal element.
- Vice Chairman Katz asked if the Commission was supposed to be offering design alternatives.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that this was just a work session and he was not happy with the horizontal element.
- Mr. Alexandropoulos reiterated that it was his goal to keep everything consistent with the house.
- Chairman Dika asked the Commission to look at the detail on page 4 of the plans and see if there should be any modifications. Vice Chairman Katz pointed out that it matched the house.
- Ms. Maltese said that after all of the discussion, she was much happier with the design. She said if they could find a way to fill in that line detail above the garage that would help because that was the one thing she was finding difficult.
- Vice Chairman Katz stated that he did not have a problem with the blank space above the doors. He felt the fact that it was set back was going to affect the view.
- Mr. Almeida said that for him it was not a deal breaker for him.
- Chairman Dika asked what the materials would be. Mr. Alexandropoulos explained that the roof would be 30 year architectural shingles, cedar siding, and the exterior doors would match the existing doors. He added that the historic sills would have to be milled out.
- Ms. Kozak asked if the windows were divided lights without spacers. Mr. Alexandropoulos said that they were simulated divided lights. He added that the windows are available with or without spacers. Chairman Dika asked if the Commission had a preference.
- Mr. Alexandropoulos said he would be willing to upgrade the windows to include spacer bars.

Hearing no other discussion Chairman Dika entertained a motion to move into a public hearing.

Ms. Maltese made a motion to move into a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Chairman Dika stated that the meeting was in public hearing mode. She then asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

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

- 1) That the windows include inside spacer bars.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Maltese. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Ms. Kozak stated that she would be supporting the motion because she felt the addition was well proportioned and extremely detailed and fit in with the historic houses and their context.

The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application with the following stipulation passed by a 6-1 vote with Mr. Wyckoff voting in opposition:

- 2) That the windows include inside spacer bars.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

11. Petition of **Gregory J. and Amanda B. Morneault, owners**, for property located at **137 Northwest Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (install fencing, arbor, and gates) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 122 as Lot 2 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Gregory Morneault and Ms. Amanda Morneault, owners for the property were present to speak to the application. Mr. Morneault stated that they were in need of a fence to keep their young son contained in the yard and safe. He explained that they lived about 15 feet from the Rt. 1 Bypass.

Mr. Morneault explained that they were proposing an 8 foot solid board fence along the Bypass. It would be white cedar with caps on the posts. He said he was considering a trim board to be placed about 2/3rds of the way up to break up the look of the 8 foot fence.

Mr. Almeida asked about the open picket fencing. Mr. Morneault explained that would be 4 feet and would run along the front of the property. Mr. Almeida commented that the proposal was very nice.

Mr. Clum asked what the distance from grade to the bottom of the fence would be. Mr. Morneault replied that there would be none.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Maltese made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kozak. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Ms. Maltese stated that she finds the design to be supportive of the house that it is going around as well as reflective to what happens when you put a bypass in someone's backyard.

Ms. Kozak added that the fence was of nice quality and appropriate.

The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

Ms. Kozak left at this point in the meeting.

12. Petition of **Catherine C. Stone Revocable Trust, owner, and Susan Paige Trace, applicant**, for property located at **28 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (install fencing and gates) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan102 as Lot 43 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

Chairman Dika stated that she would be recusing herself from the discussion and vote. Vice Chairman Katz conducted the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Ms. Susan Paige Trace, the applicant, was present to speak to the application. She informed the Commission that she would be leasing the house from the owner, Ms. Stone, for the next 18 months. She explained that there was a diagonal section of yard that was open between the back corner of the house and the garage. She stated that she would like to close that area in with two sections of fence flanking the gate. Each section of fence would measure 5 1/2 feet in length with a 4 foot gate. Ms. Trace also said that she would like to put a gate on the other side of the house. It would connect with the abutter's fence.

Ms. Trace stated that the fence would be made of cedar and the work would be done by Four Seasons Fence Company. She explained that this fence is the same style that will be used for one of the Wentworth structures in Strawberry Banke.

Vice Chairman Katz asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise he declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Maltese made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. There was no discussion. The motion passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

13. Petition of **Jonathan and Susan Paige Trace, owners**, for property located at **27 Hancock Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (rebuild chimneys) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (re-roof using architectural asphalt shingles, replace front and back doors with custom doors, replace front and back steps with granite steps, add handrail to front steps, add lighting on front façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 100 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A Districts.

Chairman Dika stated that she would be recusing herself from the discussion and vote. Vice Chairman Katz conducted the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Ms. Susan Paige Trace, owner of the property, and Ms. Linda Miller, architect for the project were present to speak to the application.

Ms. Trace began her presentation by talking about the chimneys. She said that they would like to put the chimney stacks back into place. They are currently below the roof line. She explained that they would be rebuilt using restoration brick that would be fire hardened and water poured [sic]. The mortar seam would be 3/8". She added that the chimney stacks would be built according to existing photos of the house when it was located on Hanover Street.

Mr. Wyckoff pointed out that one of the chimneys appears to be coated with stucco. He asked if both chimneys would be brick. Ms. Trace replied yes.

Vice Chairman Katz asked Mr. Clum if the Commission has ever required brick samples and set ups for chimneys. Mr. Clum replied, no, not for a single family home.

Ms. Trace said she could show the Commission the brick at a later date if they would like. Vice Chairman Katz asked if any Commissioner would like to see it. Mr. Almeida stated that he would like to see it. He said that it was a significant property of early architecture. Vice Chairman Katz asked if this should involve a site walk. Mr. Clum reminded the Commission that in the past there was a Commissioner who used to review brick and mortar samples for the Commission. Vice Chairman Katz asked Mr. Almeida if he would be willing to be the Commissioner to review it. Mr. Almeida replied yes.

Ms. Trace informed the Commission that this was going to be her home and she would not be happy looking at modern brick. She explained that she will use in kind brick as much as she can.

Ms. Maltese urged the Commission to not require the review as Ms. Trace has indicated that she would be using restoration brick and that it will match as closely as possible. She pointed out

that this chimney restoration was to the standards of the Secretary of the Interior. She felt it was unnecessary. Mr. Almeida stated that he was in agreement with Ms. Maltese.

Ms. Trace stated that the structure needed a new roof. She said that she was asking to use architectural asphalt shingles instead of cedar shingles. She explained that she has seen examples of cedar shingles from two different companies that did not look like an appropriate cedar shake. In addition, the waste was excessive. Ms. Trace pointed out that the roof is in serious shape and needs to be repaired quickly. It was not in the house's best interest to wait to find appropriate and quality cedar shakes. It would cost twice as much to use cedar shakes and would last ½ as long as an asphalt roof. She pointed out that the asphalt shingles she was proposing were the same ones that have been used by Strawberry Banke.

Vice Chairman Katz asked how the drip edge would be handled. Ms. Miller, the architect replied that the first course would be cedar. Mr. Wyckoff thought that was appropriate.

Mr. Almeida stated that this was the most painful part of the application. He said he has seen the inside of the house and the damage it has caused on the inside. He commented that a cedar roof is one of the most attractive features of the house but he can understand her situation. Ms. Miller pointed out that it was more than just cost. She said the quality of the cedar was not acceptable. Ms. Maltese asked if it was possible to do the front of the house in cedar and the back in asphalt. Ms. Miller replied that the house is on a corner lot and can be seen from several angles. Mr. Almeida explained that it would be very difficult to do.

Ms. Miller explained the details for the front and back doors. She said that the front door would be made of mahogany and would be custom made. It would have nine panels and would be 1 ¾" thick. Vice Chairman Katz asked how the doors would be weather stripped. Ms. Miller said that her preference would be with bronze weather stripping. Vice Chairman Katz replied saying that the bronze weather stripping would be the crowning touch on the doors.

Ms. Maltese asked if the windows above the front door would stay. Ms. Trace replied yes.

Ms. Trace explained that there is a door currently in the residence that was made by the Bennett Street School in the early 1990's. The door was approved by the HDC in 1993 and she would like to use as the rear door but in case it does not fit, they will make a custom four panel door.

Ms. Miller stated that the front steps would be made from blocks of cut granite. She said that they were hoping to get old granite.

Mr. Almeida asked how the lights would be mounted. Ms. Trace explained that they would probably be mounted on a block and the light fixture would probably cover most of the block. Mr. Wyckoff stated that he was not used to lights with candle bases that were so prominent. Ms. Maltese pointed out that the simplicity of them has been used in other places in Portsmouth. Ms. Trace stated that they were seeing them in unoxidized copper. She explained that she did not want them to be lacquered or treated in any way.

Mr. Almeida stated that the roof structure was never vented. He asked if they were going to try to incorporate the venting of the roof cavity. Ms. Miller replied no, and stated that they have been talking about spray foam insulation on the underside.

Vice Chairman Katz asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

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

Mr. Wyckoff commented that it was a significant historical structure and the applicant has done a very good job in getting the improvements to match.

Ms. Maltese said that it was a tribute to the applicant that she is taking great care in preserving it.

Hearing no more discussion, Vice Chairman Katz called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application as presented passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

III. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **Baer Real Estate, LLC, owner**, for property located at **51 Islington Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish building) and allow a new free standing structure (construct mixed use, multi-story building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 33 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Jennifer Ramsey, representative for the owner, was present to speak to the application. She explained that a site walk was held on Saturday to look at the site. She said that there was discussion about re-massing the buildings to have the larger commercial size building on Islington Street and a smaller, residential, townhouse style structure on Tanner Court.
- Ms. Ramsey said that they have reassessed the parking at the grade level and are now considering below grade parking.
- Ms. Ramsey explained that the Islington Street elevation was designed to look like two separate phases and may very well be built in two phases based on market interest at the time.
- Both buildings would have the same roof lines. Building A is made up of a series of stepping structures that range in height from 39 feet to 56 feet.

- Page 3 showed the elevations of the buildings surrounding it. Page 4 showed a series of buildings heights – the 7 Islington project, the 40 Bridge St. project, the Victorian house with the proposed building in the background.
- Page 5 showed the Parker Street elevation. Page 6 showed the new back building. Ms. Ramsey explained that the site crowns in the middle so they will have to work with the grade changes.
- Ms. Ramsey commented that the New Englander homes on Tanner Court are in the Mixed Residential Office zone where the maximum building height is 40 feet. She said that the proposed building that would be facing Tanner Court would be 34 feet in height.
- Vice Chairman Katz asked how far out the gabled structures on the rear building extended out. Ms. Ramsey replied 4 feet.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked if they would be finished differently. Ms. Ramsey said that they are considering a change of material. She said that the front building would be all brick but they might do clapboards and shingles to break up the back.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that Councilor Spear could not be at the meeting this evening but had a question of whether there could be openings in the back structure. Ms. Ramsey replied that it was a possibility. She would need to determine the financial ramifications of it.
- Mr. Almeida commented that the streetscape drawing of Tanner Court was very nice. Ms. Ramsey replied that they are still looking at the back of the building and playing with the massing.
- Ms. Maltese stated that she was much more comfortable with the massing. Mr. Wyckoff and Mr. Almeida agreed.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked about the previous plans to have parking and sidewalks on Tanner Court. Ms. Ramsey explained that they were pushing that building back 12 feet in hopes to accommodate that. Mr. Wyckoff asked if the parallel parking spaces would be private. Ms. Ramsey said that that has not yet been determined. She added that with the parking below grade, they will get more parking with the site.
- Chairman Dika stated that she had a little concern about the Keefe House on one side of the street and the new building on the other side of the street. She said she hoped they would not wall off the City.
- Ms. Maltese mentioned that if the building was to happen in phases, the applicant should know that all sides of the building will need to be reviewed. Mr. Wyckoff added that he would not want to see one side of the building with no windows in it.

B. Work session requested by **Chad and Laura Morin, LLC, owners**, for property located at **36 Market Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure and exterior renovations to an existing structure (changes to the rear elevation). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 29 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

- Mr. Rob Harbeson of DeStefano Architects was present to speak to the application. He explained that they would like to renovate the upper two stories of the building.
- He pointed out that Page 4 was the existing roof and site plan. Page 5 was the proposed roof plan. He said that they would like to add three skylights. In the back of the building

they are proposing multiple changes. He said that they want to replace some air conditioning units which will be placed on a concrete pad with screening.

- Page 6 showed the existing Ladd Street elevation. Page 7 showed the proposed Ladd Street elevation where they were proposing to add windows and skylights. He said they would like to use white Andersen clad windows in kind or to match.
- Page 8 showed the back alley view. He pointed out the interior court where the air conditioning units are located. Page 9 showed the existing elevation. He said they were proposing two new windows, cementitious clapboard with Azek trim, and a white aluminum gutter from the deck.
- Mr. Wyckoff clarified that they were not adding a story to the building but just adding a roof deck. Mr. Harbeson stated that was correct.
- Page 11 showed the proposed pergola, the planters and railings.
- Page 14 showed the details of the pergola. It would be simple in detailing and would be stained cedar. The gutter detail was shown on this page as well. Mr. Harbeson stated that the material for the deck would be Trex with a contemporary railing system.
- The final pages of the packet were cut sheets which included information about the canopy which would be a temporary structure. Mr. Harbeson asked the Commission if they would view it as an awning/canopy or a deck umbrella. Ms. Maltese stated that it attaches in a very different way. She felt it was appropriate. She thought the contemporary features of it would heighten the historic features surrounding it. Chairman Dika thought it should be viewed as temporary. The rest of the Commission was in agreement.
- Mr. Almeida asked if they would be removing the snow fence on the roof plan. Mr. Harbeson replied that he thought that they would want to keep it.
- Mr. Almeida asked if the roof plan called for a new finish on the top of the parapets. Mr. Harbeson replied that it did not.
- Mr. Almeida asked if they were going to match the detail of the z-brick. Mr. Harbeson said that they were considering painting the wall. He explained that they would be leaving the z-brick and cutting through it. Mr. Almeida said in regards to the painting, he liked it as it is. Mr. Wyckoff pointed out that the building next door was painted.
- Mr. Almeida asked the Commission what they thought of the stainless steel up on the railing. Ms. Maltese said that she liked it.
- Mr. Harbeson asked if a site walk was needed. Chairman Dika did not think a site walk was needed but encouraged the Commission to stop by on their own time to take a look at the site.

C. Work session requested by **Mill Gate Condominium Association, owner, and Kristin Goodwillie, applicant**, for property located at **17 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace existing windows, add new windows and doors, remove garage doors, lower entry door and add steps to yard, add chimney). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 53 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Anne Whitney, architect for the project was present to speak to the application. She explained that 17 South Street was a little shingled building that sits out over the water of Mill Pond.
- Chairman Dika asked Ms. Whitney if she had any history on the structure. Ms. Whitney said that she thought it had been a stable at one point. It is currently a one story structure and their plan is to renovate it into a two story structure.
- Ms. Whitney said they would be reworking the South St. elevation. She pointed out that one of the challenges was that it was not that large of a structure and the existing stair that goes between the two floors is only two feet wide. She is proposing to lower the entry

door down. Also on this elevation, they would be removing the garage doors and would be adding a double French door and a double hung window. The two double hung windows on that elevation will remain but she would be shifting the one that is existing on the left hand side of the building.

- Ms. Maltese commented that the double French door did not work for her. Ms. Whitney explained that a fence would be going up at a later time and so only the top of the double French door would be visible. Ms. Maltese was comfortable with that.
- Ms. Whitney explained that on the waterside elevation, the existing windows are custom made wood windows but they are drafty and falling apart. They are a very small size and do not meet today’s egress code. She said that she was proposing to add windows to this elevation. Ms. Whitney stated that she was looking to use an Andersen Eagle or a Marvin clad window with simulated divided lights. They would also be adding a chimney but are still working on the details of the fireplace. The exterior will be re-sided with shingles. She added that on the water side, she was proposing to use Azek trim.
- Mr. Almeida stated that at first he thought there were too many windows on the water side but after Ms. Whitney’s explanation, he felt the changes were appropriate.
- Ms. Whitney stated that when she comes back for the public hearing, she would have details on the fence for the Commission.

D. Work session requested by **Jose Luis and Myong S. San Miguel, owners**, for property located at **24 Holmes Court**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish garage) and allow a new free standing structure (rebuild garage) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (new siding, windows, and roof). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 15 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

- Mr. Almeida stated that he was representing the owner for this project. He showed the Commission a photo of the property. He said that Page 1 showed the existing floor plan. He pointed out that the house has a very awkward entrance. He said that the property was bounded by streets on both sides. The garage is off of Walden Street.
- Mr. Almeida explained that Page 6 showed what was being proposed. He said that they would be adding a level above the garage. He pointed out that this was the only way to expand the house.
- Page 7 showed the front of the property where new clapboards, new historically correct windows and all new exterior surfaces were being proposed.
- Mr. Almeida stated that he has dashed in the lines on the plans to show how tight it is with the adjacent properties.
- Page 8 showed where the majority of the impact would be. Mr. Almeida explained that the house is currently all shingles and so the plan is to restore it with all new clapboards and trim. The windows are currently two over two but will be replaced with 6 over 6 windows.
- Mr. Almeida stated that he was also proposing a roof deck. The two pink windows on the plan indicated new openings for new windows.
- Ms. Maltese stated that she had no heartburn with the plan. Mr. Melchior was in agreement.
- Mr. Almeida explained that he would have to go the Board of Adjustment first before coming to the HDC for a public hearing.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:15 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on July 2, 2008.