

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

SCHOOL BOARD CONFERENCE ROOM

7:00 p.m.

**April 10, 2013
reconvened from April 3, 2013**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Joseph Almeida; Vice-Chair Tracy Kozak, Members: Richard Katz; George Melchior; John Wyckoff; City Council Representative Esther Kennedy; Planning Board Representative William Gladhill; Alternates Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

I. OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of minutes – November 14, 2012

Vice-Chair Kozak moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Wyckoff seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

II. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **Timothy M. and Beth Finelli, owners**, for property located at **297 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing garage) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new garage). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 111 as Lot 23 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued.)*

Mr. Matthew Beebe, designer for the owners presented a new design from the previous session. He said the previous design had a gable front facing the street with no turning of the building. Mr. Beebe said he added a dormer identical in proportion to what was on the house and although the light cuts in the windows were slightly smaller than the house, the ratio would be approximately the same. He said he added the dormer to increase headroom and allow a stairway to the second floor.

Vice-Chair Kozak said she thought the changes were a great improvement that fit in with the massing and scale of the house. Mr. Rawling agreed, saying it fit in the backyard better. He asked what size the garage doors would be and Mr. Beebe said they would be 8' wide x 7' tall feet. He said they were a little smaller than he would normally specify for an automobile, but they were as big as he could get. He said a car would fit, but a truck with a rack probably would not.

After a series of additional questions on the dimension of the garage doors, the Commission recommended a public hearing.

B. Work Session requested by **North Mill Realty Trust, owner, and 3S Artspace, applicant**, for property located at **319 Vaughan Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct small addition) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. improvements to façade). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 124 as Lot 9 and lies within Central Business A, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was continued.)*

Ms. Ruedig recused herself from the discussion and vote.

Mr. Steve McHenry and Mr. Brandon Holben of McHenry Architecture came before the Commission to show them material samples and further design refinements. Mr. Chris Greiner, Executive Director of 3S Artspace, Ms. Lynn Cheney, Chair of the Building Committee, and Board member, Ms. Lisa Holben attended as well.

Mr. Holben reviewed the plans and materials for their project, and the changes made from their previous sessions. Mr. Holben showed material samples of the corrugated metal that would develop a rusticated metal look on the roof, and the polycarbonate that would be used in the vestibule. Councilor Kennedy asked if it would be lit up, and Mr. Wyckoff said it would be translucent. Mr. Holben said there would be a weathered, kind of driftwood colored banding around the restaurant area. Chairman Almeida said he liked the addition of the wood.

Mr. Holben showed the rooftop equipment with five-ton air handlers and the mechanical locations. He indicated there would be some skylights. He said they also added a canopy with perforated material with a steel frame added to the windows.

Mr. Rawling said he thought it was a very exciting design. He said weathering steel tended to streak on the material below it and asked how they intended to address the stains. Mr. Holben said they would have a stone drip below in areas where it met the ground, and the roof water would run into an infiltration area and a yard drain in the courtyard. However, he said the area over the restaurant needed to be addressed.

Mr. Rawling asked if they had discussed how the roof top condensing units would be screened. Mr. Holben said they had no plans to screen it, but the view was minimal from the public way. Mr. Rawling said every building would be looking down on it. Mr. McHenry said the screening became more of a distraction so they left it out intentionally and selected equipment that was very simplistic and spread it out.

Mr. Wyckoff asked about code requirements on railings for the workers on the roof. Mr. Holben said a railing was required within 10 feet from the roof edge, but their equipment was farther away than that.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if the panels would reach a point where they didn't rust anymore. Mr. McHenry said it stabilized after a certain point, and said he hoped it would be stabilized by the time the building was occupied. He said they would need to allow for channeling where public entries occur.

Mr. Wyckoff said the building design started off playful, but he thought it had become stark and industrial. Mr. Wyckoff said he was not comfortable with a rusty color on both floors, streaking down on the other building materials. Chairman Almeida said he would be uncomfortable if the rust was out of control, but he thought this was something that had been tested. Mr. McHenry said he could bring back more information on the material. Mr. Gladhill asked if there were any local examples of the rusted materials to see and Mr. Holben said there probably were in Boston.

Chairman Almeida said the building had transitioned into something more serious, was not as playful, but was maturing into something different. He said he still would support it. Mr. Katz said the building communicated a place where things were happening and he was firmly in favor of the approach.

Chairman Almeida asked if the banners would be illuminated and Mr. Holben said there would be minimal lighting on the green screen.

Chairman Almeida asked about the material of the serpentine planter/bench/retaining wall. Mr. Holben said it was a sculpted concrete along the walkway. Chairman Almeida warned that it might be an attraction to skateboarders. Mr. McHenry said it would be well lit.

Vice-Chair Kozak said she liked the playful direction the design had gone. She said the introduction of new materials referenced the materials in days gone by. She said she was concerned with the look of the roof top units. She said she was originally thinking it would look better if they built the parapet wall up to obscure visibility, but said she would be okay with leaving them unscreened so long as the design was very clean and could relate to other features on the building.

Mr. Wyckoff said the only building that was looking down on these was 111 Maplewood Avenue, and that building would also be looking down on its brother the former Portsmouth Herald Building on Maplewood Avenue. Mr. Holben said it would be like any five-story building looking down at a two-story building.

Chairman Almeida asked about the polycarbonate material and Mr. Holben said they went with the material that had the most solar gain. Chairman Almeida said the change to the rusted metal would put more focus on it than was there was before and one might look more plastic than the other. Mr. Rawling said he thought the linear pattern would be more apparent than the clear.

The Commission recommended a public hearing.

C. 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 Goodknight and Mr. Bill Bartell of CJ Architects representing owners, Messrs. Chris and Corey Erikson recapped changes from last month's meeting. She said they were considering a three-building concept, but had changed to a two-building concept.

Ms. Goodknight said they were still looking at building heights in context, and they explored the sidewalk issue. She said the minimum setback distance of the new building would be 18 inches from the property line to achieve a five-foot path.

Chairman Almeida asked if the telephone pole was the main driver and Ms. Goodknight said the pole was significant along with the narrow sidewalk. Mr. Wyckoff pointed out that the pole was leaning, and asked if they were going to secure it to the building. Ms. Goodknight said they could yardarm it. She said they learned from discussions with PSNH and TAC that it was located there because of the space that was available so they would be building right up against it. Chairman Almeida said he hated to make an architectural mistake because of the pole, and asked if there was anything they could do about it. Mr. Chris Erikson said when they first acquired the property their main focus was what to do with the wires at the back on Ceres Street because they didn't want the view over the Piscataqua River to be interrupted by wires. He said they had worked with PSNH and the other utility owners, intending to move the pole to the back and bury it. He said moving the power supply feed would affect the neighbors in the back and it appeared moving the larger pole would be difficult to nearly impossible. Chairman Almeida asked if the pole had to stay if they came out flush with the Frank Jones building, leaving 4'1". Mr. Erikson said there would be a problem with plowing.

Chairman Almeida asked if any portions of the proposal were projecting onto the Moffat Ladd gardens and Ms. Goodknight said there was not.

Vice-Chair Kozak said the street was heavy with pedestrians in the summer. Ms. Goodknight said they had an on-grade parking space, but did away with that for a pedestrian friendly terminus.

Ms. Goodknight said they also brought the storefront closer to the street. Chairman Almeida said if they created an alley or path down the side they would lose a bit of interior space, but they could create a more pedestrian friendly look with more windows for the storefronts. Ms. Goodknight said they talked about that, but decided it wouldn't be a good idea because they would be looking at the property next door if anyone developed it.

Ms. Goodknight said they removed the bay, flattened out the front, and created a separation by creating a setback from the existing older building and their new building proposal. She said the owners have a woodworking company in Maine that would replicate the doors. She said the wood working company and the Allen Realty Company would occupy one of the storefronts.

Mr. Rawling asked if they were meeting the ADA requirements through the lobby and Ms. Goodknight said yes. Mr. Rawling asked if that would serve both buildings and Ms. Goodknight said the existing building had a granite step and floor structure that was significantly higher in the older building and she thought it might be exempt because of its historic nature. Chairman

Almeida said the sidewalk could be raised to meet the foundation if she needed to meet the accessibility requirement. Ms. Goodknight said it would have to happen internally.

Chairman Almeida said he thought the proposal had come a long way and it was stunning. Mr. Wyckoff agreed.

Vice-Chair Kozak said she actually liked the former proposal, but she thought the doors were beautiful and she could work with this one.

Ms. Ruedig said she liked the simplicity of the new design and would still like to see little bit more clarity that it was a modern building without pretention. Ms. Goodknight said she understood they didn't want to see a fake historic replica so they were attempting to do a reinterpretation of the details, and were still looking for feedback.

Mr. Rawling asked if she was keeping the same proportions as the windows next door. Ms. Goodknight said she thought about it, but was trying to create a separate experience. Mr. Rawling said the windows on the new proposal were longer, and he was suggesting they be a little wider so they would match the proportion, not the size of the windows on the older building. Ms. Goodknight said she could look at it and modify them. Mr. Wyckoff said he felt the opposite and thought it was refreshing that there wasn't a similar banding on the windows as there was throughout the City even though the buildings were different. Mr. Katz and Vice-Chair Kozak agreed. Chairman Almeida said it helped that the sill heights and head heights were different.

Mr. Melchior said they solved some of the problems, but he had a problem with the vertical domination of the addition being insubordinate. He said it might help if they knocked off half a story on the addition, and got back into a horizontally respectful addition. Ms. Goodknight said they would be significantly shorter than any building on the street if they removed half a story, well below the Frank Jones building, the buildings next door and Merchants Row, which were all smaller structures. Mr. Melchior said he was still looking for a height difference in an addition that was respectful and subordinate to the older structure. Vice-Chair Kozak said from Market Street it looked like a continuation of a series of townhouse buildings so she thought it should not be subordinate.

Ms. Goodknight said they made significant roofline changes. She said the requested roofline limited their light so they wanted to introduce some light source, especially on the fourth floor.

Mr. Wyckoff asked about the blank wall beside the abutting property and Mr. Chris Erikson said they debated whether they should design that side as a firewall in anticipation of the property beside them being developed or if they should pull it back some and design it as a stand alone with some windows on that side. Ms. Goodknight said they had to consider the other property to be sure windows wouldn't intrude on anyone's personal dwelling space. Chairman Almeida said they could just pull back the first floor to avoid a solid multi-story blank wall.

Vice-Chair Kozak said the curved element on Ceres Street was a very important part of the view of the street terminus, and she was not completely satisfied with the changes. Mr. Erikson said

they were limited to what they could do because it was a flood plain. Mr. Cracknell asked how the flood plain related to the curved corner compared to the garage doors and Ms. Goodknight said they were allowed to have the garage doors on the flood plain. Chairman Almeida asked about the doors to the left and Ms. Goodknight said that door was behind the flood plain.

Vice-Chair Kozak said she thought the door should be on the corner to celebrate the entrance and to be more inviting. Ms. Goodknight said they were allowed to do that and could revert to that design. Chairman Almeida said he thought this was the place to introduce something contemporary. Ms. Ruedig agreed this was an opportunity to make the curve bright and interesting and it would be a challenge to meld the stark historic style.

Mr. Rawling said they had been doing a lot of work and he liked the balconette on the Ceres Street side of the building and the rooflines on the northern elevation. However, he said he was uncomfortable with the curved dormers and was still hesitant with the dormers on Market Street, but would be supportive of skylights to let light in. Mr. Katz said he was less apprehensive about the dormers after viewing the latest renditions and asked the applicant if they had a preference for dormers or skylights. Mr. Erikson said it was their preference to have dormers for additional light, noting that there were dormers on other buildings in the area, and they wanted to do them in a respectful fashion. Chairman Almeida polled the commissioners on their feelings on the dormers on the historic Market Street elevation. Chairman Almeida, Vice-Chair Kozak and Mr. Katz were more in favor of dormers and Mr. Gladhill, Councilor Kennedy, Mr. Melchior, Mr. Rawling, and Ms. Ruedig were not in favor of them.

Vice-Chair Kozak said she still had issues with the roof on the Ceres Street side and she thought the design from that elevation still looked like one massive building. Councilor Kennedy agreed that she was still uncomfortable with the massing on Ceres Street.

The Commission recommended another work session.

D. Work Session requested by **Maplewood and Vaughan Holding Company, LLC, owner**, for property located at **111 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new freestanding structure (construct a two story use building). Said property is shown Assessor Plan 144 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was continued.)*

Mr. Wyckoff moved to postpone the work session to the May 1, 2013 meeting at the applicant's request. Mr. Gladhill seconded, and all were in favor.

E. 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. *(This item was postponed at the March 13, 2013 meeting to the April 3, 2013 meeting.)*

Alyssa and Brian Murphy, architects with Manypenny Architecture and owner, Mr. Michael Labrie came before the Commission. Ms. Murphy said the site currently was a defunct gas station. She said the site was in an eclectic, early 1800's neighborhood and their research showed the gas station was built there after a fire in the early 1950's. Ms. Murphy said there was a deed restriction that restricted any residential or food service on the site.

Ms. Murphy said they were proposing a two-story building at the front corner of the site, and they would put green space all around, with parking in the back. She said there would be a gabled roof in keeping with the other buildings in the area. She said the first floor proportion would be a little taller with an open storefront for a Laundromat.

Ms. Murphy said they were proposing solar panels for hot water on the south facing roof. Mr. Labrie said they were trying to make this an extremely green laundry facility unlike any other that existed in New Hampshire to date and went to lengths to incorporate the solar panels into the surface of the roof plane.

Ms. Murphy said the dryer vents would be at the back of the building and they were attempting to incorporate them into the plane of the building as much as possible as well. She said they intended on framing the building in such a way that other retail uses would be possible if it were not always a Laundromat. She said there would be a cutout balcony on the roof for the mechanical condensers that would be screened from view.

Mr. Wyckoff asked how the rainwater coming down into that section would be handled. Ms. Murphy said there would likely be gutters. Mr. Wyckoff wondered if the drainage could be handled internally.

Mr. Wyckoff said it appeared there was a brick foundation with a floor joist on top and windows on top of that coming very close to the ground. Chairman Almeida said it was very contemporary building. Ms. Murphy said they were considering red cedar siding, left to age naturally, brick around the base, and they might use some kind of perforated screening on the back side.

Councilor Kennedy said she liked the design of two stories in the neighborhood, and respected the idea of the solar panels, but without any chimneys similar to its surroundings she thought it looked as if something was missing at the top. Mr. Labrie agreed and said he would like a faux chimney. Councilor Kennedy said she did not like faux chimneys, but it needed something.

Mr. Wyckoff said he felt the basic design screamed out two-story tenement building for him. He said he hoped they would change their minds about the siding because as the cedar grayed, and turned black, it would eventually rot because of the $\frac{3}{4}$ " gaps and all that would be seen was the stainless steel fasteners, and everything else would rust. He said lap siding worked for a reason.

Ms. Ruedig said she was afraid it was going to be a stripped down version of a fake old house, but she was pleased to see they took the shape and form of the surrounding buildings. She said she understood there might be an issue with the siding, but she liked the materials. Ms. Ruedig

said she would not like to see a faux chimney on a contemporary building if it wasn't needed for venting.

Mr. Katz said he would be glad to see the gas station go. He said he thought they were moving in the right direction, building a two-story building in keeping with the neighborhood and it was just a question of whether they could address Mr. Wyckoff's concerns and make the materials work.

Mr. Rawling showed a photo of the Goodwin House where the Olde Port Traders building was on Islington Street and said although some of the old buildings next door were still there, others were demolished and a long, brick condominium building was also on the street now. He said he liked the shape and form of the building and the gable roof, but the proportion and scale of the building with floor levels on the sidewalk didn't fit the rhythms of the rest of the street. Mr. Rawling said he thought modeling the width of the houses and creating a setback or maybe a recessed entry or a bump out and some street trees would help keep the pattern going on the streetscape. He said he also thought they could establish a little more proportional relationship to the canopies down the street by placing it higher and projecting it out a little more. Ms. Murphy said they took their inspiration from the canopies along the street and they were already about 12 feet higher.

Chairman Almeida said there was some pressure from the public not to fake or mimic historic styles, and this was a chance to do what the public wanted.

Mr. Rawling said he could be open to the contemporary details as long as the mass and proportions related to the context of surrounding buildings. Mr. Rawling said he thought the steel windows were beautiful and worked wonderfully.

Councilor Kennedy commended them on what they were doing and for not taking over the entire parking lot with their building. However, she said she was having trouble with the windows on the end of the building, and thought they should look different, but she understood there was a big tree there. She said she was also concerned about the siding and would like to see an example somewhere. She said there was a huge Victorian home to one side and working buildings along the street, but she would like to see someone take interest in working their designs into the neighborhood.

Vice-Chair Kozak said she thought it was a very successful design, and the materials were great if they could make them work. She said she would like to see more done with the canopy/trellis structures to follow a common feature of the street because Portsmouth had a celebration of entrances and she would hate to see the front door get lost.

Mr. Gladhill said Islington Street was a main corridor leading into the HDC so he was a little hesitant with solar panels on the front, wondering if it would be precedence setting. Chairman Almeida said there were already solar panels on some buildings along the major thoroughfares such as Middle Street and Jumping Jay's Cafe.

Mr. Katz said ice shields on the lower edge of the roofs were a common sight along City streets and he would have no problem with the solar panels if they could be kept along the same plane as the shingles.

Mr. Melchior agreed there were more opportunities to work with the trellis in the front, but said he was in complete support of what they presented.

The Commission recommended a public hearing.

F. Work Session requested by **Dale W. and Sharyn W. Smith, owners**, for property located at **275 Islington Street**, wherein permission is requested for demolition of an existing structure (demolish building) and to add a new existing structure (construct new building). Said property is Assessor Plan 144 as Lot 8 and lies within Central Business B and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued.)*

Mr. Gladhill moved to postpone the work session to the May 1, 2013 meeting at the applicant's request. Vice-Chair Kozak seconded, and all were in favor.

III. ANNOUNCEMENT

It was announced that there would be a joint work session regarding form-based codes with the HDC and Planning Board on May 2, 2013, and the fourth week in May.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:15 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane K. Kendall
Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on January 8, 2014.