



**Historic District Commission Meeting**  
Thursday, February 28, 2019, 6:00 PM  
City Hall, Council Chambers

**MINUTES**

Approved 3/28/2019

Mr. Messier called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM and asked for a roll call.

**I. Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Scott Pope, David Messier, Kristin Kenniston, Bill Kennedy, Richard Wahrlich

**Absent:**

**II. Review of Minutes:**

**A. January 24, 2019**

**Corrections:** None

**Motion:** To approve the January 24<sup>th</sup> minutes

**Made by:** Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Kennedy

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

**B. January 31, 2019**

**Corrections:** None

**Motion:** To accept the January 31<sup>st</sup> minutes

**Made by:** Mr. Pope **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

**III. Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

**IV. New Business**

Mr. Letman was late, so the Commission reviewed the applications in reverse order.

- A. **HDC 2019-00002 Joanne Knowlton, 10 Dexter Hill Road** – for exterior changes to the building at **35 Crescent Street**. Tax map 120, Lot 27. Zone: MU.

Joanne Knowlton, with the assistance of her contractor, Forest Page, presented the application and described the exterior changes proposed for the building including:

1. Installing a generator on a concrete slab behind the building. The generator will be connected to the building via a conduit drilled through the brick.
2. Mounting an HVAC condensing unit on a bracket on the back wall of the building. It will be connected by drilling through the brick.

3. Rebuilding the existing staircase on the back of the building so it complies with current building codes. These stairs are currently not in use. The new stairs will be nearly identical to the existing ones. They will be constructed of pressure-treated lumber and stained to match the existing stairs.
4. Installing a sign on the new stairway directing people to come to the front entrance of the building on Crescent Street.
5. Installing two new entry doors in the existing door openings on Crescent Street. The doors are described as “decorative fiberglass” with a half-moon glass window on the top of each door. The current doors are steel that have been cut to fit the openings.
6. 2 18 x 16 aluminum HVAC vents to be installed on the north end of the building by cutting through the brick. The vents are to be painted to match the color of the brick.
7. Installing a hanging sign from the existing canopy over the Crescent Street entry doors. The sign will show the name of the business and be suspended from an iron bracket. It will be lit with two low voltage lights directed onto the sign from both sides.

Mr. Messier objected to the style of the doors being proposed – he stated they did not stylistically fit the building. He asked if the transoms would be left intact and if there might be other options for the doors. Ms. Knowlton stated that the window could be eliminated and just have solid wood panels. Mr. Messier stated that if the door consisted of vertical and horizontal rectangular panels, it would be more appropriate. The applicant agreed that would be possible to do. Mr. Page stated that the transoms would remain intact.

The Commission asked that the ventilation vents be made to blend in as much as possible with the building.

There were no further questions.

As there is no HAER inventory sheet for the property, the Commission called on the City’s application to establish the Historic District for information about it.

This building was one of a pair of such buildings built c. 1845 by Monadnock Mills as overseer houses. The structure at 35 Crescent is the sole remainder of the pair, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> one was demolished in 1977 for a parking lot. Each unit was split down the middle with kitchen units on either end. These were considered unusual features as they were normally on the rear. However, the architecture was modified to fit the site conditions. The kitchen on the north end of the building has been removed. *“These houses are the last remaining of several believed to have at one time been directly connected with or actually owned by the Monadnock Mills.”*

The Monadnock Mills complex had residential structures associated with it, some of which were owned by the company. It is likely that these overseers’ houses were the only ones left in New England that were owned by the company for their employees. Mrs. Kenniston read, from the application:

*“The Monadnock Mills Company complex provides tangible evidence of ownership concern for the living environment off the labor force. A tradition at New England mill communities since the first Rhode Island textile villages, this paternalistic spirit is reflected in the company-sponsored housing units and boarding houses, examples of which are present within the defined district. By productively associating the living and working*

*circumstances in a planned fashion, it was felt that the worker output could be maximized, and lifestyle made more pleasant.”*

Mr. Messier went on to read, *“Few surviving nineteenth-century textile mills have retained any of their original housing units, especially those built and managed by the respective companies themselves. Hence, the Monadnock Mills Company is that much more significant architecturally because of the presence of this building type within the district. The two identical overseers’ houses (c. 1845), adjacent to the mills on Crescent Street, are particularly good examples of a small-scale, mid-nineteenth century factory housing, and are nearly the equal of those at Rollinsford and Harrisville, surely the best remaining in New Hampshire. The three-story brick structure next door has been altered nearly beyond recognition in recent years, but it still has value as an extant example of a workers’ boarding house of the same period.”*

The Commission agreed that this is a very significant building.

### *Review Criteria Questions*

#### Criterion #1: Historic, Architectural, and Cultural Value

- a. Does the building have:
  - i. Historic value
  - ii. Architectural value
  - iii. Cultural value?

The commission agreed that this building has historic value because of its connection to the Monadnock Mills complex.

The building has architectural value due to its connection to the Mills.

The building has cultural value because of its association with the Mills, the culture of mill life, and living in a mill town.

There is no rating for this building. Mr. Messier felt the building is intact enough to give it a rating of 3. The Commission agreed with that.

- b. Does it relate and contribute to its setting?

This building relates to the complex of the Mills and contributes very highly as an integral part of that.

**Motion:** I move that the building located at 35 Crescent Street has significant historical, architectural and cultural value and is an important contributing building to the setting.

**Made by:** Mr. Messier   **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Criterion #2: How do the proposed exterior design, arrangement, texture(s), and materials relate to the existing buildings or structures in the project’s setting? Are they compatible? If the project involves new construction, how will it relate to the surrounding uses in the project setting? Is it compatible?

The Commission agreed that this would be directly mostly on the stairway. The applicant is proposing to replicate what is there now.

**Motion:** I move that the exterior design, arrangement, texture(s), and materials proposed to be used in this project are compatible with the existing buildings and structures in the project's setting.

**Made by:** Mrs. Kenniston      **Second:** Mr. Kennedy

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Criterion #3: Are the scale and general size of the proposed *improvements* compatible with and in keeping with the existing surroundings? (*Improvements* here is taken to mean a building's height, width, street frontage, number of stories, roof type, façade openings such as windows, doors, etc., and architectural details)

The Commission felt that this criterion was not relevant.

Criterion #4: How will the proposed *improvements* affect the character of any other building or structure within the district? (*Improvements* here is taken to signage and stairway.)

**Motion:** I move that the applicant's plans for signs, lights, stairs and the exterior heating and vents are in keeping with the character of the district and will not adversely affect the character of any other buildings or structures within the district.

**Made by:** Mr. Pope      **Second:** Mr. Kennedy

**Discussion:** Mr. Messier stated that this building has to have some kind of heating and air conditioning. These things are required to be outside. We want the building to be used and the City is grateful for the applicant's choice, so the Commission is okay with the proposal.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Criterion #5:

(A) What impact will the proposed project have on the setting? (Positive, negative, neutral)

(B) To what extent will the proposed project help to preserve and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural qualities of the district and the community?

Mr. Pope stated that the stairs are being replaced with new, code-compliant stairs; the doors are being replaced with more appropriate doors; and a new sign – all of these are positive things. It will also be nice to have the building occupied with a business.

**Motion (A):** I move that the proposed project will have a positive effect on the project setting.

**Made by:** Mr. Pope      **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

**Motion (B):** I move that the proposed project will greatly help to preserve and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural qualities of the district and the community.

**Made by:** Mrs. Kenniston      **Second:** Mr. Pope

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Criterion #6: Is the proposal in keeping with the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation?

Mr. Messier read through all 10 of the items in the Guidelines and concluded that nothing negative would result from the proposed activities in this project.

**Motion:** I move that the applicant's proposal is in keeping with the guidelines set out in the Secretary of the Interior's *Guidelines for Rehabilitation*.

**Made by:** Mr. Messier      **Second:** Mr. Kennedy

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

## FINAL MOTION

**Motion:** Based on our preceding findings of fact, I move that the Historic District Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 35 Crescent Street with the items that were discussed in the meeting – the stairway, the utility pieces, the signs, and that the door will be something close to what was discussed.

**Made by:** Mr. Messier      **Second:** Mr. Kennedy

**Vote:** unanimous in favor

### B. **HDC 2019-00001 Errol Letman, 4 Block Avenue** – for replacement signage at **37 Pleasant Street**. Tax map 120, Lot 73. Zone: MU.

Errol Letman presented his application for a sign at 37 Pleasant Street. Mr. Letman owns and operates a Jamaican restaurant. The sign has been hung on an existing bracket. The size seems appropriate for the setting.

The Commission turned to their review criteria. Mrs. Kenniston read what little information was given on the architectural survey sheet. The building appears to have been a building built in the 1920s that fills an alley. It was given a rating of 0.

### *Review Criteria Questions*

#### Criterion #1: Historic, Architectural, and Cultural Value

- c. Does the building have:
  - i. Historic value
  - ii. Architectural value
  - iii. Cultural value?

The Commissioners agreed that the building has no historic, architectural or cultural value.

- d. Does it relate and contribute to its setting?

The Commissioners agreed that the building contributes to its setting by continuing the line of building fronts along Pleasant Street. It is not a deterrent to the setting nor is there anything particularly negative about it.

**Motion:** I move that the building located at 37 Pleasant Street has no historical, architectural and cultural value, but it does relate and contribute to its setting.

**Made by:** Mrs. Kenniston      **Second:** Mr. Pope

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Criterion #2: How do the proposed exterior design, arrangement, texture(s), and materials relate to the existing buildings or structures in the project's setting? Are they compatible? If the project involves new construction, how will it relate to the surrounding uses in the project setting? Is it compatible?

Since there will be no changes to the building, the Commission agreed this criterion was not applicable.

Criterion #3: Are the scale and general size of the proposed *improvements* compatible with and in keeping with the existing surroundings?

Again, the Commission agreed that this criterion did not apply.

Criterion # 4: How will the proposed *improvements* affect the character of any other building or structure within the district? (*Improvements* here is taken to mean the sign)

The Commissioners agreed that the sign is in keeping with the character of the district; the sign is sized appropriately, and it is always nice to have businesses on Pleasant Street.

**Motion:** I move that the applicant's plans for a sign is in keeping with the character of the district and will not adversely affect the character of any other building or structure within the district.

**Made by:** Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Kennedy

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Criterion # 5:

(A) What impact will the proposed project have on the setting?

The Commissioners agreed that the sign will have a positive impact as it shows another open business on the street.

**Motion (A):** I move that the proposed project will have a positive effect on the project setting.

**Made by:** Mr. Pope **Second:** Mr. Kennedy

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

(B) To what extent will the proposed project help to preserve and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural qualities of the district and the community?

The Commissioners agreed that the restaurant helps to preserve the cultural qualities of the district.

**Motion (B):** I move that the proposed project will somewhat help to preserve and enhance the cultural qualities of the district and the community.

**Made by:** Mr. Pope **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Criterion #6: Is the proposal in keeping with the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation?

As nothing on the building is being changed, the Commission agreed that this criterion did not apply.

## **FINAL MOTION**

**Motion:** Based on our preceding findings of fact, I move that the Historic District Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign for the property located at 37 Pleasant Street, Tax Map 120, Lot 73 with no conditions.

### **V. Other**

Mr. Messier stated that the City Council has approved applying for Certified Local Government status. Being a CLG will give the City better access to grant funding.

Mr. Pope is the Council representative on the Energy Advisory Committee. He said that the Committee will be looking at various buildings in city with an eye on energy efficiency and may be needing input from the Commission at some point.

Mr. Kennedy said he has an issue with variety if "OPEN" flags on Pleasant Street. They are not uniform (in color or condition) and some hang so low they are in the way on the sidewalk. He felt they are a distraction and take away from the historic character of the street.

Mr. Messier said these flags are not regulated as they are taken in every night, but those that are hanging too low may be a code enforcement issue.

### **VI. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

### **VII. Adjournment**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting

**Made by:** Mr. Pope    **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

*deForest Bearse*

Resource Coordinator