



CITY OF STAMFORD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
P.O. Box 10152
STAMFORD, CT 06904 -2152

(FINAL) Minutes of the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC)

Date: Regular Meeting held: May 1, 2018
Location: 6th Floor Safety Training Room
Stamford Government Center
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06904
Present: Lynn Drobbin, Anne Goslin, David Woods, Barry Hersh
Alternates: Rebecca Shannonhouse, Elena Kalman

REGULAR MEETING

I. Call to order (Meeting called to order 7:08 p.m.)

A motion was made to have R. Shannonhouse and E. Kalman assigned as voting members for this meeting to make a full number of 5 Commissioners.

(The motion was moved by A Goslin and seconded by D. Woods and carried unanimously.)

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2018 meeting. A. Goslin noted that the spelling of the name Vineeta Mathur should be corrected.

(The motion was moved by L. Drobbin and seconded by A. Goslin and carried unanimously.)

III. New Business

A. St. John's Tower Replacement

Participants: Lynn Drobbin, Renee Kahn, Lisa Feinberg, of Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey, and Jill Smyth.

1. L. Drobbin introduced the St. John's Towers proposal. They are part of three towers that were constructed in the 1970's and now are a part of a plan for redevelopment or reconstruction. She further noted that HPAC needs to open up the discussion to any review by the Commission. The plans for the new design of a building to replace the tower at Site A have not been submitted to HPAC and are in the process of submittals to the City's Land Use Boards. Lisa Feinberg, of Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey, is available for comment. They have not prepared a submission to HPAC as of yet.



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2. A. Goslin noted she understands the buildings were designed by Victor Bisharat, as were numerous other buildings in the City. They probably should be saved. She also said that they are not in good shape. D. Woods noted they were designed for a different use and in a different context in the downtown than what is there now. The neighborhood has changed. He said they are not in good shape and does not believe they should be saved. The downtown has changed which makes them look out of place.
3. L. Feinberg clarified that Tower A is currently planned to be raised with a new Sam Fuller housing/mixed use development on that parcel. The concept plans have been distributed to the Commission. She further noted that it is likely the BMR funds from the Tower A site will be used by St. John's to help to restore or redevelop the other two Towers B and C. She said Tower A has been empty for three years. There are PCBs. If this project at the Tower A site happens, then the other two towers are more likely to stay and be redeveloped. She noted that the towers have PCPs and cannot obtain financing for redevelopment. But she said that affordable housing can get financing with the PCBs remaining.
4. Jill Smith noted that she has attended a meeting and the developers for Towers B & C are receptive to discussion about the design changes. It is recommended that HPAC reach out to them. Renee Kahn said she does think the towers are too short and not in good shape. But she does want to see if Tower A can be saved and if Mr. Fuller can find a way to incorporate the building in the new design. D. Woods noted this is very difficult to do because the redesign will not easily fit with the new design and materials. He also noted that the new building design concepts, which were sent to the Commission, do not look very good. They look similar to Capelli tower skin design. (Same architecture firm.) He also noted the plans show the same panels covering the parking garage that are on the Capelli towers across the street. He further said that this design is very bad for Tresser Boulevard and the corner of Atlantic and Tresser. He has concerns the same details will look very bad on the most important street in the City and across from the Government Center. Lynn further noted the new design needs to address the pedestrian traffic and the circulation from the train station up Washington Boulevard towards U-Conn and Columbus Park.
5. Lisa also said there was some indication the plans for Towers B and C will put a new curtain wall on the building. David further noted that that will be difficult to do and incorporate the balconies. As a result, the buildings will not be restored. They will have a whole new design. The development and the City may be better off taking the buildings down. Barry added the buildings are not really significant, and they do not look great in the current neighborhood. He recommends allowing the development teams to tear them down.
6. L. Drobbin said HPAC needs to write a statement about the significance of the buildings and open up a dialogue with the development team. She said the buildings are under 50 years old and will not necessarily come before HPAC for demo review. The new construction plans may not come before HPAC for review.



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7. A resolution was discussed. Lynn proposed writing an e-mail memo to the development teams and the City with bullet points. Anne and David will help with reviewing the email before it is sent out. The group generally agreed with these bullet points for the memo: (a) The group is not opposing demolition, but HPAC generally agrees the buildings are an important part of the City's history and are important as a part of the body of work by Mr. Bisharat dating to 1971. The buildings are also a part of the mid-century modern architecture that occurred with the City's urban renewal in the 1970's; (b) HPAC should address the design of the replacement building at Site A. The design further needs to carefully consider planning for the base that can address the pedestrian scale and activity; (c) HPAC recommends the new design incorporate some contextual architecture so the building addresses the neighborhood and the history of Stamford at this important site; (d) The buildings should be allowed a HABS type documentation before they are demolished or redeveloped; (e) HPAC should engage in a dialogue with the developers for the design of the new façade for the buildings at Site B & C, with the St. John's Urban Development Corp. It was agreed Anne will do a draft to be reviewed by the Commission.

(The motion was made by L. Drobbin and seconded by A. Goslin and carried unanimously.)

IV. Old Business

A. Revisions to 7.3 Application - 159 Grove Street - Daniel Kolich

Participants: Joseph Capalbo, Attorney representing Mr. Kolich; Russell Rosicki, Design R Architects; Renee Kahn and Daniel Kolich, Owner.

1. Mr. Capalbo said this property is at 159 Grove Street. There is currently a Queen Ann style home, which is a two-family house. There was a referral from the Zoning Board to HPAC for review. Originally, the approvals allow two units in the rear. The HPAC review requested consideration of four items: (a) the roof not go above the existing; (b) the overhang at the drive be reduced; (c) the parking be considered; and (d) match taller window proportions to the existing house.
2. Mr. Capalbo noted they are returning for review of one item - the roof of the new construction. The roof was redesigned to match the height, the condition was approved and the project was commenced. He further stated the project was not viable to meet the requirements. He said the banks would not lend on the reduced foot print of the units. The team made some modifications that put the new roof about 1½ feet above the existing roof. He also said they can add about 750 square feet in extra living space and "make the project viable." They are presenting to HPAC to ask for relief from the height restriction and keep the 7.3 Application. They say this will have no impact on the existing structure in front. They still have to go back to the Zoning Board to modify the application.
3. Mr. Rosicki said they looked at the view angles from various points and claim most people will not be able to see the roof above the front existing roof. The historical Queen Ann house will still be restored. He claims they have uncovered some of the siding and believe the color was mustard yellow. They will follow that and Renee Kahn's direction.



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4. Elena sad there are a few details that are problematic. The rendering misses some brackets. She noted that the 3-D model does not look correct. The massing of the original building looks off. The architect said, yes it is just a quick 3-D model rendering. She also said with the 7.3 Application there is a requirement that there is a more thorough restoration of the original. Mr. Rosicki agreed and does intend to restore the building.
5. Renee added that Mr. Kolich cannot make any mistakes. She will be required to sign off on it. She said this house is pretty easy. The clapboards are in good shape under the siding. The porch is all there. She is concerned about the massing at the back but will stay out of that issue. L. Drobbin added she wants the porch knee wall (railings) to be shown on the plans. She wants to make sure it is restored properly. Elena said the only view of the back massing is along the front façade. L. Drobbin is OK with the massing at back and just wants the front to respect the original detailing.
6. Anne noted again that the previous issues were with the cantilever, the window compatibility, the height of the roof and the parking. Mr. Capalbo reviewed the cantilever issue. They added a bay window along the drive. The parking was resolved with the City. Mr Rosicki only said that the window proportions for the back part are set by the plan and uses. They all agreed that the big issue is the restoration of the front building.

There was a discussion that HPAC should provide an approval of the massing at the back portion with confirmation that the front building will be restored with Renee's direction. The brackets and the railing, the door and the color of the siding are important. Anne will provide the letter.

(A motion was made by A. Goslin and seconded by B. Hersh and passed unanimously.)

B. Atlantic Street Post Office - Review of Revisions to Plans

Participants: Elena Kalman provided an update on the progress.

1. Elena said at first it did not pass the tax credit application. There has been some disagreement. Some portions of the post office have been redesigned so that the project can receive the tax credits. It is being reviewed by the CT Trust right now before it is sent to SHPO for approval and forwarding on to federal approval. She noted that HPAC should not review it at this point. This is just an information update
2. Elena also said the partial demolition of the Annex portion was not acceptable to SHPO. The new plans show that the façade along Federal Street will remain as is. The significant change is that there is no more Porte Cochere. The entrance to the West Tower will be off of Federal Street. The auto access has been redesigned so the entry is off of Federal Street and does not use the Annex portion. The current plans show a space between the Tower and the Annex. It looks like it is a bridge along the West Annex façade. The remaining West elevation of the Annex may be problematic. More review is needed.



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It was generally agreed that Lynn should write an email stating that HPAC would like to have some periodic oversight. In addition, HPAC does not need to review the plans but would like to have an update on the design for the West elevation of the Annex as it proceeds.

(The item was tabled without further decision. Review of status will be on going.)

C. Review of Modified Tax Amendment Regarding Adaptive Reuse at High Ridge Park

1. L. Drobbin gave the Commission an update on the progress with Land Use submittals and the Text Change application. She said it has not yet been approved. There were several issues that needed to be addressed. Lisa Feinberg noted the Hearing is closed at this point. There were some issues related to requirements for site plans before various Boards. The setback issue is being addressed. There is a stipulation under consideration for this project. Independent study and reports for noise, light, and traffic need to be paid for by the owners for submission to the City. She said, at this point, the Zoning Board just needs to deliberate and decide.

(The item was tabled without further decision. Review of status will be on going.)

V. Adjournment

Lynn Drobbin adjourned the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Drafted by: David Woods - May 7, 2018
Secretary: Stamford, Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

Meetings are normally on the second Tuesday of the month starting at 7:00 p.m. in the 6th Floor Safety Training Room. The next meeting is planned for June 5, 2018.