



City of New Bedford

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

133 William Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740

Telephone: (508) 979.1488

JONATHAN F. MITCHELL
MAYOR

MINUTES

March 4, 2019

City Hall, Room 314, 133 William Street

Members Present:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Diana Henry, Chair | James Lopes |
| Bill King, Vice Chair | Janine da Silva |
| Tabitha Harkin, City Planner | Jennifer White Smith |
| Bill Barr | Anna Surma |
| Alex Jardin | |
| <i>Secretary:</i> | |
| Anne Louro, Preservation Planner | |

Call to Order:

D. Henry called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

Roll Call:

A formal roll call was conducted confirming a quorum of the members present as stated above. Tabitha Harkin stated that she would be recusing herself from voting on the 117 Union Street project, as the Planning Division is coordinating the project's permitting through several boards.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the February 4, 2019 public meeting were approved.

Public Hearings:

Case #2019.04 – 117 Union Street (Map 53, Lots 40,41,215,216)

Certificate of Appropriateness: New infill Construction

MOTION to open the public hearing. Moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. Barr.

Motion carried.

Michael Galasso, Director of the New Bedford Development Corporation and Tamara Roy, Principle Architect at Stantec, presented the project. Mr. Galasso Stated that architect, Kit Wise was currently working on the Moby Dick Building, which was part of the project, but not part of the current application or presentation. He noted that it will come before the board in the near future.

Mr. Galasso briefly described the current conditions of the site and noted that his team has met with the city's planning staff, housing development staff, the Mayor, neighbors and local businesses relative to the project. He thanked the members for their past comments related to the project, which he stated have been incorporated into their updated plan. He stated that the proposed project was a mixed- use, mixed- income development with 40% of the units reserved for those meeting 40% to 60% of median income, trying to serve the downtown workforce.

Tamara Roy reviewed the various adjustments that had previously been applied to the design based on commission members' feedback. Tamara describe the changes to include the reduction of height on the "west building", lightening of material colors, set back on the fifth floor's North East corner, adjusting of window rhythms along the East facade, adding more detail to the store front base, improving and refining the entries and canopy, and making the cornice more prominent.

Ms. Roy acknowledged that the civil drawings did not match the architectural drawings but will be updated. She noted changes such as the material colors on the fifth floor which had different panel patterns and colors to differentiate the two buildings. She also affirmed that the brick now wraps around the West façade. She brought attention to the fifth floor's North East corner step- back, which was in response to previous comments.

Ms. Roy reviewed the plan drawings and the door locations, noting the Commission's desire to have multiple entrances along the East façade, but describe the difficulty that would pose due to site slope, and therefore they chose a centered entry along the East façade.

Mrs. Roy Reviewed the rooftop mechanicals, noting the requirement of a generator, which she apologized was not shown in the plan section or elevations. She noted the dimensions of the generator, which would be between 10 feet and 12 feet in height, and would be positioned as far back as possible, along with the energy recovery unit and the elevator overrun.

There was discussion regarding sightlines and screening possibilities for the rooftop mechanicals. Miss Roy noted that often screening becomes more visible than the mechanical units themselves, and there are dimensional clearances which must be met. A. Louro noted that screening of rooftop mechanicals has been a District policy and that she would at least like to see it explored. J. da Silva asked for sightline renderings of the building from Custom House Square. Mrs. Roy affirmed that they would study screening of the roof rooftop mechanicals.

B. Barr inquired whether the mechanicals could be located on the Moby Dick Building in order to reduce height massing. Mr. Galasso an Ms. Roy noted that there were challenges associated with that idea, but that they would explore that possibility.

Ms. Roy reviewed the elevations, with attention to the West façade, and noted the windows discrepancy and the ability to add a window in the bathroom along the West wall.

There was brief discussion regarding the building connections and shared uses to the Moby Dick building, with A. Louro noting the confusion, as the two sites are being reviewed separately. In response to T. Harkin, Mr. Galasso stated that architect Kit Wise had fallen behind in the planning of the Moby Dick building and will be submitting plans within the next two weeks. He also confirmed that the buildings would be under common ownership and that the Moby Dick building was part of the site acquisition.

Ms. Roy reviewed the site plan area associated with the rear of the Moby Dick site, describing the proposed live work space, transformer location and parking area. She explained that they were challenges related to clearances in the utility sightings.

Mrs. Roy then reviewed the materials palette with the members, describing the color tones and the color matching of the various materials. She then reviewed a contextual 3 -D model demonstrating the volume of the building from different sight perspectives.

In response to T. Harkin, Ms. Roy stated that they would conduct a shadow study. A. Jardin confirmed the desire to see one as well, although he did not believe that it would have a huge impact on the park; particularly in the summer when the sun is at a higher angle. A. Surma expressed her desire for a wider 8" clapboard along the fifth story elevation and sought a large-scale section of a more protruding cornice, with consensus from B. Barr. T. Roy confirmed she would provide those items in a plan revision. A. Surma also noted the balcony element could

be cleaner, however she liked the double top rail. A. Louro expressed her concern with the balcony installation method, preferring it to be inset to the window openings.

J. da Silva questioned the brick color tone choices. B. Barr felt it was browner than expected, recognizing the desire not to color match the adjacent buildings, but he expected it to be closer in their color tones. He expressed his desire for the brick color to be closer to the downtown color palette and not to push the modern aesthetic. Members discussed their common desire for a more reddish tone. T. Roy noted she would re-work the color palette.

Members reviewed the brick patterning, with T. Roy noting the desire to achieve depth in the use of a brick pattern, perhaps using a herring bone or a checkerboard pattern. She noted that the pattern had not yet been determined and members specified that it would require approval.

B. Barr complemented Ms. Roy for responding to members' previous comments; however, moving forward he thought the rooftop mechanicals would be a challenge and there was a need to address this issue. He also noted the need to visualize the mechanicals in the drawings to allow for discussion. A. Louro suggested the usefulness of sightline perspectives to demonstrate the mechanicals' visibility. Members suggested developing the sightlines from locations in front of the Custom House Square Building and near the Custom House Square Park arbor.

In response to A. Louro, Mr. Galasso stated that Eversource currently had a moratorium for rooftop solar panels in the downtown and that he planned on investigating that issue further. He stated he would like to use rooftop solar panels and members requested that solar panels be shown on future drawings for discussion purposes.

There was brief discussion regarding the location of the gas meters, with agreement that they could potentially be screened, which could be determined "in the field". There was also the question as to whether a dumpster may be required, with T. Roy responding that the trash compactor should be sufficient to not warrant a dumpster.

Members discussed windows, with B. Barr seeking the extra bathroom windows on the west façade. T. Roy confirmed that the fifth floor windows would be casement windows and would provide a window schedule.

A. Louro requested a detail drawing of the main entries and awnings, explaining that the exposed steel structure design was not fully expressed in the drawings. A. Surma asked about the entry awning's projection, noting that it is not demonstrated in the elevations. T. Roy affirmed that she would provide those details and have them visible in future elevation drawings.

There was brief discussion regarding the history of the District's sidewalk material plans dating back to 1976 and the desire to follow that plan with any sidewalk material changes or additions. A. Louro noted that the sidewalk materials were potentially an item that could be determined "in the field", along with any possible tree relocations.

Members discussed the Barker's Lane elevation where a potential wall mural may be located, with the acknowledgement that art is temporary, and therefore the desire to see a blank wall in future elevations. J. da Silva noted that a future wall mural would require the Commission's approval.

T. Roy confirmed that lighting and signage had not yet been determined and they would return for those approvals.

J. White-Smith noted the challenge of accepting the fifth floor and member's reluctance towards it. She stated that perhaps the deeper cornice could reduce the visual impact of the fifth floor. B. Barr inquired about the fifth floor's ceiling height; reiterating the Commission's desire to reduce the building height, but also conceded to the applicant's statement that the fifth floor is necessary for the project's success. He also noted the architect's positive response in addressing the member's concerns, but still wanted a shorter top floor.

There was brief discussion regarding the possibility of further setbacks and extending the cornice along the west wall to further mask the fifth floor. A. Surma requested that the architect explore setting the fifth floor back at least 12" along the west façade, along with a deep cornice to help that elevation visually recede.

Public Comments:

Teri Bernert, Director of the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE), addressed the Commission stating that WHALE owns two buildings just west of the site. Ms. Bernert questioned the brick mortar widths noting the desire to see a thinner grout line than presented. She also suggested the use of Boral over Hardieboard as a material choice. She also questioned the storefront entries and the lack of undulation along the east façade and suggested the use of vestibules. She also acknowledged the attempt to make an architectural distinction between the "two buildings", however she would prefer to see a variation in the heights.

T. Roy responded to Ms. Bernert's comments stating that they did not view the east storefront entry as a primary entry; only to be used in the warmer weather to accommodate a sidewalk café, and that she would explore setting back the east storefront entry. She also confirmed that the storefront system was aluminum and that the building window manufacturer had not yet been confirmed. Ms. Roy also stated that in an effort to further distinguish the "two buildings" she would explore different cornice colors or projections for each building.

Paul Pawloski sought consideration for an additional cornice treatment to allow for a more sympathetic relationship to the adjacent buildings. He also noted the significance of the site's corner location and the historic use of a retail entrance at the corner, which would help to animate all the street fronts.

Members briefly discussed the corner entry proposition which led to discussion relative to the existing large single retail space and the concern that it did not align itself with the existing retail market conditions in the downtown. Members reiterated their desire to see a second entrance along the east façade, which potentially could allow for an additional retail space.

T. Roy reiterated the challenge of adding a second entry due to the topography, requiring the need for additional interior stairs and ramps. B. Barr suggested the possibility of awnings along the storefront to help animate the flat plane of glass. T. Roy agreed that they would explore the use of awning.

There was further discussion regarding the potential use of a secondary cornice or brick course belt along the "west building" to better align it to the adjacent streetscape's heights and patternings. T. Roy voiced her reluctance to explore that design feature, as she felt it was a deviation from the past design considerations.

MOTION to close the public hearing. Moved B. King and seconded by J da Silva.
Motion carried.

Mr. Galasso referred to upcoming funding and acquisition deadlines and sought the scheduling of a special meeting. A. Louro stated that due to the scheduling and timing of other board approvals, the scheduling of a special meeting would be unnecessary. T. Roy asked if A. Louro could distribute materials to the members for review and provide their feedback to her. A. Louro affirmed that she could, however that due to the open meeting laws, there should not be an expectation that members could review and deliberate in anticipation of an approval of the next meeting. In an effort to facilitate the forward movement of the review, A. Louro stated that she would review her meeting notes and send Ms. Roy a list of the items discussed at the meeting for revisions.

MOTION to continue the public hearing to April 1, 2019. Moved B. King and seconded by B. Barr.
Motion carried.

Other:

- **Vote: Janine da Silva as representative to CPC**

J. da Silva stated that her three year term representing the NBHC on the CPC was expiring and asked whether there was any interest in someone else serving in that role. Seeing none, a motion was made by J. Lopes and seconded by B. Barr to have J. da Silva continue in that role. The motion carried.

- **Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey & Planning Grant Submission - Waterfront Historic Resources Survey**

A. Louro informed members that she had submitted a grant which would conduct a waterfront survey resulting in approximately 60-75 Inventory and Area Forms for an area that is poised to experience redevelopment.

- **Support Letter – National Trust for Historic Preservation: Strand Theatre**

A. Louro informed members that she had provided a letter in support of a grant opportunity which WHALE was pursuing for the Strand Theatre.

- **Non-Historic Demolition Request -95 Bedford Street -Barn Structure**

A. Louro informed members that a communication had been sent to the City Council relative to the non-historic classification of a barn structure that was on the verge of collapse and was a potential safety concern.

Adjourn:

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was moved by B. King and seconded by B. Barr. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

NEXT MEETING Monday, April 1, 2019

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Louro

Secretary to the Historical Commission
Preservation Planner