

HERITAGE COMMISSION

November 6, 2008

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers at 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, November 6, 2008, at 4:30 p.m.

Prior to the beginning of the meeting, the Concord Monitor was in attendance providing press coverage for the Heritage Commission's sign program, for those who wish to exhibit their research on and to celebrate their historic building's origins, history, or historic events. The Commission members in attendance were photographed with the display of the various signs that can be purchased.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

Chairperson Donovan called the meeting to order at 4:42 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Chairperson Philip Donovan, Carol Durgy Brooks, Dr. Douglas Black, James McConaha, Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Marilyn Fraser, Bryant Tolles, Robert Johnson, and Vice Chair Frederick Richards, who arrived at 4:45 p.m. City Planner Douglas Woodward was present and introduced Administrative Specialist Donna Muir from the Planning Division who will be taking minutes for the Commission.

Chairperson Donovan elevated the alternate members to full members for the meeting.

2. Minutes of October 2, 2008:

The Commission considered the minutes of the September 4, 2008, Heritage Commission meeting. Mr. Johnson made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Ms. Fraser seconded the motion. Chairperson Donovan asked if there was any discussion regarding the minutes. No discussion ensued. The motion to accept the minutes of the September 4, 2008, Heritage Commission meeting passed unanimously.

3. New Business:

a. Heritage Sign Program

Carol Durgy Brooks thanked Marilyn Fraser for coordinating the press coverage for the Heritage Commission sign program.

b. Laconia Savings Bank Proposal at 165 & 167 North Main Street

The Commission reviewed the Laconia Savings Bank proposal at 165 & 167 North Main Street for the purpose of providing comments to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. Two separate issues were brought before the Commission:

1). the proposed demolition of an existing addition on the back of the so-called “Woodman” building, and 2). the proposed renovation and additions to the Woodman building.

Attorney Ari Pollack of Gallagher, Callahan & Gartrell and Architect Dennis Mires of The Architects were present.

Robert Johnson stated that he may have a conflict of interest, as he was raised in Laconia and has been a customer of Laconia Savings Bank. He has also communicated with the bank regarding parking issues. Ari Pollack stated that he appreciated the disclosure, but had no objection to Mr. Johnson’s sitting on the Commission during the course of the discussions.

Discussion among the Commission members regarding the proposed demolition of an existing addition in the back of the building included the size of the building and whether it was large enough to be reviewed as part of the Demolition Review Committee. The demolition had originally been scheduled for the day following Chairperson Donovan’s notification. He stated that he asked that the demolition be held off until the Heritage Commission’s meeting, scheduled for November 6, 2008. Mr. Richards stated that he was the Chair of the Demolition Review Committee and wasn’t aware that the applicant would be present at the Heritage Commission meeting. Ms. Hengen questioned what portion of the building would be demolished. Pictures were passed around to the Commission members. Attorney Pollack provided a brief summary of the project and introduced Dennis Mires, the architect on the project. Mr. Mires described the existing project and its inclusion of both the Red Cross/Woodman building and the Gulf Station lot across the street. Ms. Hengen stated that she was a consultant to the previous owner and felt that the existing addition was added in the 1930s or 1940s. The rest of the building was built in the early 1800’s. Ms. Fraser asked who put on the addition, but no one was able to provide an answer. Mr. Richards walked around the building as part of the review by the Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC), and the ADRC decided that the existing addition was of no historic value. Sometime during the last 15-20 years, the addition was rehabbed and the “L” was completely renovated. With those changes, only the original structure was historically the same. Mr. McConaha stated that the question for the Commission was whether the structure is historically significant.

Ms. Hengen asked that the Commission take a recess so that the members of the Demolition Review Committee could discuss the project. Chairman Donovan recessed the meeting at 5:00 p.m. to allow time for the Demolition Review Committee to meet.

[Ms. Fraser left the meeting at 5:00 p.m.]

Chairman Donovan called the Heritage Commission meeting back in session at 5:04 p.m.

Mr. Richards stated that the Demolition Review Committee was unanimous in deciding that the addition was not of historical significance. The action of the Committee ended the demolition delay process.

Discussion among the Commission members regarding the proposed renovations and addition to the building included the following:

Mr. Mires reviewed the site plans describing for the Commission members the proposed changes and additions to the property, including the addition of a one-story entry, renovations of the current first floor, an addition of the remote drive-up teller building with three drive-up lanes, as well as landscaping and plantings, the parking and handicap access. He described the roof slope, gabled end walls, elevation changes, the walkways, the elevator, and the addition to the porch side of the building. Pictures were provided of the project area for Commission members' review.

Ms. Hengen had questions about whether the double gabled portion of the south elevation was flush with the brick portion of the building. It was noted that the site plan had been presented to the Architectural Design Review Committee and changes were made during that process. Plans highlighting the proposed views from south to north on Main Street, as well as east to west on Court Street were provided. Mr. Richards asked if there were any larger-scale drawings of the elevation of the new additions. A photo-reduced copy was provided to the Heritage Commission. Ms. Hengen asked for an explanation of the new ground level and entry. Chairperson Donovan asked about whether the window heights would be affected. Mr. Mires responded that there are only new windows on the south side of the building and no windows are planned for where the teller stations will be placed.

Mr. Richards felt that Attorney Pollock and Mr. Mires should be commended on the site plan and how it kept with the downtown/Main Street feel. He felt it was a nice gesture.

Chairman Donovan asked for more information on the entry way. Mr. Mires responded that the doors will be white aluminum and provide handicapped access. Mr. McConaha asked for information about the siding. The siding will be cement clapboard for longevity and low maintenance, according to Mr. Mires. The existing vinyl siding will be replaced with the cement clapboard.

Ms. Hengen felt that there was extensive glazing in the vestibule and thought that perhaps narrowing the vestibule would make it appear more stepped down. She asked about how far back the doors would be. Mr. Mires indicated the doors would be set back about six feet from the roof overhang. Ms. Hengen wanted to know if there would be a possibility of adding blind windows to the left of the entry and shrubs to soften the area. Mr. Johnson expressed concern about the blank west view wall those who would be driving east on Chapel Street would be faced with. Mr. Mires stated that the Planning Board asked that a barrier wall with landscaping be placed on the property between the bank and chiropractor's office. The wall will be two feet high and one foot thick. Mr. Johnson questioned whether any elements of the west wall were changed. The response was negative. He also inquired as to whether two sets of double windows could be put in on the second floor. Mr. Mires stated that two mock or blind windows could be placed on the first floor. Mr. Johnson stated that two sets of windows on the second floor would be

better and would break up the wall and add relief to the building. Mr. Richards asked whether the window issue had anything to do with the historical significance of the building. He also stated that during the day cars would be parked up against the building.

Mr. McConaha asked about the employee entrance on Chapel Street and the canopy over this entry. He wanted to know whether the canopy would be left to hang out over the building once the existing addition was demolished. Mr. Mires stated that the canopy would have more of a hip roof design.

Ms. Brooks asked whether the back of the building, the view from the chiropractor's office, would have plantings to soften the view. Mr. Mires stated that because the parking would be right up against the building there would be no room for any type of plantings or landscaping. There would, however, be plantings at the entry to the parking lot on the Chapel Street side to screen the parking area.

Chairperson Donovan requested that the issues be summarized so that recommendations could be submitted to the Division of Historical Resources. Mr. Richards stated that the Heritage Commission's approach of design review issues should be limited to the history of old buildings and what could or could not have been on the back of other buildings of that period. He didn't feel that it is the purview of the Heritage Commission to fine-tune and redesign the plans. He also stated that he was encouraged by what has been done already with the designs.

Chairperson Donovan stated that the Division of Historical Resources seemed to have issues with the proposed entrance to the building looking more commercial than the rest of the building. Mr. Mires stated that he wasn't sure what the concerns are.

Mr. McConaha asked whether the entire structure would be white. Mr. Mires stated that the Architectural Design Review Committee requested that the entire structure be white.

Ms. Brooks asked about the plantings and whether lighting would be present in the back portion of the building. Mr. Mires stated that there would be wall-mounted lights, which would wash the wall and light the parking area. He also stated that the light fixtures have been approved by the Planning Board and are traditional. He showed Commission members pictures of the lighting fixtures.

Ms. Hengen asked if it would be possible to scale back the glazing of the entryway, as it seems excessive. She also asked whether the entryway could be reduced by two feet on both sides. Mr. Mires indicated that it was not feasible as it would reduce the interior space too much.

Mr. Richards made a motion to approve the plans as submitted. Dr. Black seconded the motion. Chairperson Donovan asked if there was any further discussion regarding the motion. There was no discussion. The motion to accept the plans as submitted passed unanimously.

Chairman Donovan stated that a letter to the Division of Historical Resources would be drafted listing the Heritage Commission's concerns – the lack of windows on the west and south walls and the possible use of blind windows on these walls, and the concern with the scale of the entryway. Mr. Richards asked that comments be written into the letter regarding the good design for the re-use of the property.

[Attorney Pollack and Mr. Mires left the meeting at 6:10 p.m.]

4. Old Business:

4a. Historic Agricultural Resources Survey:

Chairman Donovan stated that Ms. Hengen would like more time at next month's meeting to provide a complete report on the project. She did state that all field work was nearly completed and the necessary information was acquired. The team is now in the process of putting everything together, and she would provide highlights of the findings at next month's meeting. She also stated that with the exception of two, the landowners were very supportive of the project. Ms. Hengen stated that a possible Phase II of the project would be able to incorporate other barns which are situated on less land than the framework called for during Phase I.

Ms. Brooks asked that Marilyn Fraser be thanked via the minutes for contacting the *Concord Monitor Insider* to do an expose on the Heritage Commission sign program, and perhaps she would be able to contact the *Insider* about doing something on the barn project.

Ms. Hengen stated that a few of the items that stood out for her about the project included that many of the barns were built in the English Form and there were many gabled end barns from the 1800 – 1810 era. She would also like to see a project done regarding the historic agricultural neighborhoods, such as River Road, Little Pond Road, and Stickney Hill Road. She stated that she and Roger Hawk would also like to connect with the Conservation Commission regarding conservation easements on these agricultural neighborhoods.

4b. Miscellany:

Mr. McConaha stated that he had pictures available of granite culverts and gullies from the Rattlesnake Brook area of the city, which he passed around to the Commission.

Ms. Hengen stated that during her research on the barns, she found two pictures that may be of interest to the Commission members -- one picture showed former Planning Director Randall Raymond on his first day in the office with the City's first Planning Director, Gustaf Lehtinen, and the other picture showed both gentlemen reviewing plans. The pictures were dated August 4, 1969 and June 23, 1971, respectively.

Mr. Johnson stated that he had sent a letter to the City Manager regarding the Issac Hill marker, and received a response on October 16, 2008. The response stated that there was an internal meeting scheduled for November 18, 2008, at 4:00 p.m., with the City Manager and members of his staff.

Ms. Hengen also found an article dated July 31, 1969, regarding the Deacon Joseph marker being in the wrong place.

Since there was no further business or discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Brooks at 6:28 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Richards seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Donna Muir
Administrative Specialist
Planning Division