

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

4:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Andrew Weglinski, Chair
Councilor Catherine Workman
Hope Benik
David Bergeron, Alternate (Voting)

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner

Members Not Present:

Russ Fleming, Vice Chair
Sam Temple
Hans Porschitz
Sophia Cunha-Vasconcelos
Gregg Kleiner, Alternate
Peter Poanessa, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Weglinski called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and Mr. Clements called the roll.

2) Minutes of October 19, 2022

A motion by Ms. Benik to adopt the minutes of October 19, 2022 was duly seconded by Councilor Workman and the motion carried unanimously.

3) Advice & Comment

- A) Renovations to Monadnock Peer Support Agency, 24 Vernon Street – Christine Allen, representing Monadnock Area Peer Support Agency, is seeking input from the HDC regarding proposed renovations to the MPS building located at 24 Vernon St (TMP #568-058-000), including the replacement of windows, creation of rooftop garden seating, and installation of a rooftop solar array, amongst other renovations. The property is ranked as a Primary Resource and is located in the Downtown Core District**

Mr. Clements clarified that this was not a public hearing, but an opportunity for Commission guidance before a formal application is submitted.

Chair Weglinski welcomed Christine Allen and Ryan Bogard of the Monadnock Peer Support (MPS) Agency. Ms. Allen explained that MPS recently received a Community Development Block Grant for over \$900,000, from which they seek to add a new HVAC system, new window replacements, a wheelchair ramp and push button accessible doors, and a total of two building entrances through the renovation. They also seek rooftop access for a garden, seating area, solar panels, and a perimeter fence. If looking at the building from Vernon Street, they will completely remove an original exterior stairwell that is in total disrepair, which Mr. Bergeron agreed was in bad condition. Now there are opportunities for an internal stairway and elevator. It makes sense to have the Main Entrance to the right of the building with the double doors for wheelchair accessibility.

Chair Weglinski asked what they plan to replace the existing windows with. Ms. Allen said they would use the same size energy efficient windows because the current ones are old and drafty. There will be no change to the window sizes. Mr. Bogard was unsure of the current window material, but Ms. Allen knew they were not original to the building and thought they might be vinyl. In that case, Mr. Bergeron said it would be ideal for this Commission if the new windows matched the historic style. Ms. Allen will inquire about the cost of replacing the vinyl siding with brick or a brick alternative. Even if it meant another grant to do so, she wanted to finish the exterior of the building to best match the historic area and improve the downtown, depending on the costs. Mr. Bergeron said that even replacing them with something like wood would be more appropriate. Ms. Allen agreed that the current ones look silly and out of place. Mr. Bergeron asked what was under the current windows and Ms. Allen replied it was a 100% cement building. If unable to do a rooftop fence, she suggested carrying the brick all the way up as a fence, making it look like a three-story building, which would blend well with the adjacent three-story Keene Housing Authority and mask the roof activities. Mr. Bergeron asked if the HVAC would also be on the roof and Ms. Allen replied in the affirmative.

Chair Weglinski confirmed that this was only a question-and-answer session but confirmed that the applicants must submit a specific application at some point. Mr. Clements agreed, stating that this was an opportunity to present ideas with no prejudice and get candid feedback from the Commission so there are no surprises when the application is submitted; it is non-binding. Ms. Allen was open to whatever would make this happen, within cost. When submitting the application, Chair Weglinski said it would be helpful if the applicants provided the specifications of the exact materials they plan to use, height of screening, and views from different locations. He said a rendering of the rooftop fencing would be helpful. He added that it was easy enough to imagine the staircase demolished.

Ms. Benik asked if the elevator would extend above the roofline. Mr. Bogard said yes and that it would probably extend 12' to accommodate adult use. Chair Weglinski said it would be helpful to have those roof plans as well to best understand. Ms. Allen said the current elevator would remain on the Washington Street side inside, because of function and daily work. They are looking to add another one on the Vernon Street side interior as well. For the rooftop plans, Chair Weglinski said it was most important for this Commission know exactly what would be

visible from the street from different angles, as well as if there is potential for a noise disturbance. Ms. Allen thought it would make things quieter because clients would congregate there instead of on Vernon Street, distracting the community less and eliminating potential issues.

Chair Weglinski thought it was a good plan and the Commission looked forward to seeing how it would develop.

4) **Public Hearing**

- A) **COA-2015-07, Modification #4 – 161-185 Main St – St. Bernard’s Rectory Renovations – Applicant Rick Cavallero, on behalf of owner the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester NH, proposes exterior renovations and the installation of condensers at the St. Bernard’s Rectory at 161-185 Main St (TMP #584-006-000). Waivers are requested from Section 21.6.3.A.3 & Section 21.6.3.D.7 of the Land Development Code for the request to infill an existing window opening. The property is ranked as a Primary Resource and is located in the Downtown Growth District.**

At the Chair’s request, Mr. Clements said the applicant requested exemptions from submitting material samples, color renderings, and elevations. After reviewing each request, Staff had determined that exempting the applicant from submitting this information would have no bearing on the merits of the application and recommended that the Historic District Commission grant these exemptions and accept the application as complete. A motion by Chair Weglinski to accept application COA-2015-07, Modification #4, as complete was duly seconded by Ms. Benik and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Weglinski welcomed the applicants, Lynn Cavallero, the project signer, and Rick Cavallero, the liaison with the project manager. Mr. Cavallero said there was a study years ago on the many aspects of the Parish of the Holy Spirit, which involves three churches, cemeteries, and other properties. The rectory had gone into disrepair and had not been renovated since the 1960s and 1970s, so they decided to start renovating. He described the exterior work to brick-up a window, replace the fireplace that was removed in the 1900s, install a new chimney, and to install and screen a HVAC system and three compressors outside. The applicants submitted how they would screen the HVAC.

Chair Weglinski asked the reason for bricking over the window. Mr. Cavallero said it was partly for HVAC going through the wall and partly because the kitchen is narrow with two large windows and they need extra wall space, so they want to close one of the windows. Ms. Cavallero added that on this side of the rectory a window would be a privacy issue because the children would have a view of the rectory activities. This was the best option because it would keep costs the lowest. She hoped that whole section by the window removal would be screened if the shrubbery were approved. She noted that this part of the building was an addition and not original to the historic part of the house.

Mr. Bergeron asked where on the building the window was being replaced. Mr. Cavallero said that it is in the back, facing the parking lot. He added that because the brick installation would be painted with the rest of the building, no installation lines would be visible. The other window is on the side, facing Mercy Academy.

Chair Weglinski asked if most of the application details were covered during previous advice and comment. Ms. Cavallero said that visit was a courtesy to ensure the paint color chosen was appropriate. The colors of the trim and building were not related to bricking this window because the whole existing rectory's brick is already painted.

Mr. Clements provided a Staff report on this application. He reported that in conjunction with an interior renovation, an existing window is proposed to be removed and filled in with brick to facilitate the remodel of the kitchen area. The brick used to fill in the window will be pointed and painted to match the façade of the building. A second window in the kitchen area is proposed to be replaced with a new window of equal size. The new window will be a vinyl clad wooden window with simulated divided aluminum lites and permanently attached muntin grids. There are four windows located on the garage that are proposed to be replaced with fiberglass clad wooden windows with 7/8" simulated divided lite with spacer bar. The door to the garage is also proposed to be replaced with an insulated fiberglass clad wooden door with grills between the glass. Mr. Clements added that the door to the garage was not original to the building and upgrading the door was for energy efficiency.

Mr. Clements continued explaining that a new chimney is proposed to be installed on the southeast corner of the flat roof portion of the building. The applicant has included a historical photo (included in the packet) of the building that shows a chimney used to exist in the proposed location. The chimney will be 3 ft. in height and 16 in. x 16 in. area. It will be constructed with red/brown "St. Louis Used" style brick and gray mortar. The applicant proposes to install three HVAC condensers installed along the northern portion of the building. The applicant states in their narrative that this location is best suited to minimize the amount of tubing and wiring required. The HVAC system is proposed to be screened with four Canadian Hemlock evergreen shrubs at 7 ft. at mature height. Mr. Clements asked if the shrubs would be planted with a starting height of seven feet and the Cavallero's replied in the affirmative. Mr. Clements continued that all pack lighting fixtures are proposed to replace the existing wall packs on the building. The proposed fixtures are bronze in color with a compact, low-profile design, and will be installed as a downlight. The color temperature for the proposed wall packs is 3000k with a color rendering index of 72. Mr. Clements said the proposed wall pack meet the Planning Board site plan requirements. General repair and maintenance work is also proposed as part of this application. This work includes the restoration and repainting of window trim, repair to soffit woodwork, and removal and replacement of a wooden panel. The panel will be replaced with a masonry sill, wood framing, and PVC beadboard. Molded window surrounds will be cleaned, restored, and repainted as needed.

Mr. Clements continued on the specifics of the application as they apply to the HDC standards. Per Section 21.6.2 Specific Standards for Primary and Contributing Resources, the applicant has requested a waiver from subsection A.3, which states that 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) and D.7, which states that enlarging or reducing the window rough opening to fit new stock windows shall be prohibited. These waivers are required to infill the existing window in the kitchen to accommodate the remodel. The Commission needed to decide if these changes would not unduly affect the historical significance of the building.

Next, Mr. Clements reported that the applicant states in their narrative that, “This part of the building was an addition and not part of the original build. And while the window in question can be viewed from the street it adds nothing to the historic integrity of the property.” The Commission will need to determine if the proposed removal of the kitchen window would have significant negative impact to the contributing nature of the building to the District and whether it would be in keeping with the Commission’s standards. When deliberating the waiver request the Commission should consider the following waiver criteria: 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 the Historic District Regulations of this LDC equally well or better than would strict compliance with these regulations; and 3.) The waiver may be granted without substantial detriment to the intent of the Historic District Regulations and the public good.

Next, Mr. Clement reviewed the specific HDC standards regarding lighting fixtures that the Commission needed to consider. In Section 21.6.2.A.3 Specific Standards for Primary and Contributing Resources (Light Fixtures), the Commission does not have specific standards when it comes to lighting fixtures, however, as architectural features, the proposed wall packs will need to be appropriate for the architectural style of the building. Subsection A.3 states, “All architectural changes shall be appropriate either to the original style or appearance of the building or structure...” The Commission would need to determine if the proposed wall packs meet this standard.

Mr. Clements continued reviewing the requirements to consider for the chimney work. In Section 21.6.2.C.1 Roofs and Roof Structures (chimneys), it says the original or historic roofline shall not be altered. The applicant is proposing to install a chimney in a location where there was historically a chimney. The Commission will need to determine if the proposed materials and location of the chimney meets the Commission’s standard, especially subsection A.3 which states, “All architectural changes shall be appropriate either to the original style or appearance of the building or structure.”

Mr. Clements reviewed the HDC regulations for Section 21.6.2.D.2 Windows, which states that any historic or architecturally significant window that is proposed for replacement shall be

replaced with a window that conveys the same visual appearance in terms of overall dimensions and shape, size of glazed areas, muntin arrangement, and other design details as the windows to be replaced. In addition, it shall have: clearpaned, non-tinted glass (except to replace historic stained or other types of translucent or opaque glass); and 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. The applicant is proposing to replace existing wooden windows on the building with fiberglass clad wooden frame windows with simulated divided lites and permanently attached muntin grids. The grid pattern for the replacement windows will match the grid patterns of the existing windows to be replaced. Mr. Clements said it appeared that this standard had been met.

Next, Mr. Clements reviewed the HDC requirements for Section 21.6.2.E.1 Doors, which states that 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. The applicant proposed to replace an existing door that provides access to the garage. The door to be replaced is not an original historic door but is of a design and character that matches the existing windows on the garage that are proposed to be replaced as part of this application. The proposed replacement door is of the same color and grid layout as the existing door. The Commission would need to decide if this standard has been met.

Mr. Clements concluded his report on Section 21.5.4.A & B Utility, Service, and Mechanical Equipment. The standard for new mechanical units and supply line states, "Mechanical equipment (e.g. HVAC units) shall be ground mounted toward the rear of the building set as low to the ground as possible and with appropriate screening or landscaping to minimize visibility," and "New mechanical supply lines, pipes, and ductwork shall be placed in inconspicuous locations and/or concealed with architectural elements, such as downspouts." The applicant proposes to provide screening for the proposed HVAC mechanicals with evergreen shrubs. The applicant states in their narrative that the proposed location for the units will minimize the amount of wiring and tubing that will be required. The Commission would need to determine if this standard has been met.

Chair Weglinski said one thing that comes up often are the line sets that come from the outdoor units on the wall and go inside. He said these were not required to be screened before, but the application said downspouts or other thoughtful placement would be used. He asked what line sets would attach to the exterior wall. Mr. Cavallero said everything would be running inside the building, with nothing on the outside; it was costing them to have they sheetrock redone so all was inside the building.

With no public comments, Chair Weglinski closed the hearing for deliberations.

Mr. Bergeron said it looked like they had met all requirements and were doing the best they could with the building type and location to meet the regulations. He said the windows proposed looked similar to others the HDC had approved and that the chimney materials would blend

nically. Chair Weglinski said the elevations were clear and easy to understand and that concealing those line sets went above and beyond what the Commission would ask, which he appreciated.

The following motion by Councilor Workman was duly seconded by Mr. Bergeron. On a vote of 4–0, the Historic District Commission approved COA-2015-07, Modification #4, and the waivers from Section 21.6.3.A.3 & Section 21.6.3.D.7 of the Land Development Code for the request to infill an existing window opening, window, door, and light fixture replacement, and associated restoration and site work at 161-185 Main Street (TMP #584-006-000) as described in the plan set identified as “Parish of the Holy Spirit St. Bernard Church 173 Main Street Keene NH Repairs and Interior Design/Remodel,” prepared by DB Architects, dated June 23, 2022, and other application materials with no conditions.

Mr. Clements said the applicants would receive a Certificate of Appropriateness saying this application was approved, allowing them to move forward with their building permit.

5) **Staff Updates**

A) **Outreach Efforts – Informational Brochure**

Mr. Clements reported that things had been mostly quiet in the District and the Community Development Department had received few, if any, minor project applications. He mentioned the informational mailer the Commission had been working toward that would be mailed to every home in the District. He asked for the Commission’s approval to mail them in their current form. He noted that the QR code on this draft needed to be replaced. The Commission agreed that it was nice to see something new and refreshing after many years. Chair Weglinski asked how people would know they are receiving it because they are in the Historic District. Mr. Clements replied that it was a good point, and everyone agreed that it was prudent to include a cover letter explaining better. Mr. Clements would also edit the mailer to include the catch phrase, “you are the historic district.”

6) **New Business**

No new business ensued.

7) **Upcoming Dates of Interest**

A) **Next HDC Meeting: December 21, 2022 – 4:30 pm, City Hall 2nd Floor Council Chambers**

Mr. Clements was unsure the Commission would receive any applications before the deadline. He would be in communication.

B) **HDC Site Visit: December 21, 2022 – 3:30 pm (To be confirmed)**

8) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Weglinski adjourned the meeting at 5:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker
November 23, 2022

Reviewed and edited by,
Evan J. Clements, Planner