



City of Keene, New Hampshire

## **Historic District Commission**

### **AGENDA**

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

4:30 PM

2<sup>nd</sup> floor Committee Room

#### **Commission Members:**

Hanspeter Weber, Chair  
Andrew Weglinski, Vice Chair  
Thomas Powers, Councilor  
Nancy Proctor  
Erin Benik

Hans Porschitz  
Sam Temple  
Joslin Kimball Frank, Alternate  
Dave Bergeron, Alternate

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting** – September 18, 2019
- 3. Advice and Comment**
  - a) **The Community Kitchen - Rooftop Solar Installation** – Bob Furlone, on behalf of the Community Kitchen, seeks input on a proposed roof replacement and rooftop solar photovoltaic system on the building located at 37 Mechanic Street (TMP #554-087-000). The property is ranked as a Primary Resource and is located in the Central Business District.
- 4. HDC Resource Ranking Work Group Update**
- 5. 2020 Meeting Schedule**
- 6. Staff Updates**
- 7. Next Meeting** – January 15, 2020
- 8. Adjourn**

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, September 18, 2019**

**4:30 PM**

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

**Members Present:**

Hanspeter Weber, Chair  
Hans Porschitz  
Erin Benik  
Joslin Kimball Frank, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Andrew Weglinski, Vice Chair  
Councilor Thomas Powers  
Nancy Proctor  
Sam Temple  
Dave Bergeron, Alternate

**1) Call to Order & Roll Call**

Chair Weber called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM and Ms. Brunner conducted roll call.

**2) Minutes of Previous Meeting – August 21, 2019**

Ms. Benik moved to approve the minutes of August 21, 2019, which Mr. Porschitz seconded and the Historic District Commission carried unanimously.

**3) Public Hearing**

- a. **COA-2019-07– 89 Main Street – Applicant Weller & Michal Architects, on behalf of owner The Colonial Theatre Group, proposes to install a ~2,800 square foot rear addition and renovate the existing historic building. A waiver is requested from Section XV.D.1.4. of the HDC Regulations with respect to increasing the building’s height above adjacent or nearby rooflines. The property is ranked as a Primary Resource and is located at 89 Main Street (TMP# 575-008-000) in the Central Business District.**

Ms. Brunner recommended accepting this application as complete. Ms. Benik moved to accept application COA-2019-07 as complete, which Mr. Porschitz seconded and the Historic District Commission carried unanimously.

Chair Weber opened the public hearing and welcomed Charles Michal (of Weller & Michal Architects, of Harrisville, NH) on behalf of the applicant, the Colonial Theater Group, represented at the meeting by Alec Doyle (Executive Director of the Colonial Theater) and Tad Schrantz (Chair of the Building Committee). Mr. Michal recalled last speaking before members of this Commission on July 17, 2019 and leading some members on a site visit before this meeting. He provided an overview of the project and application. He displayed a site drawing to demonstrate the limits of the existing building, and three colored floor plans to show where the new construction is proposed with respect to other spaces in the building. He also described internal changes that were not the HDC's purview; interior remodeling will allow the theater to serve the audience and community better, with new features such as an elevator and bathrooms upstairs. The Main Street façade will remain largely the same with a marquis and a slightly less recessed entry, but with signage removed from the existing businesses (e.g., Brewbakers). Removing that signage will reveal the top light seen on the right side and typical on the building's side windows. The applicant intends to improve the historic quality of the building and simultaneously create as much awareness as possible of what is on the inside.

Mr. Michal explained the change concerning the HDC, which is the addition to the back of the building. Today, the theater relies on a hemp and sandbag system to lift and hold production materials, like lights. The Colonial's stage is operated from an intermediate platform above the stage that is accessed by a tall vertical, precarious ladder. Mr. Michal said the proposed expansion would accommodate a modern rail system with pulleys and a walking grid that will make maintenance above the stage safer and allow more space on the stage and in the theater. The addition will allow for a deeper and higher stage house, suitable for modern productions, and it will provide an upper floor area that is handicap accessible and served by an elevator for many backstage functions. The HVAC equipment at the back of the Colonial since 1995 will be raised to the roof to keep it as far from the auditorium as possible, as professionals recommended; one reason those ducts are so big is to slow air, making it quieter in the theater. Mr. Michal said that visiting theater performers and theater staff have lived without any proper back-of-house space, forcing there to be dressing rooms in the basement, with low ceilings in limited space. The renovations will allow for construction of larger and more appropriate dressing rooms, including a handicap accessible one. Mr. Michal also explained that the solar array planned originally for the roof is not part of the current request.

Mr. Michal explained that the applicant is seeking a waiver from the HDC for the building height, which is allowed up to 75' in the Central Business District, if the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) grants a special exception for that height. The ZBA has granted the Colonial the special exception for height increase to 75' based on the applicant demonstrating that the project is not contrary to public interest and that not granting the exception would create an unnecessary hardship for the applicant. Mr. Michal said this height increase will impact an area that is 15% of the of the building's ground floor footprint, which is not substantial from his position. If the HDC were to consider it a substantial height increase, however, Mr. Michal countered that this building can only serve one function as a theater and it must act as such or not act at all. Without

this height increase, the Colonial cannot survive in the long-term, which Mr. Michal said is an undue hardship because the building cannot act as anything else. He recalled a question at the site visit about possible alternatives to provide this theater technology without a height increase; Mr. Michal said there is no alternative and he recalled the height increase is already approved by other City bodies. The applicant saw no threat to surrounding property values and categorically stated no hazard to the public.

Mr. Porschitz asked for more explanation on why the solar array is no longer an option. Mr. Michal said the sloped southern roof is ideal for a low-slope solar array, which was considered in this construction phase. However, due to timing considerations the plan was set aside for now, though the applicant plans to continue this effort in the future, following the technical work of designing the building.

Mr. Michal spoke to construction materials and showed the Commission a digital rendering of the building with those materials; he shared physical samples of the brick types and metal finishes proposed, which he thought were fully within the HDC guidelines of preferred/allowed materials. Commission members questioned the design of metal colors chosen on the building, which Mr. Michal explained was his artistic choice, though he explained the historical significance. He explained how using two colors would help break-up the massing and geometry of the addition, and thus overall reaction to the building. Mr. Michal said the chosen exterior pattern was chosen to compliment the historic interior building design, which was constructed in 1923, when there was great social change and transition in the world of modern art. The interior also has neoclassical features (late 1880s) and art nouveau features. He used the renderings to show how he went a step beyond horizontal and vertical lines on the exterior and added an additional color to mimic those lines. Mr. Porschitz explained how the design made him see images similar to the Minecraft game his kids play.

Mr. Porschitz questioned the applicant's plan to clean stains from the brick, noting that the stains could indicate the life and character of the building, absent water stains around windows. Mr. Michal saw no reason to clean the brick on the Main Street façade. He said the south side of the building is the worst, where there was historically an iron fire escape that created black stains on the brick. Mr. Schrantz also noted the importance of work to ensure the building is water tight for its longevity.

Ms. Benik asked if the color pattern for the exterior was finalized, or if Mr. Michal anticipated going further. Mr. Michal said it was a long design process and the applicant is happy with the design displayed for the Commission. Ms. Benik said she liked the stepped features and asked if there were opportunities to use the space on the two lower flat roofs. Mr. Michal said one of those flat roofs is a parapet for the HVAC unit but there could be opportunities on the intermediate roof. Ms. Kimball Frank stated that she liked the way the exterior was designed.

Chair Weber asked about the future of the Colonial with this expansion. Mr. Doyle said that the stage house in question would be essentially a box covering a massive, contemporary rigging and lighting machine that will replace the current archaic

equipment. That new machine will allow for larger, more efficient contemporary shows and safer working conditions. He said it would be a huge change for the organization.

Mr. Porschitz questioned two blue boxes in the parking lot that were visible on the rendering. Mr. Michal said those are Eversource transformers that are painted green currently and the applicant will need permission to repaint them in the future.

Ms. Brunner provided a staff report, including a brief history of the property. This property was originally the site of Rev. Nathaniel Sprague's home and schoolroom. The house was sold to Samuel Dinsmoor, and later to Laton Martin, who operated the Colonial Inn on this site. In 1923, Charles Baldwin constructed the present structure as a vaudeville/movie house and the Colonial Theatre opened its doors on January 29, 1924. The next year, the building was purchased by the Latchis family. The building was designed by architects Harold Mason and Steven Haynes, and it was built by well-known local builder Glenroy Scott.

Over the following years, the Colonial Theatre played an important role in Keene's cultural life with movie showings, live performances, and cultural activities. In April 1984, the building was purchased from the Latchis family by Steve Levin and Ira Gavin, who brought back live entertainment after a 35-year absence. The new owners extended the stage in front of the movie screen and removed seats from the orchestra, dropping capacity from 1,036 to 886. The theatre continued to operate for almost a decade after switching to new ownership, then closed in the early 1990s. The theatre was saved by a group of Keene citizens who formed a non-profit to take over management of the theatre. The Colonial Theatre Group LLC purchased the property in October 1993. In 2004, the building was added to the NH Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Brunner listed the Colonial's significant architectural features identified on the property inventory form in 2003:

- Finish brick of beige and brown and stone cornice on the Main Street façade,
- A recessed entry with a classic theatre marquee,
- Parapet with name and date tablets,
- Exposed basement storefronts,
- Storefronts with metal steps and bronze railings and multi-pane transom,
- Historic display windows,
- Size and spacing of window openings, and
- Arched openings and brick panels with corbelled heads on the north and south sides of the building.

Ms. Brunner said the applicant is proposing to install an approximately 2,800 square foot rear addition and to renovate the existing historic building. Proposed renovations include the relocation of the main entry doors to be closer to Main Street, the replacement of 56 single-lite, double-hung wood windows, brick masonry cleaning and repointing, and the repair or replacement of wood doors on the north and south façades of the existing building. Per Sections III.D.1 ("Additions to a building or structure"), III.D.3 ("Renovation, rehabilitation, or restoration of a building or structure") III.D.6

(“Replacement of more than two windows or doors”) and III.D.8 (“Alterations to storefronts”), this work is classified as a “Major Project” for review by the HDC.

The applicant proposed changes subject to HDC Design Standards for Lighting:

1. *Lighting fixtures and poles shall be compatible in scale, design, and materials with both the individual and surrounding properties.*
2. *Only full cut-off fixtures shall be used.*
3. *The location, level, and direction of lighting shall be appropriate for the character of the area in which it is situated.*

Ms. Brunner said the applicant proposes to install two, wall-mounted LED lights that are “dark sky compliant” to provide security lighting at the two exit doors on the proposed addition. The applicant has submitted lighting cut sheets to show that the light fixtures will be full cut-off. The lighting will be directed down, and the light levels will drop to below one foot-candle at 10’ from the fixture. The fixtures would match the existing exit lights along the north and south facades of the building. A photo of an existing light submitted by the applicant and an image of the proposed light were included in the meeting packet. Ms. Brunner said these standards appeared to be met.

The applicant proposed changes subject to HDC design standards for mechanical equipment:

1. *On commercial and industrial buildings, mechanical equipment, such as compressor units, shall be set back on the roof of the building, so as to be minimally visible, or ground-mounted toward the rear of the building, with appropriate screening or landscaping to minimize visibility.*
2. *Every effort shall be made to position heating and air-conditioning equipment, fire alarm panels, telecommunications equipment, satellite dishes, and free-standing antennas and other equipment as low to the ground as possible, and where they are not readily visible from the public right-of-way.*
3. *New mechanical supply lines, pipes and ductwork shall be placed in inconspicuous locations and/or concealed with architectural elements, such as downspouts.*
4. *Bulk waste containers and waste storage containers shall be located – and appropriately screened—so as to be as inconspicuous as possible from the public right-of-way and adjacent buildings in residential use.*
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.*
6. *On commercial and industrial buildings, satellite dishes and antennas shall be located on the roof, as close to the center as possible, so as to be invisible from the street.*

Ms. Brunner said the applicant proposes to enclose all mechanical equipment on the roof of the new addition to screen all equipment completely from view. The applicant has noted that no mechanical supply lines, pipes, or ductwork would be visible on the exterior of the building; thus, the application appeared to meet standards one, two, and three. She

said standard four did not apply because the applicant proposed to utilize an off-site dumpster on adjacent City property for trash disposal, after obtaining permission from City Council. Because the applicant proposed no new vent openings or penetrations to the existing building, standard five did not apply. Finally, no satellite dishes or antennas were proposed, so standard six also did not apply.

The applicant proposes changes subject to the following HDC design standards for masonry (walls and architectural trim):

1. *Character-defining architectural trim shall be retained and repaired when technically and economically feasible. If the trim is sufficiently deteriorated that replacement is warranted, the new trim shall match the original in size, scale, placement, detailing, and ideally material. If substitute material is used, it shall convey the same visual appearance as the historic trim.*
2. *Masonry shall be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration or remove heavy soiling.*
3. *Masonry shall not be sandblasted or abrasively cleaned, but cleaned with the gentlest method possible, such as low-pressure cleaning at garden hose pressure, using water or detergents.*
6. *Repointing shall be undertaken only to address deteriorated masonry or in areas where moisture infiltration is a problem. The amount of wall area to be repointed shall be limited to the affected area. The new mortar joints shall match the original as closely as possible in terms of profile, width, and mortar composition. The new mortar shall match the color of the mortar used when the building was built; or it shall match aged or weathered mortar color, whichever is more appropriate. The color of all mortar shall come from the aggregate and not the binder. Upon completion of the repointing, all remaining mortar and residual film shall be cleaned from the façade of the building.*

Ms. Brunner said that the applicant does not propose to replace any existing masonry architectural trim, so the first standard does not apply. She said that the applicant proposes cleaning existing brick masonry where water damage has occurred, primarily along the south façade of the building where an exterior fire escape was located (removed circa 1995), and along and below recessed brick panels. No masonry cleaning is proposed on the front (east) façade of the building facing Main Street. Regarding standard three, Ms. Brunner said that the project narrative stated that the masonry would be cleaned using “a low pressure spray, roller, or soft fiber brush.” The proposed cleaner is Diedrich 101 Masonry Restorer. The cut sheet for this product states that this cleaner uses a combination of acids (hydrofluoric acid and hydrochloric acid) and biodegradable detergent to clean masonry surfaces, and has a pH of 5.3 when diluted 1:10 with water. She recommended that a test patch be inspected prior to brick cleaning to ensure no adverse reactions to the proposed cleaner and cleaning method. In addition, she said the Commission might wish to clarify with the applicant what is meant by “low pressure” in terms of PSI. Regarding standard six, Ms. Brunner said that the applicant proposes to repoint existing brick only if unsound mortar is encountered during the cleaning process. If repointing were needed, the new mortar specifications would be established after existing mortar samples are taken during the construction phase in order to match new

mortar to the existing. It is anticipated that the new mortar will be a Type N mortar. If needed, she recommended approval of the mortar type as well as approval of a test patch prior to brick repointing to ensure the new mortar matches the existing in terms of color and profile, width, and composition.

The applicant proposes changes subject to the following HDC design standards for windows:

1. *Removing character-defining historic window sash shall be discouraged, unless repair is not economically feasible.*
2. *Any windows which are approved for replacement shall convey the same visual appearance in terms of overall dimensions and shape, size of glazed areas, muntin arrangement, and other design details as the historic windows. In addition, they shall have:*
  - a. *clear-paned, non-tinted glass (except to replace historic stained or other types of translucent or opaque glass); and*
  - b. *true divided lights or a permanently affixed muntin grid on the exterior of the window. In either instance, the muntin shall have a raised trapezoidal profile. Snap-in or between-glass muntin grids are not allowed.*
3. *If the historic window to be replaced is wood, the replacement window shall also be wood, or wood clad with aluminum or a material of equal quality and approved by the Historic District Commission.*
4. *If the size or location of the original window opening has been altered, owners shall be encouraged to restore those openings if replacing windows.*
5. *Introducing new window openings into the primary elevations shall generally be prohibited.*
6. *Enlarging or reducing the window rough opening to fit new stock windows shall generally be prohibited.*

Ms. Brunner reported that the applicant proposes to replace 56, double-hung wood windows: 17 on the north façade facing Commercial Street, 24 on the east façade facing Main Street, and 15 on the south façade facing an alley. The storefront windows on the first floor of the building facing Main Street would not be replaced or altered. The request is to replace the existing, single-lite double hung wood windows with single-lite, Elevate Double Hung Insert windows from Marvin windows that are custom sized to fit the existing window openings. The cut sheet for the window product is attached to the meeting packet. The replacement windows would be an evergreen color, similar to the color of the existing windows, and the proposed material is Ultrex® (previously known as Integrity Wood-Ultrex®), a proprietary fiberglass material. The existing window sash would be replaced with a new sash; the exterior trim details would be maintained.

The applicant proposed changes subject to the following HDC design standards for entrances, doors, and porches:

1. *Historic doors, entrances and porches, including their associated features, shall be retained or replaced in-kind. If repair is necessary, only the deteriorated element shall be repaired, through patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the deteriorated section. If replacement is necessary, the new feature*



*shall match the original in size, design, texture, color and where possible, materials. The new feature shall maintain the same visual appearance as the historic feature.*

Ms. Brunner reported that the applicant proposes to relocate the main entry doors of the Colonial Theatre to be closer to Main Street. Currently, the doors are set back about 17' from the front building line. After this shift, the entry doors would be set back by about 6' from the front building line. The size, dimensions, and features of the doors will not be altered because of this shift in location. In addition to relocating the main entry doors, the applicant proposes to repair or replace existing wood doors on the south and north facades of the building. If they cannot be repaired, the doors would be replaced in-kind with stile and rail wood doors and painted to match the blue color of the insulated metal siding of the proposed addition.

The applicant proposes changes subject to the following HDC design standards for storefronts:

- 1. Historic features of the storefront – such as iron or masonry columns or piers, window trim, glass, lintels and cornices, sills, steps, railings and doors – shall be retained and repaired when technically and economically feasible.*
- 2. If most of the historic storefront survives and the overall condition of its materials is good, any necessary replacement parts shall match the original or be of a material that conveys the same visual appearance as the historic parts.*
- 3. If most or all of the historic storefront does not survive, the storefront shall either be restored to an earlier historic appearance based on physical, documentary, or pictorial evidence; or be redesigned to conform to the size, scale, and proportions of a traditional storefront appropriate to the building.*

Ms. Brunner said the applicant is not proposing to change any features of the historic storefront for this building, other than the relocation of the main entry doors to be approximately 11' closer to Main Street. Thus, these standards do not apply.

Regarding new construction, the applicant proposes changes subject to the following HDC design standards for additions to primary and contributing resources:

- 1. Additions shall not radically change, obscure, damage or destroy character-defining features.*
- 2. Additions shall be designed to be compatible with, rather than imitative of the design of the historic building, so that they are clearly identified as new construction.*
- 3. Additions shall be compatible in size and scale with the main building.*
- 4. Additions that alter the front of the building, or that substantially increase the building's height above adjacent or nearby rooflines, shall not be allowed, unless it can be documented that the addition is historically appropriate for the building.*

Ms. Brunner said the first standard appeared to be met because the proposed addition is located to the rear of the existing building and does not appear to alter, obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features of the historic structure. The only existing, visible

portion of the building that will be covered up is the rear/west-facing façade which does not contain any architecturally significant features and is already partially obscured by a fenced-in equipment area and large metal ducts. Regarding the second standard, Ms. Brunner recalled that the applicant posits that the architectural design of the proposed addition is intended to visually decrease the large scale and massing of the structure through articulation with horizontal and vertical lines, the use of different exterior materials with differing textures, and the use of a mixture of colors. The applicant noted in a memo to staff (dated September 5, 2019) that the varying colors of the insulated metal panel system are meant to evoke the polychromatic nature of the brick on the primary façade of the existing building. The lower, rear portion of the proposed addition would be clad in a brick veneer product. This section of the addition would be separated from the historic, brick-clad portion of the building with a more modern, insulated metal panel system (as shown in architectural elevations in the meeting packet). For the third standard, Ms. Brunner said the proposed addition would be about 15' taller than the existing stage house, or about 75' above grade. This is about 31' taller than the main body of the building. The applicant received a Special Exception from §102-791 ("Basic Zone Dimensional Requirements") of the Zoning Ordinance to increase the maximum building height from 55' to 75'. The applicant noted in the project narrative that this height is required in order to accommodate modern theatre productions.

For the fourth standard, Ms. Brunner said the applicant has requested a waiver from this standard to permit an addition that would increase the building's height above adjacent or nearby rooflines. The addition would not alter the front of the building. The waiver request was included as an attachment to the meeting packet. The proposed addition, while taller than the surrounding buildings, is within the allowable height in the district by Special Exception from the ZBA. The height increase is specific to the rear portion of the building, which is set back by about 150' from Main Street. The applicant provided line sketches to show the scale and massing of the proposed addition in relation to nearby buildings from different vantage points. Ms. Brunner continued explaining that in order to grant a waiver, the HDC must find that each of the three waiver criteria are met, in a case where:

1. *Strict application of these regulations would result in a particular and exceptional difficulty or undue hardship upon the owner of the affected property;*
2. *An alternative design or materials meets the design objectives stated in these regulations and in the Historic District Ordinance equally well or better than would strict compliance with these regulations;*
3. *The waiver may be granted without substantial detriment to the intent of these regulations and the Historic District Ordinance, and the public good.*

Ms. Brunner continued explaining the final regulations for additions to primary and contributing resources:

5. *Whenever possible, additions shall be located at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of the building.*
6. *Additions shall take into account the historic relationships of existing buildings and site features on the site.*

*7. Materials used for siding on additions shall be compatible with existing materials on the building and shall be those that are common in the district. Acceptable materials include brick, stone, terra cotta, wood, metal and cement clapboard.*

Ms. Brunner said the fifth standard appears to be met because the proposed addition is to the rear of the existing building. For the sixth criteria, she said the new stage house is proposed to be located in the same location as the old stage house, with an expanded footprint and increased height to allow for a deeper and taller stage house that can accommodate modern theatre production equipment and better serve the needs of the theatre. The location of the addition on the site appears to be consistent with the historic location of the stage house and in keeping with the existing relationship of the theatre with other nearby, existing buildings. Finally, she said the seventh standard appears to be met because the applicant proposes two different siding materials for the new addition that are included in the list of acceptable materials. The main siding material would be an insulated metal wall panel system (prefinished steel and/or aluminum) painted in shades of blue and gray identified as “Dove Gray,” “Slate Blue,” and “Tahoe Blue.” For the lower, rear portion of the addition (facing west), the applicant proposes to install a brick veneer using a Belden Brick “Rosewood Blend” product. These materials are consistent with those that are common in the district.

Ms. Brunner mentioned minor modifications to the architectural elevations submitted for the west elevation. Therefore, she recommends a condition of approval to provide revised elevations to show this change. She also noted that this project was proposed for completion in two phases: phase one for interior renovations and front-of-house work, and phase two for constructing the new addition. Typically, she noted that HDC approvals are good for one year or the duration of the building permit associated with the project, and therefore should not be an issue in this case.

Ms. Benik stated that she thought the proposed changes were a good solution to the problem; she was happy with it. Mr. Porschitz agreed that the application seemed to comply with all of the criteria and he thanked the applicant for speaking to those criteria. Ms. Kimball Frank thought the proposed design looked like a great combination of new and old. She asked when the interior renovations would begin. Mr. Schrantz replied that phase one is scheduled to begin in April 2020 and continue through the summer. This way, the theater could open for the fall/winter 2020/2021 season, while work continues on the back of house beginning April 2021. Mr. Michal said the specialized HVAC equipment at the back of house might take one year to fabricate, so the owners must commit one year before installing. Ms. Kimball Frank asked if shows would continue during construction. Mr. Boyle said that is the intention, which is why the project is planned in phases to allow for abbreviated seasons during renovations. Chair Weber stated that he felt the application met the waiver criteria. He said he loved the metal colors chosen and how they blend with the sky. He understood the need for two colors and thought the applicant did well marrying old and new.

Commission members discussed conditions for approving this application. There was discussion of how long the approval should be good for, such as an approval for the duration of the building permit, though there was ambiguity because the building permit was not yet issued. Mr. Porschitz said he viewed this approval as requiring HDC oversight for any future substantial changes. Ms. Benik expressed concern if the project is not completed within a time period the Commission specifies. Ms. Brunner said there is a slight risk if the project is delayed, in which case the applicant would return to the HDC for an extension of approval. The Commission agreed that three years seemed reasonable.

Chair Weber closed the public hearing. Mr. Porschitz made the following motion, which Ms. Benik seconded.

On a vote of 4-0, the Historic District Commission approved a waiver from Section XV.D.1.4. of the HDC Regulations to permit an increase in the building's height above adjacent or nearby rooflines and COA-2019-07 for the installation of a rear addition and renovations to the existing historic building on the property located at 89 Main Street (TMP# 575-008-000) as presented in the architectural elevations identified as "Building Elevations COA Application, 2020 Addition and Renovation, 95 Main Street, Keene, NH" prepared by Weller & Michal Architects, Inc. at a scale of 1/4"=1' and dated August 27, 2019, and as presented in the application and supporting materials submitted to the Community Development Department on August 29, 2018, with the following conditions:

1. Submittal of revised elevations to show the removal of recessed brick panels on the rear, west façade of the addition.
2. Staff approval of a cleaned test patch prior to masonry cleaning.
3. Staff approval of mortar type and approval of a test patch prior to brick repointing to ensure the new mortar matches the existing in terms of color, profile, width, and composition, if needed.

This approval will be valid for three years from the date of this approval.

#### **4) Staff Updates**

Ms. Brunner mentioned that the resource-ranking project is progressing.

#### **5) Next Meeting – October 16, 2019**

#### **6) Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Chair Weber adjourned the meeting at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katryna Kibler, Minute Clerk  
September 25, 2019

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner



## Community Development Department

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Historic District Commission  
**From:** Mari Brunner, Planner  
**Date:** December 11, 2019  
**Subject:** Community Kitchen Advice and Comment RE: Rooftop Solar Array

Bob Furlone, on behalf of The Community Kitchen, submitted photos and preliminary designs for a rooftop solar array on the Community Kitchen building located at 37 Mechanic Street to the Community Development Department. These materials are included as attachments to the HDC packet as background information for the “Advice and Comment” portion of the meeting agenda.

**Attachments:** Photographs of the Community Kitchen building and preliminary renderings of a rooftop solar photovoltaic system.

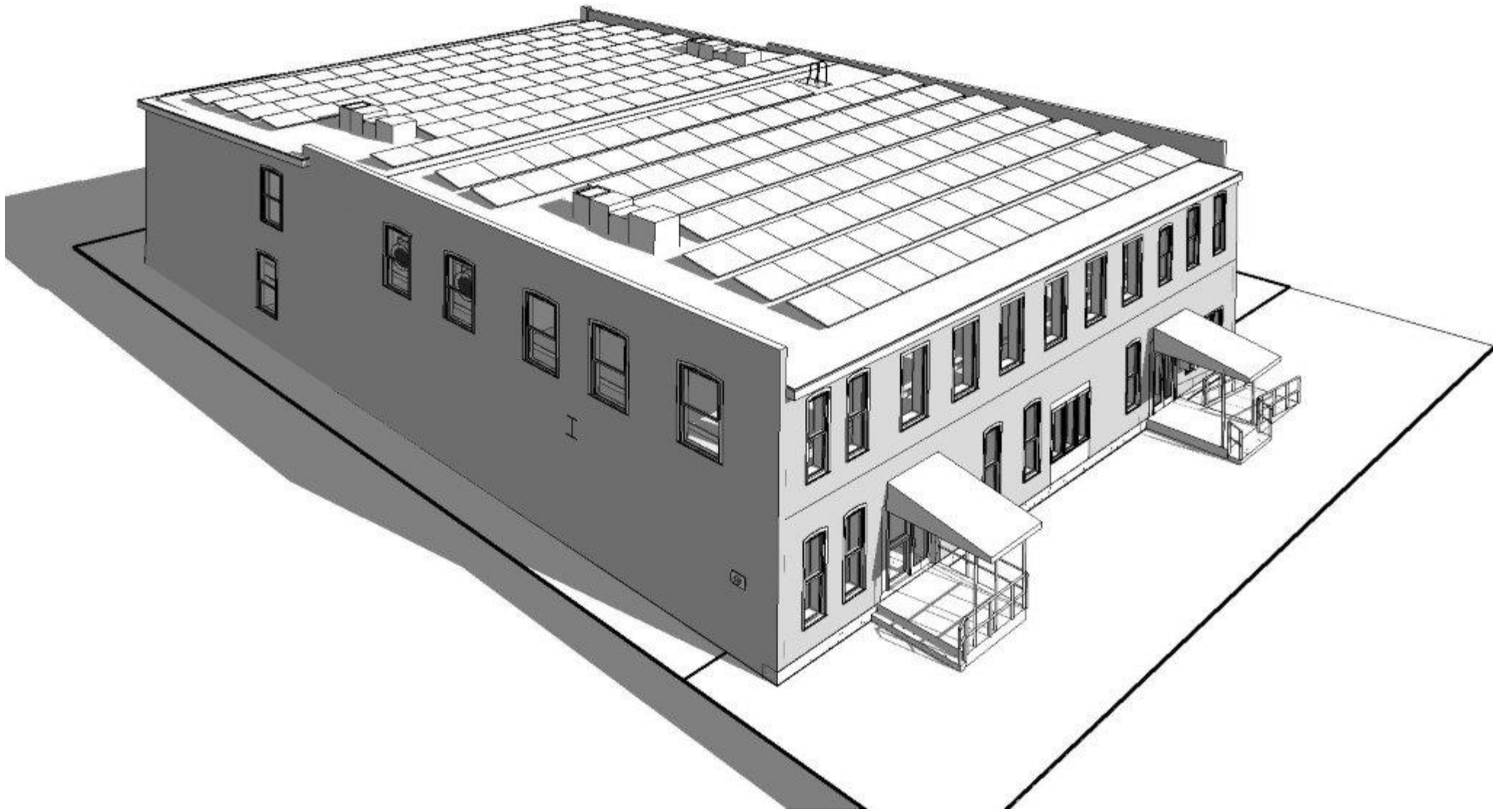














## Community Development Department

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Historic District Commission  
**From:** Mari Brunner, Planner  
**Date:** December 11, 2019  
**Subject:** HDC Resource Ranking Work Group Update

The HDC Resource Ranking Work Group was formed to rank properties within the Downtown Keene Historic District that have not yet been ranked as either “Primary,” “Contributing,” “Non-Contributing,” or “Incompatible.” There are four members of this work group: Hanspeter Weber, Chair of the HDC; Sam Temple, HDC member; Rose Carey, Chair of the Heritage Commission; and Louise Zerba, Heritage Commission member. The HDC Resource Ranking Work Group has met three times as of the date of this memo, and plans to meet next on December 16, 2019. The minutes from the three work group meetings that have already occurred are included as attachments to this agenda packet. These minutes are included as background information for the Board.

**Attachments:** HDC Resource Ranking Work Group minutes for the meeting of July 29, 2019, September 25, 2019, and October 28, 2019.



City of Keene, New Hampshire

**Historic District Commission**  
**Resource Ranking Work Group**

MINUTES

Monday, July 29, 2019

4:30 PM

2<sup>nd</sup> floor Committee Room

**Attendees:**

Hanspeter Weber, Historic District Commission (HDC) Chair  
Sam Temple, HDC Member  
Rose Carey, Heritage Commission Chair  
Louise Zerba, Heritage Commission Member  
Mari Brunner, HDC Staff liaison / Planner

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Brunner thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked for a round of introductions.

**2. Resource Ranking Project**

a) Project Overview

Ms. Brunner said that this is the first meeting of the “HDC Resource Ranking Work Group.” All properties within the Downtown Historic District, which is an overlay zoning district, are ranked according to the following categories:

- Primary Resource: a building, structure or site within the Downtown Keene Historic District that was present during the Period of Significance and that contributes to the district’s sense of time and place and historical development in a particularly distinctive manner.
- Contributing Resource: a building, structure or site within the Downtown Keene Historic District that was present during the Period of Significance and that contributes to the district’s sense of time and place and historical development.
- Non-Contributing Resource: a building, structure or site within the Downtown Keene Historic District that is either less than fifty (50) years old and thus was not constructed within the Period of Significance; or is fifty (50) or more years old and has lost its architectural, historical or cultural integrity due to major alterations or other changes and thus has lost the ability to contribute to the character of the historic district. A Non-Contributing resource may become a Primary or Contributing resource when it becomes 50 years old. It may also become a Primary or Contributing resource if its integrity is restored.
- Incompatible Resource: a building, structure or site within the Downtown Keene Historic District that has no historic or architectural integrity and whose setback, massing, scale, height, materials and/or fenestration detract from the character of the district.

Ms. Brunner continued, noting that the goal of this group is to assess which properties within the district need to be ranked for the first time, or re-ranked due to changes that have occurred since the initial

ranking. She explained that there are some properties within the district that have never been ranked because they are located in the Gilbo Avenue extension that was added on to the district at a later date. In addition, there are some properties that were initially ranked as “Non-Contributing” that have since been improved, and may now warrant a new ranking. An example is the Hannah Grimes Center located at 25 Roxbury Street. The group agreed that properties that have been changed or improved since their initial ranking should be re-examined; however, priority will be given to properties that have no ranking yet that are 50 years old or older.

b) List of Properties to be Ranked

Ms. Brunner passed out paper copies of the HDC “Resource Ranking List” dated 10/11/2016, which is also available online at [www.ci.keene.nh.us/historic-district-commission](http://www.ci.keene.nh.us/historic-district-commission). She said that there is a list at the end of the document of all the properties that have not yet been ranked. The group went through this list and identified the properties that are more than 50 years old that have no ranking. One person volunteered to research each property for the next meeting:

- 43 Wilson Street – Louise Zerba
- 104 Emerald Street – Sam Temple
- 25 Roxbury Street – Sam Temple
- 80 Emerald Street – Rose Carey
- 149 Emerald Street – Hanspeter Weber

c) Background Research Needs

The group reviewed examples of different property inventory forms that have been used in the past for resource ranking research, including a state (NHDHR) Individual Inventory Form, a form used by the Cheshire County Historical Society, and a form used by the Heritage Commission for the initial resource ranking. Ms. Brunner demonstrated how to use the online Assessing map for the City of Keene, which can be accessed at [www.axisgis.com/keenenh/](http://www.axisgis.com/keenenh/) and includes basic information about properties in Keene. The group noted that it would be helpful to have an additional column on the resource ranking list for “year built” in order to quickly identify properties that may have been ranked as “Non-Contributing” initially because they were not yet 50 years old, that may now warrant a new ranking.

**3. Next Meeting**

The group agreed to meet again in a couple months to allow time for members to research properties before the next meeting. Ms. Brunner will send out a Doodle poll to schedule the next meeting in September.

**4. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Mari Brunner, Planner.



City of Keene, New Hampshire  
**Historic District Commission**  
**Resource Ranking Work Group**

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

4:30 PM

2<sup>nd</sup> floor Committee Room

**Attendees:**

Hanspeter Weber, Historic District Commission (HDC) Chair  
Rose Carey, Heritage Commission Chair  
Louise Zerba, Heritage Commission Member  
Mari Brunner, HDC Staff liaison / Planner

**1. Welcome**

Ms. Brunner thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

**2. Resource Ranking Project**

**a) Updates on Property Research**

43 Wilson Street

Louise Zerba gave an update on her research for the property located at 43 Wilson Street. She said she received assistance from the Historical Society of Cheshire County and from the Registry of Deeds. She noted that Anna Tilton from the Registry was especially helpful and did not charge a fee because the research was done on behalf of the City.

Louise said that she was not able to determine the exact year that the current structure on this site was built; however, by 1898 the house was present on the site. All of the properties in this area of the City were originally part of the General James Wilson homestead. James Wilson deeded the property to Benjamin Cheney in 1868, who sold it to the Cheshire Railroad in 1882. In 1886, the Cheshire Railroad sold the property to Isaac Dunn. The property has switched ownership several times since then, and is currently owned by Donna Forte.

Louise said that she visited the site, and the house appears to have the original slate roof and possibly the original wood clapboard siding. The porch is in the same location as the original construction. Windows are single light, double-hung windows. These may or may not be replacement windows.

104 Emerald Street

Next, Rose Carey gave an update on her research for the property located at 104 Emerald Street. Rose said that the early history of this site is very similar to 43 Wilson Street. It was also part of the General James Wilson homestead, deeded to Benjamin Cheney in 1868, sold to the Cheshire Railroad in 1882, and purchased by Isaac Dunn in 1886. Mr. Dunn operated a chair manufacturing business on the site, then sold the property in 1955 to the Keene Industrial Paper Co. (KIPCO), the present owner of the site.

Rose noted that the older section of the existing building appears to date back to the time of the chair manufacturing company operated by Isaac Dunn. The rear addition looks newer. The older portion of the building has a slate roof and a mix of wood and vinyl siding. Rose said that this is one of the few wooden structures used for manufacturing that remain in the City. She thinks the oldest part of the building was built in 1886 when Mr. Dunn purchased the property.

**b) Additional Research Needs**

Hanspeter Weber said that he plans to research the property located at 149 Emerald Street before the next meeting. Rose Carey said that she thought she had signed up to research 104 Emerald Street instead of 80 Emerald Street; however, it appears as though Sam Temple signed up to research 104 Emerald Street. She asked if she could switch with Sam since she has already researched the property at 104 Emerald Street. Mari said she would check in with Sam to see if he is all right with this change.

**3. Next Meeting**

The group agreed to meet again in one month. Ms. Brunner will send out a Doodle poll to schedule the meeting in October.

**4. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Mari Brunner, Planner



City of Keene, New Hampshire

**Historic District Commission**  
**Resource Ranking Work Group**

MINUTES

Monday, October 28, 2019

4:30 PM

4th floor Conference Room

**Attendees:**

Hanspeter Weber, Historic District Commission (HDC) Chair

Louise Zerba, Heritage Commission Member

Mari Brunner, HDC Staff liaison / Planner

**1. Welcome**

Ms. Brunner thanked everyone for attending the meeting and passed out handouts including the agenda, resource ranking sheets for each property, and a revised list of properties in the Downtown Keene Historic District that have not yet been ranked with “year built” data.

**2. Resource Ranking Project**

**a) Updates on Property Research**

149 Emerald Street

Hanspeter Weber gave an update on his research for the property located at 149 Emerald Street. The history of this property is closely linked to that of the Cheshire Railroad. The railroad reached Keene in 1848, and in the Cheshire Railroad Co.’s early years, there were wooden facilities on this site that handled light repairs and employed about 60 people. In 1866, the railroad lines were extended north and most of the early wooden facilities were replaced by brick shops, designed and built for \$50,000 under the supervision of master mechanic Frank A. Perry. The following year, the roundhouse was built for \$66,000. The new shops consisted of a machine shop (193 x 65 feet), blacksmith’s shop (110 x 52 feet), and a carpenter’s shop (112 x 56 feet) built in a continuous line about 415 feet in length. Over time, other shops were added, including car shops, a spring shop, and tank shop. By 1878 there were tracks running out of Keene in four directions, and by 1890, the Cheshire Railroad employed 250 people.

In 1940, the property was sold to the New England Screw Company, then was sold to the Central Screw Co. in 1947. The Central Screw Co. operated for over 25 years, then sold the property to Microdot Industries in 1974. The property sat vacant for several years, then went through major renovations in the 1980s and early 1990s. At some point, the building was branded “The Center at Keene” and functioned as a shopping center. In 2014, the building came under the same ownership as the Colony Mill, and was re-branded “The Center at Colony Mill.” The property is currently owned by 149 Emerald Street Owner LLC.



**b) Resource Ranking**

The group went through each of the categories on the resource ranking form for 43 Wilson Street. Overall, the group decided that the property should be ranked as a “Contributing” Resource due to its age, massing, placement on the lot, and intact historic materials.

**3. Next Meeting**

The group agreed to meet again in about a month. Ms. Brunner will send out a Doodle poll to schedule the meeting in November or December.

**4. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Mari Brunner, Planner



## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### 2020 Meeting Schedule

All meetings are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 4:30PM  
in City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Committee Room

Wednesday, January 15

Wednesday, February 19

Wednesday, March 18

Wednesday, April 15

Wednesday, May 20

Wednesday, June 17

Wednesday, July 15

Wednesday, August 19

Wednesday, September 16

Wednesday, October 21

Wednesday, November 18

Wednesday, December 16