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STAFF REPORT

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

July 10, 2017

APPLICATION FOR DEMOLITION

899 Pleasant Street
(Map: 79, Lots: 300,301,302,304,499)
Request to demolish a circa 1876 carriage house.

APPLICANT:

Architectural Consulting Group, Inc.
c/o Michael W. Josefek, President
2206 Acushnet Avenue
New Bedford, MA 02745

OWNER:

89 Pleasant Street, LLC
32 Hillman Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

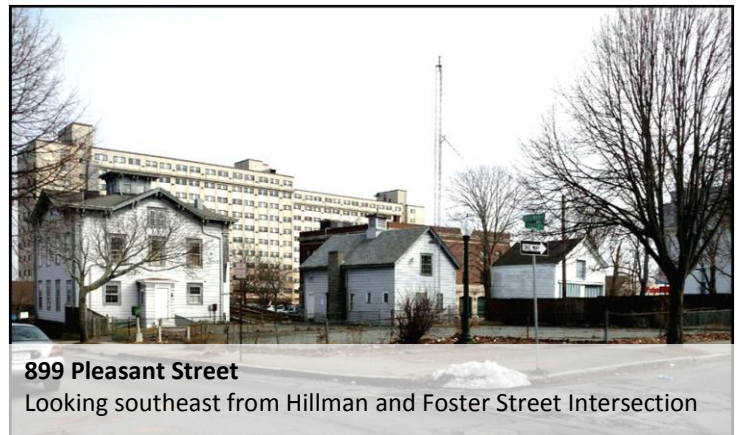


899 Pleasant Street
Looking northwest from Purchase Street

OVERVIEW OF REQUEST: The applicant is seeking demolition of a circa 1876 carriage house to accommodate parking for the redevelopment of the main structure for use as a dental office.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The 25,424 sq. ft property is comprised of five parcels of land located between North and Hillman Streets, and Pleasant and Foster Streets. The primary structure, historically referred to as the Horace Humphrey House and the carriage house are situated on a lot located on the southwest corner of Pleasant and Hillman Streets. The area west of the Humphrey House is a paved parking lot, and a grass surface is located along the southern Pleasant street portion of the property.

The Humphrey House (ca. 1867) previously had been adapted for use as professional offices and is currently vacant. The current owner recently purchased the property with the intent to develop the house into a dental office and other professional tenants with the construction of a two storey addition to the rear (west side).



899 Pleasant Street
Looking southeast from Hillman and Foster Street Intersection

A one and one-half storey gable-end carriage house (ca. 1876) is located south of the Humphrey House, facing Pleasant Street. The carriage house is rectangular in shape and its sill plate sits on a shallow stone foundation. The roof material is asphalt with a ventilating cupola and accompanying weathervane located at the center of the roof

ridge. The original clapboard siding has been covered with aluminum siding and all the wood sash windows appear original. On the east façade exists a door opening with a three part horizontal transom above. The original carriage door has been replaced with a vertical garage door. A six over six wood sash window is located adjacent to the door on the first storey, with a hay door opening centered in the gable. The hay door has been replaced with an eight over eight wood sash window. The south façade has one first storey window. The rear façade (west) has a single entry door, which has been covered, and a six over six wood sash window is located adjacent to the door on the first storey, with a window centered in the gable. The north façade has a single door towards the front of the building, a full size



sash window and two small windows on the first storey, and a small window on the upper storey, centered over the door entry. A contemporary concrete block chimney exists on this façade.

CITY PERMITTING:

The development project at 899 Pleasant Street requires several city permits and board reviews. Prior to formal permitting submissions, in late 2016 the applicant and owner met with the city’s Permitting Task Force to participate in an informal review of the development proposal, which at that time determined that the project would require a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals and Site Plan Review from the Planning Board.

At the Permitting Task Force meeting, the applicant presented a conceptual proposal for the redevelopment of the property for its intended use as a dental office and other professional offices, which included an architecturally sensitive two storey addition to the rear of the Humphrey House and the relocation of the carriage house to the southern portion of the property in order to accommodate parking.

Zoning Board of Appeals

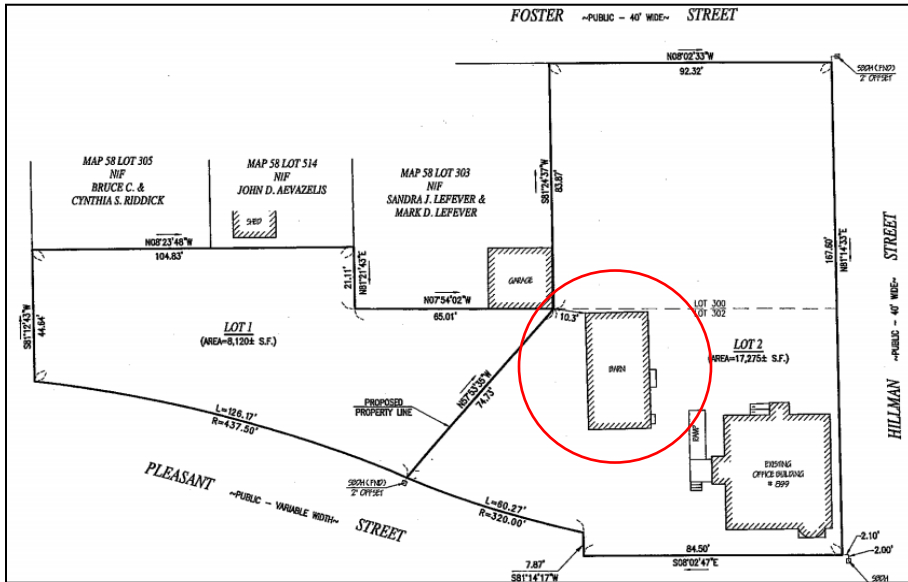
Although the applicant’s submittal for a Special Permit to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) on March 16, 2017 indicated the applicant’s intention to relocate the carriage house on the southernmost portion of the site, this was put forth as a result of the applicant’s misunderstanding that the city would not allow demolition of the building. The Special Permit (that would allow a medical office in this particular zoning district) was granted by the ZBA at the March 16, 2017 meeting.

Planning Board

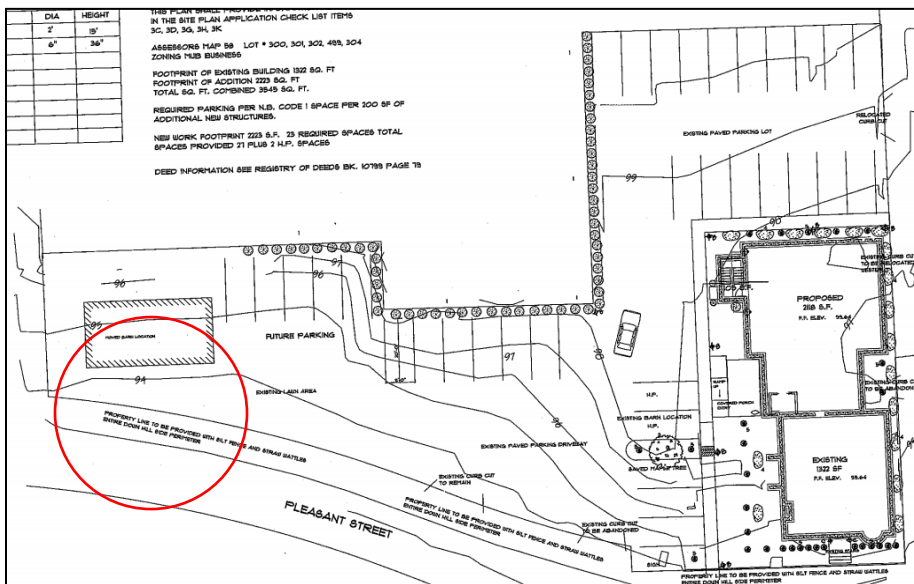
The applicant’s submittal for Site Plan Review to the Planning Board originally began on March 8, 2017 but was later continued to April 12th and then again to May 10th. At the time when the application was originally filed with the Planning Board, the applicant had—just as he had done with his application before the ZBA--indicated his intent to relocate the carriage house, again, because of his misunderstanding that the city was compelling him to move the

building. In the course of his Planning Board public hearings and in discussion with the board and staff, the applicant eventually indicated his desire to demolish the carriage house in order to meet the city's parking requirements for the project and because there were no need for the building. At the final Planning Board meeting on this matter (May 10, 2017), the applicant submitted revised plans to the Planning Board that portayed the removal of the carriage house from the property and indicated at the public hearing the applicant's intent to file a request for demolition of the carriage house with the city.

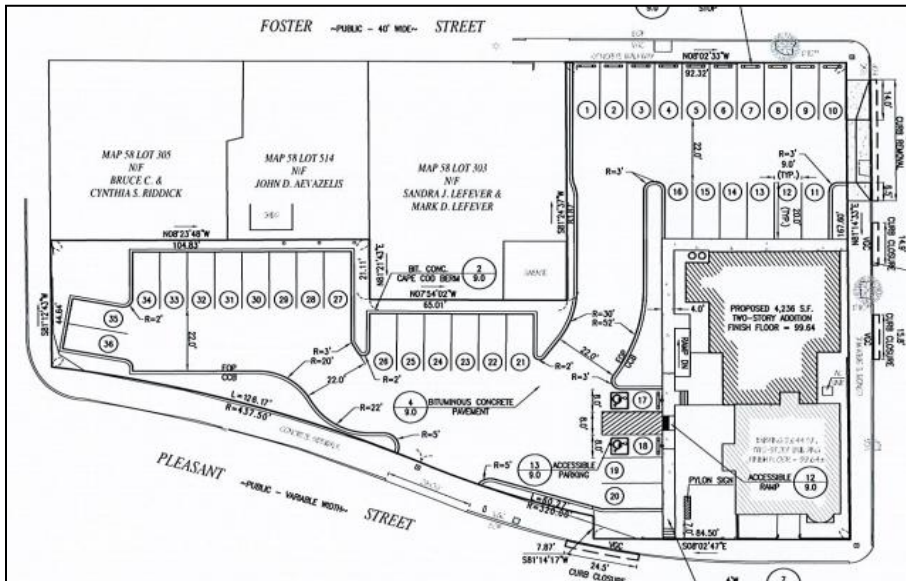
Site Plan Approval was granted by the Planning Board at the May 10, 2017 meeting based on the amended plans reflecting the request for demolition of the carriage house.



Existing Site Conditions



Plans dated 02.6.17 submitted to ZBA and Planning Board proposing carriage house relocation



**Revised Plans dated 03.8.17
submitted to Planning Board
proposing carriage house demolition**

STATEMENT OF APPLICABLE GUIDELINES: The provisions of the Demolition Delay Ordinance shall apply only to any building or structure that, in whole or in part, was built seventy-five (75) or more years prior to the date of the application for the demolition permit, and is:

- A building or structure listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or on the State Register of Historic Places;
- A building or structure importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, economic, political or social history of the city, or;
- A building or structure which is historically or architecturally significant in terms of period style, method of building construction or association with a significant architect or builder either by itself or as a part of a group of buildings, or;
- A building or structure located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a federal, state or local historic district boundary.

FOR BOARD MEMBER CONSIDERATION:

Historical Context

The Humphrey House (NBE.672) and its carriage house are contributing resources within the North Bedford National Register District. Horace Humphrey resided in Fairhaven and operated a paint company, Horace Humphrey & Co., located at 32 Centre Street. Humphrey built the house in 1867, but by 1871 had sold it to Dr. Charles S. Spencer. Humphrey eventually merged his paint company with George Kirby, as it became Humphrey, Kirby and Company. The George Kirby Jr. Paint Company is still in existence, operating as one of the oldest paint companies in the nation.

The 19th century carriage house type of structure originally provided shelter for the carriage chair as well as a one or two horse stable with a hay loft above. Although a utilitarian outbuilding, carriage houses were often built by the wealthy citizens and therefore portrayed one's status. Sanborn Maps from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century show that New Bedford, including the North Bedford neighborhood, had a number of carriage house and stable buildings during that period. The carriage house is significant as very few carriage/stable buildings in New Bedford survive from the mid to late nineteenth century. Nearly all of these outbuildings were demolished as automobiles replaced horse-drawn vehicles, as estates were sold and divided for suburban development, or have been victims of demolition by neglect. There exists another nearby remaining carriage/stable structure adjacent to the subject property, located at 55 Foster Street.

Integrity

Without the benefit of an engineer's assessment, the carriage house building appears structurally sound and retains its character, massing and form from its original construction as a stable/carriage house for the Humphrey House. Over time the carriage house has undergone alterations including the application of aluminum siding, the replacement of its original carriage and hay doors, and the addition of a concrete block chimney.

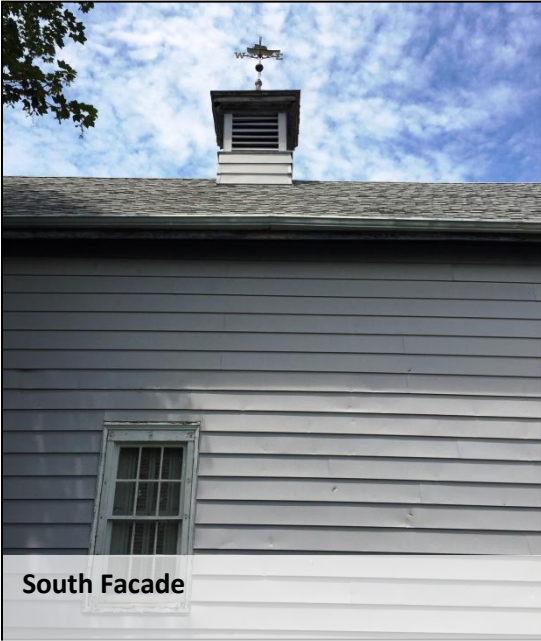
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

In evaluating this proposal, staff recommends that the Commission keep the following in mind:

- The carriage house is a rare surviving outbuilding from the period in which prominent citizens built their homes just outside of the village center and it also reflects the transition of the North Bedford District from an area of large estates to an area of mixed business and residential uses. Because these buildings' original purpose is now obsolete, these structures are prone particularly to neglect and demolition.
- Without conducting a thorough construction assessment of the carriage house, it is impossible to determine the extent to which it has or hasn't experienced deferred maintenance and whether or not it is in sound condition.
- The proposed reuse of this vacant property would introduce professional offices in this area of the city which the Master Plan identifies as a commercial corridor, one particularly visible from a downtown gateway area.
- The purpose of demolition review, and the use of demolition delay, is to preserve and protect significant buildings and limit the detrimental effect of demolition on the character of the city. By preserving and protecting significant buildings, structures, streetscapes and neighborhoods, the public welfare is promoted by making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live and work. As such, the owners of preferably preserved historic buildings and structures are encouraged to seek out alternative options that will preserve, rehabilitate or restore such buildings. In this particular case, an adaptive reuse of the main house has been proposed and approved by city permitting. The project includes the rehabilitation of the Humphrey House and the development of a building addition which is architecturally sensitive to the original house to which it will be connected.
- The carriage house structure does not support the intended re-use of the Humphrey House as professional offices and the applicant is not required through the previous noted city approvals, to rehabilitate or maintain the carriage house as part of the overall site development.
- To accommodate the city's parking requirements, particularly related to universal accessibility, and the site's vehicular circulation, the carriage house necessitates relocation; a cost which the applicant has expressed an inability to undertake as part of the overall site development budget. In addition, a delay in demolition may hamper the timeframe of the Humphrey House redevelopment and could potentially render the project unfeasible.



View looking north from the "Octopus" Gateway Location



South Facade



North Facade



East Facade



**Conceptual Drawing of Humphrey House Addition
South Facade**



NORTH (HILLMAN ST) ELEVATION