

**LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD
MINUTES
Mayor's Reception Room, Lowell City Hall
October 18, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.**

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For further detail, contact the Lowell Historic Board, Lowell City Hall, Room 51, 375 Merrimack Street or refer to video recordings available online at www.LTC.org.

Members Present: Jeffrey Harris, Chairman; Lisa "LC" Cassidy, Troy Depeiza, Aurora Erickson, Christine McCall, James Wilde

Members Absent: Kerry Regan Jenness, Richard Lockhart, George Villaras

Others Present: Stephen Stowell, Administrator

The following represents the actions taken by the Historic Board at the 10/18/2021 meeting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting occurred in hybrid form, both in-person and via the Zoom video conferencing platform.

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

1. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. **DLHD-22-10: 78 Middlesex Street**

Site of the Odd Fellows Building (1890) aka Middlesex Supply Co. Building (ca. 1971). Application for a Historic Permit in the Downtown Lowell Historic District by 78-80 Middlesex Street LLC for exterior rehabilitation pursuant to the Lowell Historic District Act (Chapter 566, Acts of 1983).

On Behalf:

John Geary, Geary and Geary LLP
Justin MacFarlane, 78-80 Middlesex Street LLC
Alex Yoon, Monte French Design Studio

J. Geary introduced and described the proposed project while A. Yoon presented photos and plans.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

L. Cassidy asked about the foundation material shown in the photographs and if it was from the historic building. A. Yoon said that he believed it was, saying it was doubtful that an early 1970s building would have created a new granite foundation and instead, utilized portions of the earlier building's foundation.

J. Wilde asked about the ground floor five foot setback areas and if they would be accessible by the unit occupants. A. Yoon said that there would not much space given two feet would be comprised of planted materials to provide privacy but it would be accessible.

J. Wilde asked about potential elevator headhouse visibility. A. Yoon was able to illustrate the location of the elevator on a sectional plan and that any overrun to the roof would not be visible. He noted that the overrun would be minimal at around two feet high, given that the third floor is approximately 13 feet tall, and set one third back from the front of the building.

T. Depeiza inquired about parking. J. Geary said that there is no parking associated with the project and they have received a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals for parking relief.

The Chairman said that the proposed project is a successful adaptation of the existing structure, that the chosen materials and façade pattern fits in well with the streetscape but is clearly contemporary. He said that it will be a valuable addition to the District and appreciated the care taken with the design.

Motion:

By L. Cassidy, seconded by J. Wilde, to:

Vote to issue the Historic Permit for the exterior rehabilitation of 78 Middlesex Street in the Downtown Lowell Historic District conditional upon the following:

1. Submittal, review, and approval of material and color samples for masonry/mortar, fiber cement panels, glass, metal, and paint. On-site samples will be required for review and approval prior to commencement of individual work items;
2. Submittal, review, and approval of final design details and/or shop drawings for window and door systems including storefronts prior to commencement of work. Any proposed window blinds shall be a dark color with samples provided for review and approval prior to installation;
3. Submittal, review, and approval of final design and construction details including, but not limited to, site/landscaping features and plantings; mechanical equipment; roofing/flashings; any roof elements such as headhouses, elevator penthouses, decks/railings/planters, and solar panels; lighting including traditional fixtures, security lighting, and architectural lighting; cameras; and building signage prior to commencement of individual work items; and
4. Submittal, review, and approval of any scope of work alterations and final details prior to commencement of individual work items.

Work is consistent with Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the Design Review Standards for the Downtown Lowell Historic District.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

B. DLHD-22-11: 60 Fletcher Street

The Perkins-Knowles Buildings (ca. 1850-1879). Application for a Historic Permit in the Downtown Lowell Historic District by Kazanjian Enterprises for exterior rehabilitation pursuant to the Lowell Historic District Act (Chapter 566, Acts of 1983).

On Behalf:

John Geary, Geary and Geary LLP
David Gray, Kazanjian Enterprises

J. Geary and D. Gray introduced and described the proposed project.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

L. Cassidy inquired about the proposed windows. D. Gray said that they have been working with consultant Maureen Cavanaugh from PAL Associates who has been assisting with the historic tax credit process. He said that the windows are aluminum that match the historic wood windows from the Universal company, that they are waiting on final approval from the National Park Service's tax credit office.

L. Cassidy said that given the variety of window types, that the attention to detail is commendable.

L. Cassidy inquired about the masonry. D. Gray said that it would be left in place and cleaned and repointed as needed.

The Administrator noted that the type of historic aluminum replica windows proposed for this project are similar to other mill rehabilitation projects previously approved and completed in the District over the years.

A. Erickson asked about the preservation of the F.S. Perkins Machinist ghost sign on the Fletcher Street elevation. D. Gray said that they are working with several contractors on developing a plan for its preservation and that the McKitterick signs would be removed though. He noted that they will work with the Administrator on this along with the other proposed conditions for the project.

The Chairman inquired about the proposed elevator tower where it extends above the second floor and is visible from the third and fourth floors, if there was a way to reduce the footprint of it and thus the amount of mass visible. In particular the lobby area of the elevator. D. Gray said that he will raise it with the architect and see if there is a way to reduce it.

The Chairman said that overall this is a long-awaited project to revitalize a very visible building as you enter downtown and is complementary to other nearby projects including the roadway work. He also was pleased that historic tax credits were being used on the project.

J. Geary said that with various projects happening nearby, the area is transforming and the neighborhood is being enhanced.

Motion:

By C. McCall, seconded by L. Cassidy, to:

Vote to issue the Historic Permit for the exterior rehabilitation of 60 Fletcher Street in the Downtown Lowell Historic District conditional upon the following:

1. Submittal, review, and approval of final details related to all aspects of the window scope of work including, but not limited to, shop drawings, paint color, interior screen units (dark color), and blinds (dark color) prior to commencement of work;
2. Submittal, review, and approval of final details related to all entries and egresses (doors, hardware, etc.) as well as canopies including, but not limited to, shop drawings and color prior to commencement of work;
3. Submittal, review, and approval of design, material, and color samples for masonry repair/cleaning, repointing, metal work/flashings, tower siding, and paint. On-site mortar, brick, cleaning, metal, and paint samples will be required for review and approval prior to commencement of work;
4. FS Perkins ghost sign on Fletcher Street elevation to be protected from damage during any masonry work and cleaning. Existing McKittrick panel wall signs to be removed and wall areas to be appropriately repaired beneath;
5. Submittal, review, and approval of final design and construction details including, but not limited to, site/landscaping features, plantings, and dumpsters/screening; mechanical equipment; roofing/flashings/gutters/downspouts; any roof elements such as headhouses, decks/railings/planters, and solar panels; lighting including traditional fixtures, security lighting, and architectural lighting; cameras; and building signage prior to commencement of individual work items; and
6. Submittal, review, and approval of any scope of work alterations and final details prior to commencement of individual work items.

Work is consistent with Sections 2.301, 2.31, and 2.32 of the Design Review Standards for the Downtown Lowell Historic District.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

2. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Enforcement/Violations Update

The Administrator said that enforcement continues to ramp up with several visits to businesses regarding signage issues. However the focus in the past month has been revising the Board's existing violation process that was included in the meeting packet. He noted that the revision eliminates several steps and further streamlines the process beyond what has already been done in the past.

The Administrator also said that a violation log is being developed for field use as is a violation database for tracking violations based upon a prior database that had been corrupted. Both tools will greatly assist in identifying and tracking violations.

Motion:

By C. McCall, seconded by J. Wilde, to:

Adopt the revised Lowell Historic Board Violation Process.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

B. Administrator's Report

Upcoming Projects

Several projects are in the review stage and will require public hearings. Among the projects are the rehabilitation of both 62 Gorham Street and 80 Gorham Street which will be on the public hearing docket next month.

On a side note, a permitting database that was long thought to have been corrupted and inaccessible has been resurrected and is in the process of being reworked to track all permitting data from applicants to project cost to permits issued.

City Hall Stained Glass – Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Committee deemed the City Hall stained glass restoration project eligible for CPA funds and a full application will be submitted by the October 15 deadline. The estimate for restoring all 24 windows in City Hall is approximately \$473,000.

The Administrator has also been providing guidance to those CPA projects with an historic preservation component.

Downtown Lowell Historic District Building Markers

24 new markers are in the process of being developed that will be installed as they are fabricated. To date, 44 markers have been installed.

Social Media

Social media continues to be a very popular and effective community engagement and outreach tool for the Board. The Board's Facebook page has 6,110 "likes" while individual posts continue to reach thousands. Other platforms include Twitter (716 followers), Instagram (1,405 followers), and Pinterest (25 followers).

Newsletter

After a hiatus, the Board's electronic newsletter Presence from the Past will be making a comeback later this year. Another popular and effective Board community engagement and outreach tool, the distribution list is being updated and edited with the fall being targeted for distribution.

Next Meeting

The Board's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 8, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Reception Room.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

By C. McCall, seconded by L. Cassidy, to:

Adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

ATTEST: _____
Stephen R. Stowell, Administrator

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