

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 21, 2019

4:30 PM

**2nd Floor Committee Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Andrew Weglinski, Vice Chair
Councilor Thomas Powers
Erin Benik
Sam Temple
Hans Porchitz (Arrived at 5:03 PM)

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Planner

Members Not Present:

Hanspeter Weber, Chair
Nancy Proctor
Joslin Kimball Frank, Alternate
Dave Bergeron, Alternate

1) Call to Order & Roll Call

Vice Chair Weglinski called the meeting to order at 4:46 PM and Ms. Brunner conducted roll call.

2) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – July 17, 2019

Councilor Powers moved to adopt the minutes of July 17, 2019, which Ms. Benik seconded and the Historic District Commission carried unanimously.

3) Public Hearing:

- a. **COA-2016-06, Modification #4 – 31 Washington Street – Tony Marcotte, on behalf of owner Washington Park of Keene LLC, proposes exterior work to the former Middle School building, including penetrations for exterior ventilation, the replacement of an exterior stairway, and modifications to three entrances on the south side of the building. The property is located at 31 Washington Street (TMP# 569-056-00) in the Central Business District. The former Middle School building is ranked as a Primary Resource.**

Vice Chair Weglinski opened the public hearing and welcomed Tony Marcotte of MDP Development, who represented the property owner, Washington Park Keene, LLC. He said Washington Park of Keene has drilled seven 4" diameter holes that will be covered with 5" squared vented covers for bathroom and kitchen (no hoods) fans. The approved

mechanical plans showed four penetrations on the front of the building, and the owners eliminated three of the front penetrations. The owners asked the contractor not to penetrate the front of the building at all; however, one penetration was made for ventilation and another hole was drilled at a low spot on the front of the building (near the entrance with the ramp) for the sprinkler system drain. One additional hole will need to be drilled on the south side of the building for a connection so that the Fire Department may utilize or charge water into that sprinkler system, which is required by fire code.

Mr. Marcotte said the formerly white vinyl siding on a stairway entrance to the lower level on the south side was replaced and painted in a color similar to the brick because it had been covered in graffiti. A matching small structure was built over an existing opening for a weather tight access to the boiler room. A railing was also placed at an existing stair entrance on the south side of the building and steel plates were added where there is constant weathering of the brick. The existing stairway to the second floor on the south side of the building was deteriorated beyond repair and was replaced with metal stairs with diamond plate treads for traction. Mr. Marcotte shared pictures of areas he referenced during the site visit and described here, which were included in the meeting packet.

Mr. Marcotte concluded, saying the venting holes are only for bathrooms and kitchens, with one central dryer location in the building with an existing vent. He demonstrated two options to cap the metal pipes, which would be painted to match the brick of the building. One option is smaller and less expensive but meets the District's size requirement for vents. The second option is larger and more expensive but more consistent with the historic character of the building; it also covers any damage to the brick from drilling. If allowed to complete the work, Mr. Marcotte was prepared to implement either option the Commission chose. He stated that the owner's intent was not to avoid the Commission but the southern work was largely invisible from the street.

Ms. Benik asked Mr. Marcotte to confirm that there is only one penetration on the Washington Street façade. Mr. Marcotte replied in the affirmative and said he thinks one of the vent covers he demonstrated would be more appealing than trying to repair the one spot. He said there are two much larger vents near the main entrance installed years ago with 1' x 1' metal hoods. He thought the more expensive vent hood presented would blend more historically.

Vice Chair Weglinski asked if the aluminum flashing detail around the vents would be visible. Mr. Marcotte said no, only the caps would be visible and painted to match the brick; he demonstrated how the larger one would cover brick imperfections. The smaller vent does pose potential for the aluminum to be visible because it must tilt downward to release water. Because these are not venting dryers or kitchen hood grease, they will not stain the building. Vice Chair Weglinski asked if further additional exterior work is anticipated that Mr. Marcotte discuss with staff ahead of time. Mr. Marcotte said moving forward no vents will face the street; if necessary, they will use the roof.

On page 10 of the meeting packet, Ms. Benik referenced the photos and asked if the archway over the door was maintained or if any metal breaks were moved. Mr. Marcotte referred to the photo and said no brickwork was removed.

Ms. Brunner reported that the applicant was requesting approval for modifications to the exterior of the former Middle School building, including the following:

- Installation of seven, four-inch diameter penetrations with 25 square inch vent caps in brick walls for exterior ventilation on the west and south facades of the building;
- The replacement of an existing stairway to the second floor on the south side of the building;
- The installation of new siding on an attached structure on the south façade of the building;
- The installation of a new, 42.5 square foot attached structure over the entrance to the boiler room on the south side of the building; and
- The installation of metal flashing and railings at an existing entrance to the first floor on the south side of the building. All of the work proposed has already been completed / installed, with the exception of the vent caps for the seven penetrations to the exterior brick walls.

Ms. Brunner recommended accepting the application as complete. Councilor Powers moved to accept application COA-2016-6 Modification #4 as complete, which Ms. Brunner seconded and the Historic District Commission carried unanimously.

Ms. Brunner reviewed the first relevant HDC criteria: Section XV.A.5 – Utility, Service and Mechanical Equipment Sub-section b.5: *“Walls on front or street-facing facades shall not be penetrated for vent openings larger than seventy (70) square inches. Vent caps shall not be larger than two-hundred (200) square inches.”*

Ms. Brunner reported that the applicant proposed to install one, 4” diameter penetration with a 25 square inch vent cap on the primary, street-facing façade of the building, as well as six penetrations (identical in size and vent cap) along the south façade of the building. In addition, the applicant proposed a penetration near the main entrance on the primary façade of the building for a sprinkler system drain. The vent caps are proposed to be a dark brown color. The vent openings are each approximately 12.6 square inches, and the proposed vent caps are 25 square inches. This meets the size requirements for vent openings on a street-facing façade.

Ms. Brunner shared the second relevant HDC criteria: Section XV.B.1 – General Standards. a) Design Standards.

1. *Each building or structure shall be recognized as a physical and cultural record of its time, place, and use.*
2. *The historic character of a building or structure shall be retained and preserved.*
3. *The removal of historic materials or alteration of features that characterize a building or structure shall be avoided.*

4. *Deteriorated historic features significant to the building or structure shall be repaired, rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary due to extreme deterioration, the new feature shall match the historic in size, design, texture, color and, where possible, materials. The new feature shall maintain the same visual appearance as the historic feature.*
5. *All architectural changes shall be appropriate either to the original style or appearance of the building or structure (if it has not been significantly altered) or to its altered style or appearance (if it has been altered within the Period of Significance and those alterations have attained significance).*
6. *Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.*

Ms. Brunner reported that the applicant proposes several modifications to the exterior of the south side of the building. She shared photos in the meeting packet that were submitted by the applicant to show the proposed changes, which have already been installed. She noted that the applicant proposes to replace an area of white vinyl with HardiePlank® cement board siding, painted to match the brick color. A new, 7' tall, 42.5 square foot structure is proposed to be installed at the entrance to the boiler room that would be clad in the same HardiePlank® material and have a rubber membrane roof. The applicant has noted that the purpose of this structure is to provide access to the boiler room that is protected from the weather. An existing, brick-and-concrete staircase is proposed to be replaced with a black painted steel staircase (visible in the right image below). The applicant noted in the narrative that the brick and concrete staircase was damaged beyond repair. The applicant also proposed to install two black railings and steel metal plates at an existing entrance on the south side of the building. Ms. Brunner referenced photos in the meeting to demonstrate building conditions in 2016 compared to the existing conditions described in this late application. The application states that the steel plates are needed to prevent weathering of the brick around the entry door.

Ms. Brunner said most of the proposed changes to the south façade of the building are only partially visible from Roxbury Street. These features are set back by about 250'-300' from the road (depending on the viewing location on Roxbury Street) behind the MoCo Arts building. None of the features that are proposed to be replaced are known historic features. Staff was unable to locate historic photos of the south façade of the building, which was historically blocked from view by the Keene YMCA building. The proposed colors (brick red for siding; black for railings, staircase, and metal flashing) are consistent with other architectural features on the building.

Vice Chair Weglinski asked if that partial visibility from Roxbury Street is what prompted staff to bring this to the HDC. Ms. Brunner said yes, in this case any brick work that is not just repointing or repairing has to come before the HDC. Even if drilling holes into brick were allowed, it would still come to the HDC for review. In this case, the applicant did what is consistent with the standards but still needs Commission approval.

With no comments, Vice Chair Weglinski closed the public hearing. Ms. Benik and Councilor Powers expressed contentment with either vent cap option, though the larger

will be more practical and consistent with downtown buildings. Ms. Benik made the following motion, which Councilor Powers seconded and the Historic District Commission carried unanimously:

The Historic District Commission approved COA-2016-06 Modification #4 for exterior work to the former Middle School building located at 31 Washington Street (TMP# 569-056-000), as described in the application and supporting materials submitted to the Community Development Department by Tony Marcotte on behalf of owner Washington Park of Keene on August 1, 2019 with no conditions.

4) Staff Updates

a. Resource Ranking Effort

Ms. Brunner said this effort is underway.

5) Next Meeting – September 18, 2019

6) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Vice Chair Weglinski adjourned the meeting at 5:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker
August 22, 2019

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner