

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 p.m.

**June 17, 2015
reconvened from June 3 & 10, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Joseph Almeida; Vice Chairman/Planning Board Representative William Gladhill; Members John Wyckoff; Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig, Vincent Lombardi; and Alternate Richard Shea

MEMBERS EXCUSED: City Council Representative Esther Kennedy

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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*The Board's action in these matters has been deemed to be quasi-judicial in nature.
If any person believes any member of the Board has a conflict of interest,
that issue should be raised at this point or it will be deemed waived.*

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 456 Middle Street

Mr. Cracknell explained the history of the petition, saying that it was approved recently by the HDC but that there had been a number of minor changes:

- 1) the kitchen windows were reduced in height by 15 inches;
- 2) two of the side windows on the rear corners were covered over with clapboards;
- 3) the front door had four light transoms instead of two;
- 4) side vents on the previous two-family house were covered with wood siding; and
- 5) a mahogany deck was added on the back of the two doors from the prior structure.

The applicant was not present, so Chairman Almeida suggested postponing the petition.

*Ms. Ruedig made a motion to **postpone** the petition until later in the evening. Vice-Chair Gladhill seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

2. 337 Pleasant Street

Mr. Cracknell explained that the petition was not really an administrative approval but was an exempt project in the Historic District. The owner wanted to erect a wooden Lady Liberty artwork piece on the second floor balcony and fasten it to the masonry on the house in front of other window for at least four months. Mr. Cracknell said it was an atypical building décor but

he wanted to ensure that it was exempt before he signed off on it. Vice-Chair Gladhill said he would approve it because it was historically-important art.

*Vice-Chair Gladhill made a motion to **approve the administrative approval** as submitted. Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

II. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **David White, owner**, for property located at **127 New Castle Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct two shed dormers to rear addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 54 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the May 13, 2015 meeting.)*

Ms. Jennifer Ramsey of SOMMA Studies and the owner Mr. David White were present. Mr. White stated that they were submitting new designs for the Commission to review, based on their previous suggestions. Ms. Ramsey stated that she had options for the west and east elevations. She discussed how the detail of the dormer eave line would be reduced to make it secondary to the main home, and the amount of materials on the facade would be lessened. She said that the suggestions to add more windows, omit the clapboards, and do trimmed-out dormer faces were also adopted. She also wanted to discuss whether or not to break the addition's eave line and to add a metal roof.

Ms. Ramsey discussed the options for the west elevation and explained Options A and B. Most of the Commissioners preferred Option B1 and thought it was the most appropriate. They further discussed the window trim, the material, and the sheet walls. Mr. Ruedig asked whether there was a way to push back the sheet walls, and Ms. Ramsey replied that they would lose space inside. Mr. Rawling thought that the trim elements on the lower-level French windows were thin, and Ms. Ramsey said they could modify it. Mr. Lombardi said he liked the double hung windows but preferred that the dormer be stepped back. Vice-Chair Gladhill said he was more in favor of the B options. He was also concerned about the metal roof because he thought the metal roof would stick out and was more in favor of asphalt shingles. Mr. Shea said he liked the metal roof because the dormer was new and had a different material, and he felt that the metal roof would blend in and much of it would not be seen. He preferred clapboards on the sheet walls. Mr. Rawling said that he would support the shingles on the roof and the clapboards on the side, and Mr. Wyckoff said he preferred Option B1.

Chairman Almeida reminded Ms. Ramsey to include the details for the eave and the window trim around the windows for the public hearing. Mr. Rawling suggested wider molds between the windows. Chairman Almeida thought it would either widen the dormer or change the pane size. Ms. Ramsey said that they had applied trim around the windows in Option A but could widen the pocket without changing the width of the dormer. Chairman Almeida said that it was important that the window pane size match the house. Ms. Ruedig thought that all the options were fine but felt that Option A was preferable because the sash size matched, and she asked the applicant to find a dark color that didn't pop out of the black asphalt if they decided on a metal roof.

Chairman Almeida asked Ms. Ramsey to highlight the existing and new features when they next met, and Ms. Ramsey agreed.

There were no comments from the public.

*It was voted that the work session would **continue** to the July meeting.*

At this time, the applicant for Administrative Approval Item #1, 456 Middle Street, arrived, so the Commission went back to address it.

1. 456 Middle Street

Mr. Rawling recused himself.

The applicant Mr. Stephen Meade was present to speak to the petition. Mr. Wyckoff asked whether the surround on the front door was already constructed and whether Mr. Meade had received approval. Mr. Meade stated that he had received approval and explained how it was constructed. Chairman Almeida thought that the only problem might be that the cap didn't extend out beyond the casing. They further discussed how it could be resolved.

Ms. Ruedig said that she felt the design was ambiguous because the details weren't presented at the previous meeting. Mr. Meade replied that he had submitted the drawing to Mr. Cracknell. They further discussed the crown molding and whether or not it was appropriate. Vice-Chair Gladhill also noted that there were no drawings or details for the deck. Mr. Meade said it wasn't really a deck but a landing with five steps and that he had not been told that he had to submit anything. Mr. Cracknell thought that there was enough information to vote on it because it was on the back of the house and Mr. Meade had emailed an image of an existing deck. Mr. Wyckoff stated that the 2"x4" railing that Mr. Meade planned to install would not be approved by the Assistant Building Inspector, and he further discussed it. Mr. Meade replied that he could do a rail instead. Mr. Wyckoff said he was willing to approve it because it was on the back but felt that a lot of the design would be dictated by the Building Inspector. Vice-Chair Gladhill reminded Mr. Meade that the Commission asked for details and drawings from every applicant, and Chairman Almeida agreed. They further discussed the rail system.

Mr. Cracknell suggested that they discuss the four items that had already been completed. The Commission discussed the four items briefly but agreed to defer the landing and steps to the July meeting. They also decided that the front door should be simplified.

*Ms. Ruedig made a motion to **approve Items 1 through 4** and request that the applicant return for the July 1, 2015 meeting with drawings on the deck and a photo of the simplified door return updates. Vice-Chair Gladhill seconded the motion.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

B. Work Session requested by **Joseph J. and Jennifer Almeida, owners**, for property located at **101-105 High Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (alter roof line and front façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor 118 as Lot 22 and lies within the CD4-L, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was continued at the May 13, 2015 meeting.)*

Chairman Almeida requested that the work session be postponed to the end of the meeting.

*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **postpone** the work session to the end of the meeting. Mr. Lombardi seconded the motion. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

C. Work Session requested by **44-46 Market Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **44-46 Market Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (change exterior cladding, replace doors, windows) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct one small addition, construct small additions on second floor) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 31 and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the May 13, 2015 meeting to the June meeting.)*

The application was withdrawn from consideration at the applicant's request.

D. Work Session requested by **Nobles Island Condominium Association, owner**, for property located at **500 Market Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (install solar panels) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 120 as Lot 2 and lies within Central Business A and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the May 13, 2015 meeting to the June meeting.)*

The application was withdrawn from consideration at the applicant's request.

E. Work Session requested by **Mark A. and Deborah Chag, owners**, for property located at **404 Middle Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow amendments to a previously approved design (modifications to prior approval) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 136 as Lot 21 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

Mr. Rawling recused himself so that he could represent the application.

The architect Mr. Rawling and the owner Ms. Deborah Chag were present to speak to the petition. Mr. Rawling showed the Commission photos of the carriage house with the additional revisions. He stated that the barn would remain at the existing level and that the entrance would

be modified to create a two-car garage. They would also add an open porch on the side of it, similar to the previous footprint of the porch. They would reconstruct the potting shed and make the rear taller, but the same footprint and size would remain. The deck would be built on the back. Mr. Rawling showed drawings for the proposed garage doors, noting that they would be divided by a center post and would have 9-foot tall overhead doors with glazing in the top panel and wood panels on the bottom.

Ms. Ruedig wondered whether the changes to the garage door panels would make it look more like a carriage house and asked whether it could have carriage house doors that were also overhead doors. They further discussed it. Mr. Wyckoff asked whether there was room for awnings over the garage doors, and Mr. Rawling said he wanted to keep the appearance of a large-scale opening rather than two separate pieces. Mr. Lombardi said he liked the barn door but felt that the two garage doors made it look more like a garage than a barn. Mr. Rawling replied it would seriously impact the use of the building and the parking because having only one door would create tandem parking and convert the entire barn to nothing but a garage. They further discussed the look of a carriage house versus a garage or a barn. Mr. Lombardi thought the double doors prevented the structure from looking like a barn. Ms. Ruedig suggested finessing the garage doors to retain more of the carriage house look. Chairman Almeida said he thought the doors were wonderful and appropriate. Mr. Wyckoff said he felt the opposite because they had scaled it back from the previous version, which he had been in favor of. He felt that they were taking out a historic carriage house door and replacing it with a suburban metal garage door and that it shouldn't be allowed. He suggested using the opening or a transom window over each door to give it a carriage house look rather than use 9-foot doors.

Mr. Shea felt that the structure had the front elevation of a real barn because it looked horizontal and lost the verticality, and he asked whether the height could be brought back. Mr. Rawling felt that the design was still reflective of a carriage house. Mr. Shea asked whether the doors could be made to look like four individual doors that slid over.

Mr. Rawling said that the porch followed the same previous footprint and that the windows above were similar to what was previously approved. He noted that another window was added on the left side. Mr. Lombardi asked what the back rail system was, and Mr. Rawling said it was 2"x6" horizontal boards. Mr. Wyckoff thought it was awkward because it had gone back to a very traditional design. Previously it was a contemporary design, but he felt that the design had been pulled back and a horizontal railing did not fit the traditional New England design. He suggested conventional Victorian porch details to match everything else, and Mr. Rawling said he was trying to keep the expression and details simple. Ms. Ruedig said she had no problem with it because she felt that it was simple and would be in the back of the carriage house, with an enormous tree that would hide it. She was concerned, however, about the amount of windows on the top. Vice-Chair Gladhill noted that trees could go away and didn't like it as an example of not seeing the structure. He wanted to keep the carriage house appearance. The Commission next discussed the cable rail system options and keeping it simple. Chairman Almeida said that he thought the structure was still a barn, like a gentleman's barn, and the cupola would keep the look of the barn and have a huge effect on the esthetics. Mr. Wyckoff said they were looking at a renovation of a carriage house, which was the most important thing.

The Commission then discussed the other elevations, the potting shed, the second-floor deck and the steps, and the door placement. Chairman Almeida asked about shutters, and Mr. Rawling said they were previously asked to remove them. Mr. Wyckoff thought the back fenestration looked quirky because the windows were high and the door interfered with the returns. Mr. Rawling asked how he would incorporate the suggested railing into a carriage house, and Mr. Wyckoff suggested a diamond cutaway shape similar to the Frank Jones House. Mr. Lombardi said he liked the horizontal board because it was a simple, modern element. Mr. Rawling said it was a traditional element from a horizontal board fence design element.

Chairman Almeida asked that the cupola be shown at the next work session and that the rail comments and whether it should be horizontal or vertical board with a cutout be addressed.

There were no comments from the public.

*Ms. Ruedig made a motion to **continue** the work session to the July 15, 2015 meeting. Vice-Chair Gladhill seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

F. Work Session requested by **Richard and Janice Henderson, owners**, for property located at **284 New Castle Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct two story addition, entry and side porch addition, and front box bay addition) and allow a new free standing structure (construct detached garage) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 207 as Lot 73 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic Districts.

The architect Ms. Anne Whitney and the owner Mr. Richard Henderson and Mrs. Janice Henderson were present to speak to the application. Ms. Whitney went through her application, noting that the front elevation was hiding a double door with transom. She wanted to remove it and make the building more of a Greek Revival style. She noted that the 18" bump-out was awkward and didn't seem appropriate. She also noted that the windows to the left had changed and that she had come up with a hip roof boxed bay and would re-use the side windows. All the original windows had been replaced and were Andersen windows, and they were considering switching to a dark sash window and replacing some of the windows. Mr. Wyckoff suggested painting the windows. Ms. Whitney said they were keeping the theme of heavier columns on the left-hand side of the 2-story addition. Mr. Wyckoff asked if the chimney was real brick. Ms. Whitney agreed and said they were proposing to remove the existing chimney due to the finished attic and the fact that they couldn't change the stairs. They would put in a full brick chimney. They further discussed the chimney. Mr. Rawling said he supported the chimney comments but felt that the applicant shouldn't convert the house to a Greek Revival style. Chairman Almeida said he thought the proposed changes were wonderful and hoped that they would keep the front bay addition because he felt it was an important piece to have in the front of the house.

Mr. Shea said he thought the overall design was good and the addition was fine, and he felt that the existing 2nd floor windows looked proportionally wrong and that the Greek Revival look would help them. He also agreed with Chairman Almeida about the bay addition, but preferred the old bay because the new one had no windows on the side and looked more like a Colonial

reproduction. He asked whether the existing foundation for the back elevation was brick, and Ms. Whitney said it was concrete with a brick shelf. They further discussed the back elevation.

Mr. Rawling reiterated that he would have a difficult time supporting the change to the Greek Revival style, and Ms. Ruedig agreed, saying that they couldn't just take a building and change it. She had a problem with extending the cornice board all the way across. She thought the addition and the porch were appropriate. Ms. Whitney asked whether the main issue was isolating the gable, and Ms. Ruedig agreed, noting that Ms. Whitney could beef up the corner boards. Ms. Whitney said that she didn't think it was out of character in terms of changing the style of the house. Mr. Lombardi thought that the house probably had wider corner boards originally, and if Mr. Whitney got rid of the Greek Revival style and put wider corner boards in, it may give the appearance that the owners wanted.

Mr. Wyckoff wondered how the 6/6 windows got approved, noting that the windows were replaced entirely and weren't right on the 2nd floor, but he thought that the continued pediment and returns helped the windows that were out of proportion and was willing to accept them. He thought they could get away with 12' corner boards and didn't feel that they had gone overboard with the style. The bay window was important, but he agreed with Mr. Shea that it might be better if it had small angled windows and a sash. He said that the carriage house was fine and that he was basically in support of the project and appreciated that the entry would be renovated and that the old doors would be exposed. Chairman Almeida emphasized that all the Commissioners had made it clear that a bay or box window was necessary. Mr. Rawling said that he felt the original details of the house should be kept and less of the Greek Revival ones used. Mr. Wyckoff asked that they put wooden doors on the garage. Mr. Rawling suggested heavier heads over the garage door to give it more height.

There was no public comment.

*Vice-Chair Gladhill made a motion to **continue** the work session to the July 15, 2015 meeting. Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

D. Work Session requested by **Joseph J. and Jennifer Almeida, owners**, for property located at **101-105 High Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (alter roof line and front façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor 118 as Lot 22 and lies within the CD4-L, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was continued at the May 13, 2015 meeting.)*

Chairman Almeida recused himself, and Vice-Chair Gladhill conducted the work session.

Mr. Almeida stated that the drawings had not changed and that he had additional photos for discussion. He asked that the Commission focus primarily on the altering of the roof line rather than the storefront. He walked taken photos of existing examples of his proposed roof in the Historic District and also examples of wood-framed buildings in the immediate area. He noted that his project would reflect the history of when people in the north end lived in homes and had

shops on the first level. Mr. Almeida further explained how his proposed new roofline was common in Portsmouth and was a combination of gabled and hip roofs, and as an example, he showed a photo of a house on Marcy Street, where he felt that the proportions were appropriate in a Central Business District. He discussed the existing context of the Marcy Street house, with was a large, almost 4-story structure, with two stories above the retail space, and had an abutting condition that he wanted to continue in his renovation. Mr. Almeida thought that his changes would be the most appropriate way to renovate his home because a lot had changed in the neighborhood and he was practically surrounded by commercial enterprises. He showed copies of what the home looked like when he purchased it and also copies of the Portsmouth Advocates survey that showed very different window locations on the 1st floor. Mr. Almeida felt that he single-handedly rescued the building by doing previous renovations by putting in a high level of detail and experience, and he wished to continue it.

Mr. Shea said he understood that it was common to alter the first floor of houses and put in storefronts, and he asked whether Mr. Almeida felt that most of the buildings were built as 3-story ones. Mr. Almeida showed further examples of what some houses looked like before stores were added to them. He said he read an article about a particular home that was under enormous pressure to add commerce because it was being swallowed up by commerce in all directions. Mr. Shea asked whether any of the Daniel Street properties had been lifted up, and Mr. Almeida said he wasn't sure, but the cost would be enormous and he couldn't do it.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that Mr. Almeida's home had to meet code, including anything that was grandfathered in, and that it would have to be rewired and gutted, and he was uncomfortable with the top of the house being torn off and the addition of a third floor. He felt that the case about the pressure on the other building to change commercially seemed to relieve any burden that Mr. Almeida might feel from not having a commercial first floor, and whether or not the second floor ended up being good enough for living quarters was not in the Commission's purview. Mr. Wyckoff declared that he wanted to leave the top of the building alone.

Mr. Rawling noted that the building forms were characteristic and had a lot of pressure and demand on them, but he felt that everyone but the smaller building owners would take the same approach. He thought what Mr. Almeida proposed was a nice-looking building but didn't reflect what was currently there and that the addition of the upper level would change the characteristics of the neighborhood. He felt there were other ways of doing it by using other pieces around it. Chairman Almeida said he could not consider the idea of doing more with the side pieces because of the garden in the back yard, which he couldn't expand into. Mr. Rawling said the essential gable form was the important part. Ms. Ruedig said that Mr. Almeida was proposing the demolition of the existing house and recreating it, and she felt that it would change the existing structure too much and that the house couldn't handle more vertical change. Mr. Lombardi agreed that changing the roof from a gabled end to a hip roof to raise it up significantly changed the building. He thought that the house fit in the way it was, and the fact that it was high on the hill would emphasize it all the more.

Mr. Almeida asked to hear criteria about whether or not the building form was appropriate on High Street because the 3-story hip roof existed at several locations. Mr. Wyckoff explained that Mr. Almeida was starting off with a historic structure and not building a new building. He felt

that it was not appropriate to rip the top of the building off and add a third story to make a new roof on an old historic building. Mr. Shea said he thought that the 3-story buildings with stores were always 3-story buildings, and his problem was the roof alteration. Vice- Gladhill said he had no problem with the roof project but worried about the consequences of setting a precedent in raising the roof. Mr. Almeida noted that he did a photographic study and showed a before-and-after version of what his house would look like after the renovations. Mr. Rawling said he didn't see anything significant with the backyard elevation because it would keep the footprint, so doing a vertical expansion would be fine and it wouldn't affect the garden.

Vice-Chair Gladhill noted that Mr. Almeida was the only citizen who wanted to bring back the north end history, and he would support the concept, but he was worried about setting a precedent. However, he knew that more and more money was coming in for redevelopment, so he wasn't saying he was against it. Mr. Almeida told the Commission that it would be difficult for him and his wife to be told that their building was where they stopped changing. He felt that his proposal was something that visitors and residents could be part of, but in order to financially make it happen, the building had to support itself in the event that the commercial piece of it was not supporting the building. He asked why that would not be appropriate for the location. Mr. Rawling asked what the Commission would think if the project was proposed on Bridge Street because the Bridge Street project was a significant change to the city.

Mr. Almeida offered to schedule a site walk, and the Commissioners agreed.

There were no comments from the public.

*Mr. Lombardi made a motion to **continue** the work session to the July 15, 2015 meeting, and Mr. Wyckoff seconded the motion. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

2. ADJOURNMENT

*At 10:00 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously to **adjourn** the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on July 15, 2015.