

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

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**6:30 p.m.**

**February 13, 2013  
reconvened from February 6, 2013**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Joseph Almeida; Members George Melchior; City Councilor Esther Kennedy; Planning Board Representative William Gladhill; Alternate Daniel Rawling, Reagan Ruedig

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Vice Chairman Tracy Kozak; Richard Katz, John Wyckoff

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nicholas Cracknell, Principal Planner

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**I. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Approval of minutes: October 3, 2012

*Mr. Melchior moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Gladhill seconded, and all were in favor. (6-0)*

A. Petition of **B & M Wharf, LLC, owner, and McNabb Properties, LTD, applicant**, for property located at **70 & 80 State Street and 5 Atkinson Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (add roof dormers, build dumpster enclosure) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace windows and doors, removal/reconstruction of chimneys, replace HVAC equipment) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lots 14, 15, and 16 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the February 6, 2013 meeting to a work session/public hearing at the February 6, 2013 meeting.)*

**WORK SESSION**

Architect, Steve McHenry introduced himself, along with owners Mark McNabb and Joe Baroni.

Mr. McHenry said they removed the dormers, were keeping two major chimneys, removing one chimney, and changed the window patterns in response to comments from the previous meeting. Mr. McHenry walked the Commission through their plans to replace the double hung windows on the third floor, and their plans to replace the 2, 3, 4 window patterns with a 6/6 pattern. They proposed replacing the first floor doors to be ADA accessible, and changed their original proposal for a six panel door, to a twelve panel door on State Street.

Chairman Almeida asked if the fan light on door would remain, and Mr. McHenry said it would.

Mr. McHenry said they would be repointing the existing chimneys, and remove the chimney behind the gable that could not be seen from the street. The reason for removing the chimney was its poor condition, the need for space, and technical requirements of the restaurant below. Mr. McNabb said the chimney was built with weakened lime mortar and wood beam framing inside so it could never be used.

Mr. McHenry said they would replace the roof top fans and HVAC equipment and put them on the roof of the single story addition. They proposed creating a parapet wall to screen kitchen roof mechanicals & to flatten and unify the height of roof at the back of building. Mr. McNabb said all the mechanicals were visible in the back before they took over. The final design was not complete, but they gave approximate sizes of the equipment. Mr. McNabb said they knew they were going to have two five ton units and it was just a question of how far out it had to go away from windows and for setback. Mr. McHenry said the equipment had not been scaled yet, and the final design had not been done, but they would come back with details. Mr. Melchior inquired if it was their intention to hide the mechanicals. Mr. McNabb said it was and they also had a 16 foot wood fence in the back so nothing could be seen from State Street. Mr. McHenry said they were rebuilding the wood fence to repair the poor condition.

Mr. Rawling asked where the meter sockets would be placed. Mr. McNabb said they only had one meter right now which was currently in building, but PSNH and the electrical inspector wanted them outside so they put them inside the dumpster corral. Councilor Kennedy asked if they would have a bank of meters and Mr. McNabb said they would have seven meters.

Chairman Almeida asked about the gas meters, and Mr. McNabb said there would be no changes to the gas lines which were brand new when changes were done on State Street, but the meter bar would get rebuilt. The water main and drain lines were also new when they upgraded State Street. He said they just needed to upgrade the sprinklers and upgrade the electric meters.

Mr. McHenry said they were changing the gate on the rear and moving the menu board to a new entry location. They were also installing a decorative canopy, and the owners wanted to use copper flashing. Chairman Almeida asked how it would be worked into the brick, and Mr. McNabb said it would need to be stepped in. Chairman Almeida asked if the purpose was to shed water or if it was decorative and Mr. McHenry said it would come out a foot from the building and would provide some protection, but was mostly it was decorative.

Mr. McNabb discussed the steel beam line that ran across the front façade that was pushing the brick out, and thought it appropriate to repair it. Mr. Rawling asked how much height would be needed, and Mr. McNabb said 14 inches. Mr. McNabb said the front was changed at some point, and there was cinder block at the corner where there once was a corner entrance with a spiral staircase, so they were trying to blend in the steel beam. Councilor Kennedy agreed that the awnings would look a little bit separate, but they would prevent it from looking like one big building.

Mr. McHenry discussed the removal and replacement of the street level windows. He said they changed the window patterns in an attempt to solve some of the issues that were brought up. Mr. Rawling said they added continuity and harmony to the building with their changes. Mr. Rawling said he also liked the door design, but usually saw wider styles. Mr. McHenry said some of the proportions were not correct, and he would be happy to come back with more precise cut sheets. Chairman Almeida said so long as they verbally stated the sizes they wouldn't need to come back. Mr. McHenry agreed and stated the sizes.

Mr. Rawling said the hoods over the doors didn't rest well with him, that the shape seemed Victorian, and they looked like a hat that was too small. He said he thought it could be improved by making them larger, or even wider. Mr. McHenry said the Atkinson Street door was an emergency entrance, and the hood offered some cover, but was primarily ornamental. Mr. McNabb said he would be willing to remove them if it meant moving the project along. Chairman Almeida noted they were five feet wide with copper flashed at the top. He said he initially thought they stood out over the primary entrance but given that there would be no other protection over the door, and given all the other improvements, he could live with them. He asked others on their opinion of the "eyelid" hood on Atkinson Street. Mr. Melchior said he recognized the importance of maintaining the Federal façade, but had no problem with the "eyelid" over either door because it was minimally invasive, and it was an example of architectural differences. Councilor Kennedy agreed that it wasn't major feature, or permanent part of the structure, and the applicant had given up other features that she hadn't liked so she was willing to live with it.

Mr. Rawling said their proposal was improved over the last version, but he was also troubled by the casement window look on the nano wall, and wondered if it would look more proportionate if each section was divided into three lights. Mr. McHenry said they prepared some options so they could come back with an amendment if it was an issue. Chairman Almeida asked how this nano wall would compare to what was across the street at Agave, and what colors they would use to finish off the nano wall. Mr. McNabb said they were mahogany at Agave, but wood warps and was tough to keep up so this would be a different system. He said he did not favor white, and envisioned a deep bronze. All nano walls would be under the awning, and were required to have a continuous screen on the outside with the nano folding inside.

Mr. Rawling said he would like the double hung windows on the Atkinson street side to be consistent with the paired double hung windows seen in the historic district, and said he was opposed to factory mullings without the wider style popular at the turn of century. Mr. McHenry said they could choose factory mulling to give it the same look. Mr. Rawling said it was rare to have paired windows at the turn of century. Mr. McHenry said the idea was not to replicate but to replace the windows. Mr. Rawling said it was a very historic street. Ms. Ruedig said she agreed that the simple Federal façade was typical of the area, and while she understood the banding on the State Street side, she wondered if they could leave it off Atkinson Street side to preserve the look of the linear valance. She said she would also rather see separate windows than windows mullied together. Mr. McNabb said their plan could be amended, but pointed out that the street side of the building was not original. Mr. McNabb added that there was a problem with only two windows on the Atkinson Street side in that they would like more light and would like to know what kind of windows they could use. He asked if it would help to separate the windows. Ms.

Ruedig suggested they install two separate but same sized single windows on either side of the door as was done on State Street so long as they weren't double windows. Mr. Rawlings said if the façade was not historic with a plain façade, then they wouldn't have to keep the tops of the windows flat, they could put arches over them. Councilor Kennedy said she would be fine with two windows on both sides of the door, but wouldn't like arches. She said whether the façade was new or old, the building was still an entrance to Strawberry Banke. Mr. McHenry said they could describe addition of two windows centered between the masonry opening of the doorway and the adjoining window sash. Mr. Almeida asked if the windows would be flush, and if they would cut the brick for the additional window opening. Mr. McNabb said he would retoothe the brick, discontinue the banding, and the recessed window depth would be maintained.

Mr. Gladhill said he noted that the handles on the existing doors were older looking, but the handles in the drawing of the new doors look very modern. Mr. McHenry said it was a levered door for ADA access.

Chairman Almeida asked if the shutters would be hung properly. Mr. McHenry said they would have traditional pentels and dogs.

Chairman Almeida also said the sign band looked different, and asked if it was staying as it was. Mr. McHenry said it was.

Mr. Cracknell read through the suggested stipulations and discussion ensued regarding the Nano walls. Mr. McNabb said a simple Nano wall would be his preference. Mr. Rawling said it didn't relate to the building and he couldn't support it without something relating it to building. Councilor Kennedy asked what Agave had. Mr. Rawling said they had four lights and they stood out as something added instead of looking like a natural part of the building. Mr. McNabb asked what he would like to see, and Mr. Rawling said three lights would take on the proportions of M windows. Mr. McNabb said that would be their next best option. Councilor Kennedy said she had preferences with three lights to match what was currently there, but wouldn't hold up the project. Mr. Melchior said he would accept the proposal as it was. Chairman Almeida said he liked the reuse of a historic building allowing some contemporary elements instead of it being neglected. He said no matter what they did to the Nano wall it would never look like an old English storefront so he could go with any pattern and it wouldn't be a sticking point. Mr. McNabb said he respected what they said, but wanted to stick with what they had.

Chairman Almeida closed the Work Session and opened the Public Hearing, reading the application again for public record.

### **SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

No further discussion was added and Chairman Almeida closed public comment for the hearing.

### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Councilor Kennedy reviewed the criteria.

*Councilor Kennedy moved that the request be approved for a certificate of approval as presented with the following stipulations:*

- 1) The entrance doors at street level will use 3”–4” rails and an 8” rail at the bottom.*
- 2) The two 6/6 windows on the Atkinson Street elevation will be centered between the existing door and window and the brick frame will be re-toothed to have the same visual appearance of the original windows.*
- 3) The banding along the Atkinson Street façade will be discontinued and the eyelid canopy will be removed.*
- 4) The door on Atkinson Street will be a six panel door and traditional hardware will be used.*
- 5) The shutters will have traditional pentals and dogs.*

*Mr. Melchior seconded, and all were in favor. (6-0)*

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2. Petition of **Hoefle, Phoenix, Gormley, and Roberts, P.A., owners**, for property located at **127 Parrott Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow an amendment to a previously approved design (replace five windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 115 as Lot 3 and lies within Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the February 6, 2013 meeting to the February 13, 2013 meeting.)*

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Tracy Kozak with JSA, Inc. Architects presented additional materials to those not present at their last presentation. Ms. Kozak said the original windows were to be refurbished, but in the course of construction they found five windows on the second floor of the west sunroom were beyond repair. The 2002 addition had Eagle Talon double hung windows that were approved, and were approved again in May as a replacement for the French door at the back of the building. She said they would also like to use a full screen because they believe it would look better than a half screen. Option 2 was their preference.

Chairman Almeida said the presentation was crystal clear.

**SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

No further discussion was added and Chairman Almeida closed public hearing.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Mr. Rawling read through the criteria, and made a motion to grant a certificate of approval for option 2 as presented. Mr. Melchior seconded, and all were in favor, 6-0.*

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### III. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **Eport Properties 1, LLC, owner**, for property located at **173-175 Market Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct addition) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 4 and lies within the Central Business A, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was continued.)*

Ms. Carla Goodnight and Mr. Bill Bartell, with CJ Architects with owners Ken, Chris and Corey Erikson came before the Commission. Ms. Goodnight said they would need a variance for the fire wall massing for a continuous roof line.

Mr. Rawling asked if the new building would be set further back from the street edge than it already was. Ms. Goodnight said it would be set back 4½ feet.

Chairman Almeida asked if would be an all wood storefront, and Ms. Goodnight said it would be, and might have a granite sill.

Chairman Almeida said, this was one of the largest projects the City had seen in quite a while, and they had several work sessions already and he wanted to address the height, massing and scale.

Councilor Kennedy said she liked the changes to the doors, but did not like the dormers, particularly on an old building. She said she knew they weren't there for views, but she questioned the effect the mass and scale had on the contextual integrity of the street. She said she didn't think the new addition matched anything on the street, though she had no issues with the height on the Market Street side. Ms. Ruedig said she had no problem with the mass and scaling on the Market Street side either.

Mr. Melchior said it felt as if the addition was engulfing the building, and said he also had a problem with the dormers. Ms. Goodnight said it was not engulfing the building, it was "urban infill", and the next building was set back. Chairman Almeida said the Market Street building was designed from the existing historic building, but they didn't want the building behind to give the appearance of wrapping around it.

Mr. Rawling said he had an issue with the dormers too, and the street was characterized by a lack of dormers. Mr. Erikson said he was aware there were few dormers on roofs in the immediate area, but he showed dormers on other buildings on nearby streets such as the Chamber of Commerce building, the Sheraton, the Moffat Ladd House, and the new building on Deer Street. Mr. Melchior said they were talking about this building as a bookend at the end of Merchants' Row and none of those buildings had dormers except one that looked inappropriate, and the examples given were of different architectural styles or stood by themselves. Mr. Erikson said this building would be viewed among other buildings with dormers when coming down Market Street. Ms. Goodnight said there was also debate whether this building was a bookend to the rest of Merchant's Row because this building was not attached. She said the roofline of the building before them was a full story lower than the rest of the buildings in Merchants Row as was this

building so they were sharing the characteristics of that last building. She said the height of the other buildings negated the need for dormers. Councilor Kennedy said it was an historical building at the end of Merchants' Row that never had dormers and they were referring to the contextual setting and had the same visual expectations. Chairman agreed and said they would have a hard time convincing the Commission to accept dormers.

Mr. Melchior asked how they planned on tying in the newer masonry to the older brick, and Ms. Goodnight said they were working with masonry consultant, John Walstrom, to be sure the new mortar works with the older brick. Mr. Melchior said how they tied the architectural details in would be important as well. Ms. Ruedig said she would rather see the storefront construction be new rather than faking old and she would like to see more modern lines, bring in some stylistic themes. Mr. Melchior agreed that the new construction should differentiate and represent the period it was built. Chairman Almeida and Councilor Kennedy said they'd rather see it match the surrounding buildings more.

*The Commission recommended they come back for another work session.*

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B. Work Session requested by **Maplewood and Vaughan Holding Company, LLC, owner**, for property located at **111 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow a new free standing structure (construct four story mixed use building). Said property is shown Assessor Plan 124 as Lot 8 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the January 2, 2013 meeting to the February 13, 2013 meeting.)*

Ms. Lisa DeStefano and Mr. Rob Harbeson from DeStefano Architects, along with R. J. Finley came before the Commission with their presentation. Ms. DeStefano said there had been a zoning change proposal since they came before the Commission three months before. They had since redesigned the project from an "L" shape to a "U" shape brick building with a central entry, and towers on the ends. She discussed the possibility of a glazed roof, 8 feet of grade change in the back of the building, and lots of green space.

Mr. Rawling asked how the proposal related to the other buildings on Maplewood Avenue, and Ms. DeStefano said their building was taller in the center, and cascaded down at the ends. Chairman Almeida said the building appeared to get wider rather than taller in response to the zoning change. He said this building was very similar to 233 Vaughan Street in architectural style

Mr. Rawling said it would function as a gateway building, and asked how the building would address Portsmouth. Ms. DeStefano said it was transitional.

Chairman Almeida said he would like a shadow study. Ms. DeStefano said the building was situated to cast shadows upon itself so it wouldn't cast shadows on the historic area, and she could provide a shadow study.

Ms. DeStefano said the first floor would be commercial with three floors of residential above. She said the building could be seen from all sides, and would be comprised of brick, metals, precast, rain screen, and a granite base.

Chairman Almeida said he saw they made an attempt to make it look different from Port Walk. Mr. Melchior suggested they do some more detail on the first floor, and Ms. DeStefano said they would be doing further studies on the pedestrian level. Chairman Almeida asked for Master Plan information about this location.

Chairman Almeida invited public input. Mr. David Nord said the scale was a distraction to the cultural heritage of Portsmouth and he could imagine the building as being across from Boston Common.

Ms. Martha Fuller Clark said she thought the building fit in with other buildings in the Port Walk. She said the simplicity fit in with the industrial concept, and the setbacks and plantings helped reduced the massing. She said their question of how it would fit in with the residential buildings across the street would be a challenge.

*The Commission recommended another work session.*

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C. Work Session requested by **OAL Properties, LLC, owner, and David Takis, applicant,** for property located at **103 Congress Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (install awning). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 6-106 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was continued.)*

Ms. Jessie Aikman with Back Channel Canvas guided the commission through the submitted plan changes for the proposed awning.

Mr. Gladhill asked if it would be permanently fixed or if it would get rolled up at night. Ms. Aikman said it would go away in the fall and come back in the spring. In the winter, the original awning would go back up.

Mr. Rawling said it appeared like a 16 x 20 foot room on the front of the building. He said it gave a sense of crawling into a big dark cavernous tent to get into the building. Mr. Gladhill agreed. Ms. Aikman said it needed to be large to prevent rain from dripping onto tables, and they proposed some clear panels on the top of the awning to guard against darkness.

Chairman Almeida said it wasn't a very interesting corner, but the glass view into the restaurant made it interesting he thought making the awning taller might allow a more open view of the windows.

Councilor Kennedy said she had no problem with it having sides, but asked if they would feel the same about an awning with no sides. Mr. Gladhill said even without sides it would be the biggest awning on Congress Street. Chairman Almeida said there were several structures like it, including at the Gaslight, Mombo on Marcy Street, Pocos deck, and the River House on the waterfront. Ms. Aikman agreed there was nothing like it on Congress Street. Mr. Gladhill said there were large awnings on Bow Street too, but they were in the back and this was a main thoroughfare.



Councilor Kennedy wondered if there would be as much concern if the structure came out to the side of the building only. Chairman Almeida said it had to function for the restaurant. He said he was for anything that added energy to this dark area, but he wanted to see the complexity of it go away, and suggested making it a rectangular shape. Ms. Aikman said they could make it more attractive with a nice fence and some planters.

Ms. Ruedig said it was reversible and she didn't have a problem with it because it was a difficult area that could use improvement. Mr. Rawling suggested attaching the new awning at a slope to the existing awning. Ms. Aikman said they were concerned about the pitch and the side piece.

Councilor Kennedy expressed concern that granting this would set a precedence that would encourage more requests to the City for outside dining areas that serve alcohol.

Ms. Aikman said next time she would come with a model. She asked if she need permission from the City to go onto City property if they needed to extend the awning. Councilor Kennedy said the City couldn't grant land. Mr. Cracknell said they could apply for conditional use approval for encroachment into right of way and then go to City Council if necessary.

*The Commission recommended a work session and public hearing next time.*

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D. Work Session requested by **Wright Avenue, LLC, owner**, for property located at **Wright Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing building) and allow a new free standing structure (construct 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. Jen Ramsey said they spent eight work sessions on the project and said they were looking for final approval by next month. She said the Planning Board informed them at their last meeting that the City had revised their parking scheme which gave them almost 20 feet of sidewalk in front of the building, allowing 30 foot trees and lighting in front of the building.

Mr. Cracknell said the Technical Advisory Committee looked at both the Wright Avenue project and the Connie Beane Center redevelopment. He said they made adjustments to the parking from angled to parallel parking to support the needs of the Fire Department without disturbing any of the parked vehicles. He said this project was going to be approved by the State as part of the Memorial Bridge project that would connect this project to several other improvements in the surrounding area. One of the other benefits to this area was that they were able to create a more active streetscape and the State would replace the broken four foot sidewalk with a wider brick sidewalk that would connect the upcoming improvements from Market Square along Daniel Street, Wright Avenue, and State Street to Prescott Park and to the Memorial Bridge.

Ms. Ramsey said they in turn pulled their building in by nearly ten feet in certain places so they could create more pedestrian friendly space with pavement changes and some plantings.

Ms. Ramsey presented two options that brought down the scale and increased green space on Wright Avenue. Ms. Ramsey said that was one option on Scheme A to meet the height ordinance, and Scheme B simplified the building mass.

Chairman Almeida said his preference would be for Scheme A which echoed what they presented before, but he was disappointed to see the top hat go because they rarely had an opportunity to add anything new to the skyline.

Ms. Ruedig said she did not like the style, did not like the faking of historic buildings, such as a fake Victorian building in a Federal district. She said she saw the point in a variation of skyline however, so she agreed with that aspect. Chairman Almeida said they went over authentic design and materials carefully and for that reason he didn't see that they were faking anything.

Mr. Gladhill said he never liked the garage entrance on State Street that would contribute to congestion around the Memorial Bridge. Mr. Cracknell said it went before the Technical Advisory Committee and the position of the City was that Wright Avenue was not the access point so State Street was the only way to get into the building.

Mr. Melchior said he was not seeing the large changes they talked about, and he did not like the curved mansard or the barrel dormers. Ms. Ramsey asked if they would approve a steeply sloped roof or cantered mansard. Mr. Melchior said he wasn't convinced there should be a mansard at all, but it definitely shouldn't be a curved mansard with barrel dormers. Chairman Almeida said they did not want to see any roof top units or penetrations resulting in high parapet walls.

Mr. Rawling said he had grown to accept a Victorian building being there, and did not have the discomfort with the tower he had before. He said Scheme A was nice, but Scheme B toned it down with better proportion and simpler forms relating it to the neighborhood better.

Councilor Kennedy said it might be fine around Maplewood or on the North end, but this building would be in a Federal area, the gateway to historical Strawberry Banke. She said they spent a lot of time talking about the Rosa and the look of State Street, and she was concerned that they would cover some beautiful buildings on the street. She said she couldn't accept it without major changes. Ms. Ramsey said it sounded as if Councilor Kennedy would like it to have a flat roof like the Rosa or a pitched roof like 58 State Street, but Chairman Almeida would not be as happy with it. Chairman Almeida said the issue was that the Rosa was a true historic building, and they would be staying in a safety zone to replicate that look. This building would give license to explore outside the box.

Ms. Ramsey went over the pedestrian view. Chairman Almeida said it was an opportunity to do something with the ground level storefronts for visual interest, and this looked "hotelish". Ms. Ramsey said they didn't have enough space to do much in front of the storefronts, and the parking garage was tight too, but they did what they could in the open areas available. Chairman Almeida said it looked like the backside of buildings and he would still like to see thing of interest there, even if it was for a display case.

Councilor Kennedy read though their "Purpose of Intent" to "preserve the integrity of the district", and to "maintain the special character of the district". She said she did not think the building met those criteria, and she did not think a Victorian building worked there.

Mr. Melchior said it was not a Victorian, Renaissance, Georgian or Federal but some of those details were incorporated in the design and it felt fake. He said they would have been better off to stay more contemporary. Ms. Ramsey said they started out that way in 2008, but were encouraged to pull details from surrounding styles in buildings like the Kearsarge and the Rockingham. Mr. Richard Candee, a member of the public said that was their mistake because all those buildings were part of the post Civil War growth on the western half outside of Downtown and this building, did not match the scale, mass, location and style of this district. Mr. Melchior said their previous conversations referenced other buildings' size and mass, what would be appropriate and how the building would tie into the rest of the area for continuity, but it was not to take stylistic elements from those buildings. Ms. Ramsay said they did historic studies of the area. Ms. Ramsey said her client was partial to this style and had been working on the project and making adjustments to the City's requirements and the surrounding area for a year, and they received a lot of positive feedback until this point.

Chairman Almeida said he believed the City would want them to pick a stylistic direction, albeit "fakery" to blend new developments into the area as they moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, or they would move in other extremes with glass buildings or a deconstructionist Frank Gehry style of architecture.

Ms. Ramsey said the Commission supported modern styled buildings in the Vaughn Mall area and north end, and they were attempting to combine styles to match the variety of styles to suit this area. Councilor Kennedy said there were other styles on the western side and the north end, but those areas were earmarked for development in the Master Plan, whereas this was a different district.

Councilor Kennedy also reminded everyone that these were work sessions and they still hadn't had a public hearing for public comment. Ms. Ramsey said they'd had eight presentations open to the public, and asked where people were up until this point. Mr. Almeida said he'd never seen as many people attending as that night, and even though it was late in the game, he was glad they were there and they needed to be heard.

Ms. Sandy Dika said the public doesn't get notified and there was little opportunity for public discussion until this point, and they couldn't expect a final decision from the Commission until it was opened up for comment at a public hearing. She said she appreciated how hard they worked through eight work sessions, and thought it was an interesting building, but the majority of buildings in the area were Federal and a couple of Georgian. She said she thought the few contemporary buildings worked better than this building and she didn't think this building suited the area.

Mr. Richard Candee spoke on behalf of the Portsmouth Historical Society and Portsmouth Advocates which was merged into the Portsmouth Historical Society last year. He said early photos from the time when Memorial Bridge was first built showed the Federal buildings and the mansard roofs all had a common roof line like the Connie Beane cornices, and they felt this building was too massive and still a story too tall even if it was referencing historic buildings on the west end. He said a more modern, less referential building would fit better in the area. They

felt this building was too large for the Historic District and would fit better in a background location like Boston's Commonwealth or Mass Avenues.

An unidentified speaker said she felt they should discuss the scale and mass in the context of the neighborhood before proceeding with design discussions. She said she thought the size should be reduced horizontally and vertically by half.

Ms. Martha Fuller Clark said the HDC guidelines ask that they "*preserve the integrity of the district*", and this segment was one of the most noted Federal downtowns in existence in New England, but there was nothing in the building that referenced the period in scale, rooflines, massing, or fenestration.

Ms. Clark said the building did nothing for the "*conservation and enhancement*" of the surrounding property values, and would instead detract value from the surrounding buildings. She said one of the core design values written in the Master Plan was the pedestrian nature and the human scale in the makeup of buildings in the City, but there was nothing in the design of this building.

Ms. Clark said they were trying to pick up a pastiche of historical references from other buildings in the entire district, but they bore no reference to the "*special and defining character of surrounding buildings*" in this section of the district that relates to the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She said whatever design comes forward, whether modern or replicative must be in harmony with the characteristics of that part of the City taking the roof lines and proportions of the surrounding buildings into consideration.

Ms. Clark said it was an inappropriate design according to the directives given to preserve the character of this segment of the City, and it was too bad that they went through seven or eight work sessions, and drawings hadn't been published sooner so the public could respond sooner. Chairman Almeida agreed. Ms. Clark said the tiny print of legal notices were an inefficient way of informing the public. The local paper was useful, and plans could be put up on the website to encourage people to review them there as well.

An unidentified speaker said the building design was a fake style trying to create a false sense of history. She said a "*sense of place*" was repeatedly mentioned in the HDC's objectives and purpose, but she didn't think this building contributed to Portsmouth's sense of place because there were no buildings in this end of the City with these design elements. She said this style wouldn't be part of what made the City one of a dozen distinctive destinations in the National Trust that referred to Portsmouth's unique and distinctive character. She said this building design looked like it belonged in Boston, and would detract from the surrounding buildings and lessen their integrity.

Richard Nylander commended everyone for speaking to the ordinance checklist when reviewing the appropriateness of this project to the area.

Mr. David Nord said every professional should consider the Hippocratic Oath of doing no harm when considering the ramifications of their actions. He said this proposal was lacking humility and subservience to the community.

Mr. Jim Reid, the current owner of the Kingsbury House and a direct abutter to the proposed building said he hoped they could do something with the property that honored the historic gateway character in that area of the City. He said his building was 2½ stories tall, and the abutting cottage was 1½ stories tall and would be quite diminished by this building. He said he was concerned that all the smaller buildings and homes would also be diminished by these large buildings and would eventually disappear.

Chairman Almeida thanked everyone for coming out. He said it was late in the game, but they were still in the game.

Ms. Ruedig left the work session earlier.

*The Commission recommended another work session.*

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E. Petition of **Strawberry Banke, Inc.**, for property located at **14 Hancock Street (Visitors Center)**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct additions, construct deck/patio, misc. door and window changes). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 104 as Lot 7 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

Mr. Larry Yerdon, President of Strawberry Banke said their tourist visitation was up 10% and their total visitation was up 50% and they were looking to make improvements to their Visitor Center. Bruce (no last name given) presented the plan showing the existing main structure and a one story shed addition on the south elevation. They were proposing to extend the shed around both sides of the visitor’s center to expand the entrance area, the bathroom facilities, and create a food area for a proposed café, and a storage space. He said they would use the same types of doors and windows, and all previously approved materials.

Councilor Kennedy asked if there was there going to be retail space somewhere else. Mr. Yerdon said the museum store would go back to where it originally was at 420 Court Street. Ms. Martha Fuller Clark said they were hoping the improvements to State Street would bring more people to the shop with appropriate signage, and returning it to that location would allow easier access from that side.

Councilor Kennedy asked if there would be outside dining, and Mr. Yerdon said there would be chairs outside during the warmer months. Bruce said the design would reference the historic warehouses along the dock by using posts in the landscaping which was yet to be determined.

Chairman Almeida said it appeared very straightforward.

*The Commission recommended a public hearing.*

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F. Petition of **Patricia Bogardus Living Trust, owner, Patricia and Robert W. Bogardus, trustees and owners**, for property located at **26 Park Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish one story addition and garage) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct two story garage with connector). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 148 as Lot 44 and lies within General Residence A and Historic Districts.

Architect Anne Whitney said the property was two lots in from Middle Street, right on the edge of the Historic District. The existing building was a New Englander with a one story addition, another one story entry addition and a one story garage with a shed. She said they were proposing to take off all the additions, leave the existing 20' by 30' structure, remove the front door, use a kitchen entry, add a one story addition, and a two story garage with living space above. They were proposing to replace the asbestos siding with beveled siding.

Ms. Whitney said they were going to replace the windows on the existing main structure to match the rest of the house as much as possible, and reuse the Pella clad windows that were still in good condition on the garage.

Councilor Kennedy asked if the shed was going away and Ms. Whitney said it would. Councilor Kennedy asked if the fencing was staying. Ms. Whitney said it was at the property line, and most of it would have to be removed to make room for the driveway. Councilor Kennedy, Mr. Rawling, and Mr. Gladhill said they thought they should keep it.

Ms. Whitney said the chimney was only two feet off the roof, they did not need it, and intended on removing that as well. She said they could put a fake chimney back on. Mr. Rawling said they were receiving requests to remove chimneys with increasing frequency so they couldn't approve chimney removals or everyone would ask. Councilor Kennedy agreed. Chairman Almeida said it was a contributing feature that made the little structure a house instead of an out building.

Mr. Gladhill said the front of the original house would look odd without a front door. Ms. Whitney said the floor plan to center the stairway drove that decision. Chairman Almeida said it was a loss, and wondered if the door at new location could be formalized. Mr. Melchior said they would lose the one defining feature to that elevation. Chairman Almeida said the building was small, and agreed that the chimney and door made it a house. Ms. Whitney said they could keep both doors, but the front door wouldn't be used. She said the door had a stepped back airlock that didn't work well so she would bring the door out and redo the steps.

Mr. Gladhill asked about the wooden shutters, and Ms. Whitney said she didn't think they were appropriate for a New Englander and she would like to get rid of them.

Mr. Rawling said he had a problem with factory mulled and ganged windows. Ms. Whitney said there were only two factory mulled windows on the kitchen addition and three inch stud pockets with four inch trim on the porch windows. She said it was tight for space to down size windows.

Chairman Almeida said they could apply the back of house rule and let the kitchen windows go, but wondered if she could separate the porch windows.

Mr. Rawling said he liked the garage, but wondered if she could change the door style to give it more height and create a carriage house appearance. Ms. Whitney said the garage door was 7' x 9' and she couldn't get the door opener to work if she went much bigger, but she could use a little heavier trim on the door. Mr. Rawling said that would help make it appear taller.

Mr. Gladhill asked what comprised the foundation of the original structure. Mr. Whitney said it was rubble and brick on the upper level. Mr. Gladhill asked how the transition would be. Ms. Whitney said the grade came up high, and though the garage would be the most visible, it was set back from the street. Chairman Almeida said in the past they had matched brick foundation on more significant houses, but didn't think it would be necessary. Mr. Gladhill suggested using foundation plantings.

Ms. Whitney said they would go to the Board of Adjustment next, and return in April.

*The Commission recommended a public hearing.*

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G. Petition of **Rye Atlantic Property, LLC, owner, and Michael Labrie, applicant**, for property located at **361 Islington Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish structure) and allow a new free standing structure (construct new 5,500 sq. foot building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 144 as Lot 23 and lies within the Mixed Residential Business and Historic Districts.

Designers Alyssa and Brian Murphy and applicant, Mr. Michael Labrie came before the Commission with their proposal to demolish the old Getty gas station and replace it with a laundromat on the ground level and office space on the second floor.

Ms. Murphy said it appeared there had been a gas station on the lot since 1957, and it was mostly surrounded by two story residences, until more commercial uses moved in. Ms. Murphy referred to the Islington Street Action Plan to consider what the City was looking for in the area. Ms. Murphy said this building would go on the corner of Islington and Cabot Streets with parking around the back of the building. She also reviewed the landscaping features.

Mr. Murphy said they wanted clear details in a simple form with quality materials, and were considering wood siding.

Councilor Kennedy thanked them for respecting the neighborhood, and keeping the building small.

Mr. Labrie addressed an abutter's letter of concern about dry cleaning and fans, and said it was a state of the art, "green" drop off laundromat, not a dry cleaning service with fans. He said they would be using new technology that didn't exist in the City at this point.

Councilor Kennedy asked what kind of structures would be needed on the outside. Ms. Murphy said all the HVAC units would be incorporated into a recessed deck on the second floor, and the dryer vents would all be consolidated out of the back of the building. Mr. Labrie said he was still working with engineers and vendors, but they would seek to consolidate and mask those penetrations. Councilor Kennedy said even though they would be coming out of the back, it would still be visible.

Mr. Rawling said the front yard landscaping was an interesting element in context of the residential character, but it would be even more important to have some street trees.

Mr. Labrie said he saw a couple of opportunities to put trees toward the back so they wouldn't block traffic site lines. He said he also hoped to keep the existing trees.

Mr. Rawling suggested they consider breaking up the building to make it look like more than one building to decrease the mass and refer to the size of the surrounding buildings to the old houses along the street. Mr. Rawling said having encasement windows down to the ground gave it too much of a pavilion feel, and suggested double hung windows instead. Mr. Murphy asked if they would consider encasement windows for their energy value, and Mr. Almeida said they would be awkward there. Mr. Labrie agreed that double hung windows would be more appropriate.

Mr. Gladhill said the size reminded him of the old Boyd Raynes house in the Northern Tier with two entrances along the elongated building. He suggested they check out old photos in Portsmouth Picturesque or at the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

Chairman Almeida said they needed to talk about mechanical issues, lighting and signage next time. Mr. Labrie said he hadn't planned the lighting schemes yet, but would follow the Planning Board's requirements for lighting, etc. He said the desire was in designing the laundromat was to give a feeling of visibility and safety. Mr. Labrie said he only intended to have a small directory beside the door leading to the offices upstairs, and he didn't want anything too gaudy for the laundromat.

Councilor Kennedy asked about contaminated soil disturbance during demolition. Mr. Labrie said the tanks had been removed. The State was already in remediation with soil monitoring wells in place on site. He said when they take building down they would excavate additional soils they couldn't get to when the slabs were in place and replace them with improved soils.

Ms. Margo Doring from Martin Hill Inn on 404 Islington Street said she was part of the last Islington Street corridor project, and considered buildings up against the sidewalks to be one of the biggest problems along the street. She said except for architectural facades and utility tree poles, there was little opportunity for beautification with trees unless bump-outs were approved and created by the City. She said although this building proposal was nicely done, it still looked like a box like many of the other boxes along the street, however she pointed out that there were some other buildings with simple, but beautiful front entries. She said their front lot was large enough to provide some nice plantings and it would be nice to keep the set back rather than lining up with the adjacent building. She said this would be the first building in the area with windows that come down that far and it would look industrial. She said she would like to see the windows raised up rather than looking at a full display of laundromat furnishings. Ms. Doring



added that safely lighting for the entrance and exits at Cabot Street would be important. She said she would like to see something interesting there.

*The Commission recommended another work session.*

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**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

*At 11:30 p.m. it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Jane K. Kendall  
Acting Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on Nov. 13, 2013.