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CITY OF STAMFORD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
STAMFORD, CT 06904-2152

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

Date: Regular meeting held: December 13, 2021
(Postponed from December 7, 2021 due to technical difficulties related to Zoom)

Location: Via Zoom

Present: David Woods, Rebecca Shannonhouse, Dee Davis Oberwetter and
Claire Fishman (Alternate)

Absent: Barry Hersh and Elena Kalman

REGULAR MEETING

I. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by HPAC Chair, David Woods.
The Commission voted unanimously to make Claire Fishman a voting member for the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes for November 2, 2021.

A motion was made by D. Davis to accept the minutes; it was seconded by R. Shannonhouse, and the vote was carried unanimously.

III. New Business.

A. Zoning Application #221-24 - Old Town Square, LLC

160 Atlantic Street

Presenters: John F. X. Leydon, Esq.; Shelly Nichani (Owner) and Sotheby Chung (Architect).

The Commission reviewed the drawings and submission materials on referral from the Zoning Board. The property is within the Downtown Historic District and is a contributing structure within the district. The applicant is seeking Special Exceptions to develop a hotel on the site of the former First County Bank, which is adjacent to Veterans' Park.

It is a classic building that was built around 1939 and is a significant part of downtown Stamford. The development would add eight floors, which would accommodate 84 rooms and seven suites. They also anticipate having a restaurant on-site with outdoor dining.

J. Leydon made the presentation with S. Chung also participating to answer questions from HPAC members regarding the elevation drawings.

The applicant is not seeking any bonuses and will be saving as much of the bank building as possible, along with its historic features.



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D. Woods asked about requirements that may be necessary for a hotel, such as drop-off and parking. J. Leydon said drop-off will be in the rear of the building. One of the municipal parking garages should also be available. There will be valet parking as well.

D. Woods asked for comments/questions from the public. Judy Norinsky, President of Historic Neighborhood Preservation, inquired about the bricks that will be used. Sue Halpern, President of the South End NRZ, asked about the hotel's use of a portion of Veterans' Park.

The following resolution was drafted by the Commission:

1. The Commission commends the owners for proposing to retain the historic structure and its materials and details, with the understanding that some minor corrections may be required. It is also understood the back (northeast side) of the building will be revised so it can be incorporated into the new structure.
2. The Commission requests the south-facing façade windows of the main hall be restored pending an investigation of the original openings. It also encourages placing new windows (that match the windows on the north side), at those locations, if it proves to be feasible.
3. The Commission requested, and the owner agreed, to provide "full width" brick in lieu of the proposed "thin" brick. This correction also requires the owner's architect to revise the proposed materials and details for cornice lines, and pilasters, and window heads and sills. It was also noted the façade, including window placements, needs to be corrected to match the plans that were presented.
4. The Commission requested that the materials used in the new construction match the brick shape and color, and the limestone color that is on the historic façade. It is understood that these materials are difficult to match. The Commission further offers to review the material selections on-site, to confirm the compatibility.

D. Davis made a motion to accept the resolution as stated; it was seconded by C. Fishman and carried unanimously.

At a later date, the Commission will review the historic property for inclusion in Cultural Resources Inventory.

The Commission made a determination to have the owners return, and present corrections or improvements at the next meeting.

The Commission further requested the corrections noted above be re-submitted to Vineeta Mathur, Acting Principal Planner, at the City and forwarded to HPAC for review prior to the next meeting attended by the owners for presentation.



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B. Zoning Application #221-29 - South End Pacific, LLC

686 - 690 Pacific Street & 171 Henry Street.

Presenter: Raymond Mazzeo, Redniss & Mead.

The Commission reviewed the drawings and submission materials, which were forwarded to HPAC as a Section 7.3 historic application.

R. Mazzeo made the presentation, including a review of the historic improvements being made to the buildings.

Following questions from HPAC members, D. Woods asked for comments from the public. S. Halpern, of the NRZ, and Elizabeth McCauley, of the South End, spoke in support of the project.

The Commission made a determination to support the project as presented, with the following resolution:

1. The Commission commends the owners for addressing the informal comments that were provided by the Commission members at the October meeting, including the historic building and site improvements.
2. The Commission supports the improvements to the three historic properties as proposed under Section 7.3 guidelines. There is an additional request for the church property to clean up PVC pipes and utility connections at the corner facing Pacific Street.
3. The Commission requests a resolution of the design of the top cornice line, and the base/intermediate cornice line - materials and details (as shown in gray tone on the elevation). In addition, the Commission requests the brackets be removed at the inset cornice line, and an alternative be proposed that works with the outer cornice line. The use of a stone or precast masonry product is encouraged.
4. It was agreed the owner's architect will simplify the materials and details at the base of the building, including coordination of the stone pilasters and their related cornice line.

The Commission further agreed to allow the owners to submit the requested revisions electronically for final review.

D. Davis made motion to accept the resolution; it was seconded by R. Shannonhouse and carried unanimously.

At a later date, HPAC will review the historic properties for inclusion in the Cultural Resources Inventory.

IV. Old Business

A. South End Updates.

Presenter: David Woods, Chair

D. Woods said he sat in on a Zoom meeting organized by BLT and the State of CT about the Blickensderfer site. The back (perhaps 1/6 of the building) is going to have to be demolished due to PCB contamination. The work should take three to six months.



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B. South End Grant Updates.

Presenter: David Woods, Chair

There will be a meeting at the Lathon Wider House on January 18, 2022 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. D. Woods has not heard anything else from SHPO since the last meeting. D. Davis agreed to manage HPAC's representation for these meetings.

C. Historic Brochure Progress.

Presenter: Rebecca Shannonhouse, Commissioner

R. Shannonhouse updated the Commission on the grants process and her communications with Joseph Hickey, Grants Coordinator, for the City of Stamford. J. Hickey explained that HPAC would need approval from Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief, to apply for a grant and move ahead on this project. R. Shannonhouse agreed to email R. Blessing to ask for his approval.

D. Demolition Permit Applications.

TBD

D. Woods feels there are no applications that should come before HPAC. J. Norinsky asked why the house at 280 Ocean Drive East should not come before HPAC. D. Woods said he does not believe it is HPAC's responsibility to get involved with private single-family residences outside of Historic Districts and falls instead within HNP's purview. J. Norinsky said she would lift the stay and ask the owner to document it with the Historical Society.

E. Miscellaneous Future Projects.

General Discussion

V. Adjournment

D. Woods adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m. (There was no further discussion)

Written by: Rebecca Shannonhouse
Secretary, Historic Preservation Advisory Commission
December 22, 2021

Meetings are normally held on the first Tuesday of the month starting at 7:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2022 via Zoom.