

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 p.m.

**April 11, 2012
reconvened from April 4, 2012**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Richard Katz; Vice Chairman Joseph Almeida; Members John Wyckoff, Tracy Kozak, Elena Whittaker; City Council Representative Jack Thorsen; Planning Department Representative William Gladhill; Alternates George Melchior, Dan Rawling

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Planning Consultant

1. Petition of **AHI Holdings, LLC, owner**, for property located at **121 Bow Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace nine windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 1A and lies within Central Business A, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the April 4, 2012 meeting to a work session/public hearing at the April 11, 2012 meeting.)*

Ms. Whittaker stated that she would be recusing herself from the discussion and vote.

WORK SESSION

- Mr. Daniel Innis and Mr. Doug Palardy, co-owners of the Ale House Inn were present to speak to the application.
- Chairman Katz stated that at the last meeting, a number of objections were made with regard to the vinyl window proposal.
- Mr. Palardy showed the Commission an old photograph of the building when it was a warehouse. He pointed out the small arched windows in the photo and noted that they have since been bricked in. He also noted that the windows in question were not visible from the waterfront. He also brought a current photo of the Harbour Place building for comparison.
- Mr. Palardy said that he met with a window installer whose recommendation was to install vinyl windows instead of metal windows into the brick openings because of the frosting and the water damage to the building.
- Mr. Innis commented that they wanted something that would work in terms of appearance and performance and so they were asking for help from the Commission as to what other options might exist. Mr. Wyckoff asked if they had considered the Andersen window with a fibrex coating.

- Mr. Innis asked what was wrong with vinyl if it looked good. Mr. Wyckoff explained that vinyl double hung windows are made with extruded square stock and are not appropriate for an historic building. He thought the applicant's windows were slightly different in his opinion however because their windows were sliding windows.
- Mr. Almeida asked the applicants if they had considered a different layout for their windows. Mr. Palardy thought it would be difficult to do that because all of the windows were different sizes. He also had a concern about egress.
- Mr. Almeida said that the style of the window was more troubling to him than the vinyl material.
- Mr. Thorsen pointed out that vinyl breaks down over time and so he was wondering if the Commission would deal with the time aspect of vinyl or just the design aspect. Mr. Wyckoff thought that the length of service of a product was not the Commission's purview.
- Mr. Wyckoff also stated that the sliding window was probably the tightest window as far as infiltration goes; however, the vinyl that was chosen was not a long term solution. He suggested that they go with a better quality window like an Andersen or a Pella. Ms. Kozak suggested other cladding like fibrex or aluminum. She expressed concern about the gap there would be around the window but added that it could be easily fixed with trim or a brick mold. She said that she would not be opposed to the vinyl as long as they addressed the exterior perimeter around the windows.
- Councilor Thorsen stated that he did not have an objection to the vinyl windows.
- Mr. Almeida said that he would be hard pressed to approve a vinyl window on the waterfront. If he were to be convinced, he would need to see how the window would sit in the existing masonry opening.
- Mr. Gladhill stated that he was afraid of precedence setting.
- Mr. Wyckoff said that he did not object to the vinyl windows as presented.
- Mr. Melchior stated that he would support the application with Ms. Kozak's amendment to add trim work or a brick molding. He pointed out that these windows were not on a prominent elevation and were in an area of the building where they would not be seen. He agreed that the vinyl would break down over time.
- Mr. Almeida asked the Commission to consider if they were okay with this window being used throughout the building if other tenants wished to replace their windows.
- There was detailed discussion about how the brick mold would be installed. Mr. Melchior explained to the applicants that they could stipulate that a brick mold be installed but if it did not work, they would have to come back before the Commission for discussion and approval of another solution.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to move from the work session into a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kozak. The motion passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Chairman Katz 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. Kozak made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulation:

- 1) That a brick mold is applied at the exterior perimeter of the window frame.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. Chairman Katz asked for discussion.

Mr. Almeida stated that he could not support the application. He felt they were winging it.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Katz called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulation passed by a vote of 5-2 with Mr. Almeida and Mr. Gladhill voting in opposition:

- 1) That a brick mold is applied at the exterior perimeter of the window frame.

II. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **North Mill Realty Trust, owner**, for property located at **319 Vaughan Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (add windows, **Request To Postpone** and **Postpone** is shown on Assessor Plan 124 as Lot 9 and lies within Central Business A, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item is continued from the February 1, 2012 meeting.)*

Ms. Whittaker made a motion to postpone the application to the May 2, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wyckoff. The motion passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

B. Work Session requested by **Theodore M. Stiles and Joan Boyd, owners**, for property located at **28 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish garage) and allow a new free standing structure (construct new garage). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 43 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts.

- Mr. Theodore Stiles was present to speak to the application.
- Chairman Katz informed the public that a site walk was held prior to this work session.
- Mr. Stiles stated that he was looking to demolish the existing structure and replace it with a structure in the same location but with a few changes. The changes were to add a foundation, dormers, and extend the length. There would be no increase in height or width. Mr. Stiles presented the Commission with photos showing existing garages with dormers in the neighborhood and context views.

- Chairman Katz asked the Commissioners who viewed the site earlier to offer their comments. Mr. Melchior stated that he was not at the site walk but he viewed the site on his own. He asked if the siding would be the same as the existing structure. Mr. Stiles replied yes. Mr. Almeida said that the site walk was very helpful and he felt the request to take down the structure was quite reasonable. He appreciated that the dormers did not go all the way to the ridge to help make them appear as small as possible. He added that he was convinced that this was the right thing to do. Ms. Kozak stated that she did not have any problems with it and thought it would be appropriate in its setting. Ms. Whittaker agreed. Mr. Wyckoff asked if there was an elevation issue with the yard next door. Mr. Almeida said that there was no major grade change. Mr. Wyckoff commented that he thought the design was compatible with the neighborhood but he did not know how they were going to fit it in. Mr. Melchior commented that going to the site helpful. He told Mr. Stiles that he should address how he was going to make the transition to the foundation.
- There was considerable discussion about the structure being close to the lot line and the ability to have windows on that side. Mr. Cracknell said that he would look into it before a public hearing.
- Mr. Almeida complimented the applicant on the completeness of the documentation presented.
- Councilor Thorsen commented that he was impressed that the applicant had already sought the input from the neighbors. Mr. Stiles said that he was over halfway through getting the opinions of the abutters.
- Mr. Almeida asked if a decision had been made about the doors. Mr. Stiles asked what the Commission’s opinions were on door materials. Mr. Almeida pointed out that all of the examples shown of garages in the area had wood doors. Mr. Stiles said that they would prefer the look of a wood door.
- Mr. Almeida told Mr. Stiles they would need all details for the public hearing.

C. Work Session requested by **South Mill Investments, LLC, owner**, for property located at **25 South Mill Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish **Request To Postpone** structure (construct new house). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 16 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts.

Mr. Almeida made a motion to postpone the application to the May 2, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gladhill. The motion passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

D. Work Session requested by **80 Wright Avenue, LLC, owner**, for property located at **Wright Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish garage) and allow a new free standing structure (construct a 4-5 story mixed use building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 18 and lies within Central Business B and Historic Districts.

- Ms. Jennifer Ramsey of Somma Studios was present to speak to the application. She stated she came before the Commission in 2008 with a different design and programming. She said they were looking at a new design that would try to capture the time period of 1850-1910 with a Victorian type of structure. She pointed out that at last month's work session; there was a question as to whether the style and height were appropriate in this area of the district.
- Ms. Whittaker stated that she thought the building was way too large. She felt the house next door was being dwarfed by it.
- Mr. Wyckoff pointed out that this was a similar problem the Commission had with the Marriott hotel with a similar stepping down of the building on one side.
- Ms. Ramsey showed the Commission an 1877 map and noted that a four story building used to be on the site.
- Mr. Almeida felt that the height was okay. Mr. Wyckoff reminded the Commission that in 2008, some of the Commissioners thought that the proposed building at the time was one story too high. He thought that maybe something more conservative in town would help to bring down the height of the building.
- Mr. Rawling felt that there was too much brick massing. He suggested the possibility of brick on the first three floors with a different material on the top floors.
- Mr. Almeida commented that he was very excited about it the way it was and he was looking forward to further details. He added that he was fine with the massing and was comfortable with the direction it was heading.
- Mr. Melchior also was okay with the massing and pointed out that this was a gateway to the City. He also pointed out that it would be important to look at the structure from the elevated perspective on Bow Street.
- Mr. Wyckoff agreed but still felt the building needed to be simplified, especially the mansard level. He said he was fairly comfortable with the height and massing. Mr. Melchior agreed as well.
- Mr. Gladhill also stated that he did not have a problem with the height or the massing. He added that he liked the State Street elevation better than the Wright Avenue elevation.
- Mr. Almeida cautioned that as the building turned the corner, it would be important to not downgrade the materials. He said that at the next work session, he would like to discuss the location of dumpsters, mechanical equipment, lighting, garage entrance and the at grade parking.
- Ms. Ramsey told the Commission that currently they were anticipating a restaurant on the first floor of the building with condominium units above.
- Councilor Thorsen thought the building would work well with the foot traffic. He cautioned the Commission to keep in mind the uncertainty of the future of the Connie Bean Center next door.
- Ms. Ramsey told the Commission that she had started discussions with the Planning Department and would be before the Technical Advisory Committee about the project soon.
- Mr. Cracknell informed the Commission that one of the issues the TAC would be looking at was the access of the building, specifically whether it would stay on State Street or whether it would be relocated to Wright Avenue.

- Ms. Kozak stated that she appreciated all of the extra documentation that Ms. Ramsey submitted and said that it was very insightful. She did however; think the building was too high.
- Mr. Rawling commented that he could see a lot of effort to break up the massing but he felt the scale could be reduced. He thought maybe stepping back the upper floors would help. He asked Ms. Ramsey why the Victorian design. Ms. Ramsey explained that they would have clients who would be living there and who might want to live in something that looked like a grand old hotel.
- Ms. Whittaker stated that there was a benefit to having a building there but she still felt it was too high. She reminded the Commission that Chapel Street would be a view to consider. She thought a site walk would be necessary.
- Mr. Melchior pointed out that this building would be filling a void, a parking lot, in the area and so that was why some of the Commissioners were uncomfortable with its massing. Ms. Whittaker disagreed and said it was the building next to it, the residential home that was making her uncomfortable. She pointed out the The Hill and the Marriott Residence Inn building that Mr. Wyckoff had noted earlier in the conversation.
- Mr. Almeida asked what the floor to floor heights would be. Ms. Ramsey said they would be eleven feet. Mr. Almeida asked what the proposed height of the building was. Ms. Ramsey said it would be roughly 56 feet tall.
- Councilor Thorsen pointed out that buildings do grow over time so he thought it was important to look at the buildings surrounding it to get an idea of what that potential might be. Mr. Melchior encouraged the Commission to walk around and look at the proposed site from a distance.
- Chairman Katz stated that it appeared that the majority of the Commission felt Ms. Ramsey was on the right track.

E. Work Session requested by **Donovan-Hess Family Revocable Trust, Jane M. Donovan and William Hess, owners and trustees**, for property located at **54 Rogers Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct rear addition) and allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish shed, construct new shed). Said property is located at 116 as Lot 44 and lies within Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

- Mr. Charles Hugo of Charles Hugo Landscaping and Mr. Bill Hess, owner of the property were present to speak to the application. Mr. Hugo stated that they were proposing to remove an existing sunroom and construct a two story addition that was slightly larger than what was existing. He said they would also like to take an existing shed and reduce it in size. Lastly, they would like to install fencing. Mr. Hess added that the fencing was approved by the HDC a couple years ago.
- Mr. Wyckoff commented that he was okay with the massing of the addition. Mr. Hugo said that the intent was to mimic the details of the existing house.
- Mr. Hugo said that they were proposing to replace all of the windows and match the windows of the addition to the main house but in a smaller scale.

- Mr. Hugo also said they were proposing porches on the side and the back of the house. Mr. Almeida asked Mr. Hugo how he planned to skirt the bottom of the porch. Mr. Hugo said they would be looking to use a two inch wide board with 3/4 inch spacing.
- Ms. Kozak asked Mr. Hugo how he would cricket the area where the two gables met. Mr. Hugo said that he did not have that detail worked out yet.
- Ms. Whittaker noted that on the rear elevation, the windows on the first and second floors were all left of center. Mr. Hugo said that was because of what was happening on the interior.
- Ms. Whittaker pointed out the windows that were located very near the double doors. She wondered if any Commissioners were uncomfortable with that. Ms. Kozak pointed out that with a seven foot fence surrounding the rear of the property; she doubted it would be very visible. Ms. Whittaker commented that fences can come down also.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked what the siding material would be. He said he would have a problem with hardiplank since the building was right on the sidewalk. Ms. Whittaker agreed.
- Ms. Kozak asked if they were proposing to remove the chimney. Ms. Whittaker did not have a problem with removing the rear chimney. Mr. Hugo pointed out that there was a lot of valuable floor space being taken up by the chimney. Mr. Almeida said it was a coal venting chimney. Mr. Wyckoff thought it was awkward looking. Mr. Gladhill said he would want to walk the street to get a better look at it and the surrounding houses. Ms. Whittaker thought it might be a defining feature of the house but she too would walk the street to make that determination for herself.
- Mr. Hugo said that the existing garage/shed would be demolished and would be rebuilt to half of its original size. The details would match the house.

F. Work Session requested by **Leanne Stella, owner, and Janet Seekell and George Kaniwec, applicants**, for property located at **478 Marcy Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction (addition of a gable dormer). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 74 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts.

G. Work Session requested by **Lea H. Aeschliman Trust, Lea H. Aeschliman, owner and trustee**, for property located at **314 Middle Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct rear addition). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 136 as Lot 6 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

- Ms. Anne Whitney, architect for the project was present to speak to the application. She stated that they were proposing a two story addition on the rear of the structure to enclose a stairway. The addition would match the corner boards, trim boards, roof trim and clapboards. The roof would be a hip roof.
- There was detailed discussion about the proposed awning windows in the structure.
- Ms. Kozak and Ms. Whittaker stated that they did not have any issues with the window locations.

- Ms. Whitney added that they would also be relocating a condenser on the site.
- There was discussion about the foundation which was proposed to be a brick veneer.
- Ms. Whitney stated that she would be using an outswinging fiberglass door that would have an awning overhead.

- **III. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:35 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 11, 2012.