

**APPROVED MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 2, 2023  
HDC MEETING**

Members Present: Chair Rodney Rowland, Vice Chair Irene Bush, Jane Finn, Kate Murray, Judy Groppa and Ruth Zikaras.

Absent: Julia Thomas

The meeting was held in the Macomber Room. Chair Rowland called the meeting of the New Castle Historic District Commission to order at 7:00 pm. Rowland asked anyone who was going to speak to sign in. Ruth Zikaras recused herself from the public hearing as she is a neighbor of Karen Fay. All other members present will be voting on the public hearing.

The Chair spoke on the Findings of Fact to be referenced by the Commission in all approvals or disapprovals, pursuant to a relatively new RSA. Rowland stated that there are a couple of options to the Findings of Fact which the Board will discuss later this evening. The Commission will use the Findings of Fact used at last month's meeting when voting on the application before it this evening, which the Chair obtained from the City of Portsmouth. If the Commission is approving an application, it doesn't have to use all four of the Findings of Fact, however, if the Commission is disapproving an application, it must use as many Findings of Fact as appropriate for its decision.

1. Public Hearing for Karen Fay, 108 Main Street, Map 18, Lot 1

Guests: Karen Fay, Pat Driscoll of Star Island Builders, Tom Smith

Karen Fay lives at 108 Main Street and believes it is a very special property in the historic district. She is from Boston and bought unit 3 at 108 Main Street six years ago, and four years ago she bought unit 2. She currently lives in unit 3 and rents unit 2. Fay would like to retire and make New Castle her permanent residence. 108 Main Street was built in 1785 and at one point in its history, it was a general store. In 1985 the building was purchased and expanded and then converted into three condos; each condo has 2 bedrooms and 1.5 baths. Ms. Fay would like to expand unit 2 for her residence and have room for children and grandkids when they come to visit. She is working with Maugel DeStefano Architects and is very happy with the design. Fay respects the historic nature of the house and in keeping with the period, has made every effort to complement the existing look of the house and has also worked with the neighbors. She enjoys her neighbors and everyone seems to work well together. Fay added that so far, all the neighbors are verbally on board with her plan.

The Chair asked Fay to walk the Commission through her submission. The small packet contains the front and rear elevations and photos of the current condition

1 of the house. The left side of the building has a six foot jut out with the entrance  
2 to unit 2 at the ground level, and upon entry, there are stairs which go up to the  
3 main level of the unit. Fay would like to expand the left side of the building an  
4 additional 12 feet, for the entire depth of the building which is 18 feet, for all  
5 three levels. The entry will be a mudroom, the second floor will have the kitchen  
6 and living room and possibly an office, and the third level will have bedrooms.

7  
8 The Chair asked whether the windows would be re-used or replaced. Fay stated  
9 the windows in the unit were fairly recently replaced with Harvey windows. The  
10 existing windows will stay in place and any new windows on the addition will  
11 match the existing windows. Kate Murray asked how does the stairway stay in  
12 place if the building is being bumped out. Pat Driscoll of Star Island Builders  
13 stated the current entrance is on the side and they intend to keep that side entrance  
14 but it will be 12' further out. You will enter into a vestibule to reduce heat loss  
15 and then into a mud room, before the stairway to the second level. There is  
16 currently a trash shed against the house and that space will remain for common  
17 storage, recycles and trash but will become a 4 x 8 storage area built into the  
18 house and have double doors matching the current doors on the shed.

19  
20 The application packet also contains a picture of the door for unit 3 which has an  
21 entrance on the back of the house and was recently replaced; Fay intends to use  
22 this same type door for the side entrance door for Unit 2. Kate Murray asked if the  
23 back of the house can be seen from the road; Rowland stated you can only see the  
24 side. Fay stated she appeared before the HDC 6 years ago when she put a café  
25 deck addition on Unit 3. She stated you cannot see the back from Main Street and  
26 can only see a very small part of the house from Piscataqua Street.

27  
28 The Chair asked about the materials list and whether it was the intention to match  
29 the trim detail in every way. Fay stated she would like cedar shakes on the  
30 addition, stating that if the addition is a neutral color, it will give flexibility to  
31 paint the remaining house any color in the future. There are currently no cedar  
32 shakes on the house, it is all clapboard, confirming that she would like cedar  
33 shakes only on the new addition, left side jut out, and the main house will remain  
34 clapboard.

35  
36 The Chair again asked if the corner boards with details will remain the same as  
37 the main house, as well as the window trim and dormer detailing. Judy Groppa  
38 commented that the corner boards look like a thin strip. Fay said by design it  
39 does look more narrow than the trim on the main house but she is willing to put  
40 the same trim as the house if the Commission preferred. Pat Driscoll said he has  
41 done a good amount of historic work in town and is currently working in  
42 Portsmouth for a client that is the owner of a preservation company. Driscoll  
43 stated his company is a bit knowledgeable about historic properties. As designed,  
44 the corner boards and trim details will be in proportion to the size of the house,  
45 being a little smaller so as not to detract from the historic main house but the  
46 details will be complementary. The Chair stated that was fine but the

1 Commission cannot vote on something they have no information on. The  
2 materials need to be specified in the application and the plan says "To be  
3 determined" for the siding and the applicant has indicated cedar shakes, but the  
4 trim detail is needed so the Chair can advise the building inspector. Rowland  
5 stated that on a project of this scale, it is always helpful to do a work session.  
6 Driscoll asked the Chair if he wanted to see soffit and rake board detail and  
7 Rowland stated the Commission needed to know precisely what was being  
8 approved. If the original trim is wider than the proposed trim on the addition,  
9 those details are required. Fay stated they are proposing 6" corner boards, the  
10 rake to match facing the street, and door and window trim of 5" which is  
11 documented on the form under dimensions. The Chair asked if they can get the  
12 proposed door and Fay confirmed yes as she just installed the same door on the  
13 entrance to unit 3 and would like the same design for unit 2, adding that it's a  
14 Simpson door. Driscoll advised that although the application says Anderson 400  
15 windows they will use Harvey Tribute DH (double hung) windows, 6 over 6, to  
16 match the house.

17  
18 Again there was discussion of the view from Piscataqua Street, and Fay stated you  
19 may see a very small part of the upper two floors from some vantage point on  
20 Piscataqua. However, 108 Main Street is on a hill and as you go up the driveway  
21 behind the house, it continues up and then you look down to Piscataqua, so you  
22 cannot see the entire back of the house because you are looking uphill from  
23 Piscataqua. Fay stated one may be able to see the very top of the new addition.

24  
25 Rowland asked Fay about the back façade and whether the main house is staying  
26 the same, particularly interested in the deck railing and whether it was being  
27 changed but it is not. Fay pointed out on the plan to Commission members what  
28 was existing and what was new on the back of the house.

29  
30 Fay confirmed she is not combining unit 2 and 3, she is keeping them separate.  
31 She is just expanding unit 2 for more room for retirement and having children and  
32 grandchildren visit.

33  
34 Rowland asked Fay if she needed any variances and yes, she has submitted a  
35 zoning variance application and the hearing is upcoming in February. It's a  
36 variance for volume/lot coverage. There is an 8' right of way granted to the  
37 neighbor on the left as you enter the driveway and another right of way winds up  
38 behind the house to the Gardner's house behind the condominium.

39  
40 There are 6 deeded parking spaces, four of which are stacked parking behind the  
41 house and will remain the same. Another two spaces are on the side of the house.  
42 The parking will improve and will not interfere with the right of ways. The back  
43 parking is for units 1 and 3; parking for unit 2 has one spot on the side and  
44 another diagonal spot by the storage shed. With this project, unit 2 will have two  
45 parking spaces, side by side on the side of the building.

1 Jane Finn asked if the parking spaces were in front of the new addition rather than  
2 to the side and Fay confirmed that yes, as one of the spots exists there today.  
3 Driscoll showed the Commission the parking spaces on the plan, adding that there  
4 is room for 2 cars next to each other, and they are not in the right of way. The  
5 stone wall in front of the house will remain.  
6

7 The Chair asked whether there would be shutters such as on the main house, and  
8 questioned the shed roof over the side entry and shed doors. Fay is not having  
9 shutters on the addition and the shed roof is primarily for coverage over the doors  
10 and for aesthetics. Fay thought the shed roofs match the overall design, adding  
11 that unit 3 which is in back, has no coverage and is not pleasant in a storm. The  
12 Chair asked about the brackets for the shed roofs, as they are not presently on the  
13 house. However, there are brackets on the back of the house but they cannot be  
14 seen from the main street. The Chair stated an element is being introduced that is  
15 not visible from Main Street and it should tie into the main structure. Driscoll  
16 stated he can work on the aesthetic of the bracket but would like to keep the  
17 protection over the doors. Rowland asked if the main concern was the entry door  
18 rather than storage shed and Fay confirmed that yes, it is. From a building  
19 perspective, Driscoll stated when you don't have cover over a door, there is  
20 concern with water coming in with wind driven rain, adding that he could build an  
21 overhang and attach it to the side of the house without brackets.  
22

23 The Chair asked Commission members if there were more questions. Kate  
24 Murray asked about the front dormer on the addition and was informed it is for  
25 the master bathroom. The Vice Chair asked about the brackets under the bump-  
26 out window on the back. The Chair responded that the bracket detail is currently  
27 on the house but cannot be seen from Main Street and to introduce the brackets on  
28 the side of the house, is basically a new detail. Everything else is keeping with  
29 the existing architecture so Rowland asked if it can be made to blend in better.  
30

31 The Chair opened the meeting to the public at 7:33 pm. Tom Smith spoke in  
32 favor, adding that 40 years ago, he bought this building when it was a general  
33 store, called the Great Island Store. Smith showed a picture of the building before  
34 it was converted into a house. Smith ran the store for six months and put two  
35 units in upstairs, and after the store was gone, the house was made into 3 units.  
36 At the time, the town didn't have a historic district but he was concerned about  
37 keeping the building historically accurate. There were four windows on the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
38 floor and picture windows on the first floor. He did research on the building and  
39 discovered that 108 Main Street was built like 116 Main Street, the former  
40 McCarthy property. 108 Main Street was originally one level and in the mid  
41 1800's, the roof was picked up and a second story was added. The second floor  
42 had a Knights of Pithius hall. Smith believes Fay's proposal is a wonderful  
43 change. He was the first to have a condominium in New Castle. Smith stated he  
44 has a real affection for this building and is proud of this building. He believes  
45 Fay's changes will be a perfect addition and architecturally compatible.  
46

1 The Chair closed the public hearing at 7:38 pm.

2  
3 Rowland stated he believes the addition is in keeping with the existing  
4 architecture. Although at first he was concerned about the massing, you don't see  
5 the addition when coming from the direction of the post office and when  
6 approaching along Main Street into town, the addition is set back. The Chair  
7 would like to simplify the shed roof and lose the brackets.

8  
9 Groppa stated she is troubled by the single dormer. The Chair stated that as there  
10 are two dormers on the main house and one on the addition, scale wise, it's  
11 appropriate. Groppa agreed with the scale, but commented that dormers are  
12 usually in pairs, but there's not room for two dormers. Kate Murray said the  
13 addition will look better aesthetically when coming into town, adding that at first,  
14 she was concerned with the massing, but it is pushed back, architecturally calming  
15 and similar to the rest of the building.

16  
17 Irene Bush is concerned about the back of the house, particularly the upper 2  
18 floors with two decks and a bump-out. The Chair again asked if those are visible  
19 from Piscataqua Street. Fay said the existing 3<sup>rd</sup> level deck can be seen from the  
20 river and a small portion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level may be seen from Piscataqua Street but  
21 she doesn't believe the 2<sup>nd</sup> level deck can be seen from Piscataqua. Tom Smith  
22 said one can only see the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor from Piscataqua Street. The Chair stated the  
23 visibility is very limited, you cannot see much and the HDC has approved decks  
24 before when visibility is so minimal.

25  
26 Rowland stated he needed a motion and Murray asked how complicated did the  
27 motion need to be and would it be better if there was a spec sheet. The Chair  
28 stated he had made notes on his copy and acknowledged most of the materials and  
29 dimensions are on the application. Rowland noted the change of the door to a  
30 Simpson door, the change of the windows to Harvey Tribute windows and cedar  
31 shakes for the siding. Fay stated she is ok with removing the brackets for the shed  
32 roof but deferred to Driscoll as to whether that is possible. Driscoll stated he will  
33 check with the engineer and will come back before the Commission if that is not  
34 possible.

35  
36 The Commission discussed how to apply the Findings of Fact. The addition  
37 complements the architectural value of the existing structure.

38  
39 M/S/P Kate Murray moved to approve the applicant's proposal for the property at 108  
40 Main Street, Map 18, Lot 1, Unit 2 as presented in the application received 1-10-  
41 2023, with the condition that the brackets on the shed roof on the new addition be  
42 removed. Approval is based on Finding of Fact #1 that this meets "The special  
43 and defining character of surrounding properties, including architectural details,  
44 design, height, scale, mass, width of surrounding structures, street frontages, types  
45 of roofs, facades and openings." Irene Bush seconded. All in favor, including the  
46 Chair.

2. Work Session for Mary and Ron Pressman, 34 Oliver Street - Front Lot, Map 16, Lot 40

Guests: Mary Pressman, Michael Cerbone and Caulen Finch of Mangel DeStefano Architects.

The Chair stated this work session is for a brand new house being proposed for where the tennis courts were on Oliver Street. The tennis courts are gone and it will soon be a newly created lot. Cerbone said the new house will be set back 35' from the street. There will be a main house, garage and a connector, all in a traditional New England early colonial style.

The Chair asked about the site plan and where the tennis courts were. The plan shows a new driveway on Oliver Street and the existing driveway is being removed. Ruth Zikaras asked Cerbone to confirm where the property line is. There will be a right of way shared between the two properties. Mary Pressman said the barn, which is remaining, will be with the front lot, explaining that the intention of moving the driveway from one side of the lot to the other was to allow the lot to be contiguous and it would be a nicer lot than having it split. The driveway is being moved to what will be the east side of the house. The Chair asked about the stone wall and was informed that it will be moved to open the driveway.

Michael Cerbone went through the materials, stating they will keep the New England colonial traditional and will have painted cedar clapboard on the front, the sides will have natural cedar shingles, the connector will also have cedar clapboards, and the garage will have board and batten to echo the barn. Boral will be used for the cornerboards and exterior trim and the chimneys will be brick clad. The windows will be Marvin Elevate, which are wood framed composite windows with simulated, divided light spacer bars, and a composite material on the exterior. Pressman stated she has used these windows before and they are quality windows and one would never know they are not wood on the outside and they don't have to be painted. The roof will be architectural asphalt shingles.

Ruth Zikaras asked about the chimney and Cerbone stated it will be a thin brick veneer that looks like brick, gets grouted and mortared. Rowland asked if it would be a plywood box, straight chimney, with no detailing, and also asked that they bring a sample of the veneer to the hearing. Cerbone stated there may be profile detail on the top, but it will be traditional and he will include the detail for the hearing.

The Chair stated he loves the garage and how it blends with the barn. Murray asked whether the kitchen window will be a box bay window and was advised that it will be built up but not visible from the street. The Chair asked how

1 stepped back is the connector from the main house and was informed  
2 approximately 6 feet.  
3

4 The Chair asked if the Commission had more questions. Zikaras asked about the  
5 height of the house and whether it was 53'. Cerbone indicated that the elevation  
6 is 53', the ridge height is 31' and a few inches from grade, which is just below  
7 maximum. Cerbone was asked if any variances were needed and he stated  
8 everything complies with zoning.  
9

10 Groppa asked about the shutters and Cerbone advised they would be wood with  
11 mounted brackets as that will be more appropriate for the historic district. The  
12 front door and surround design was taken from a house down the street that has  
13 similar surrounding detail. The door will be all panels, with no glass and is  
14 manufactured by Marvin. There will be glass sidelights. The pilaster detail was  
15 taken from 57 Oliver Street that faces the river, which also has a transom window  
16 above and sidelights.  
17

18 The Chair asked if there are any proposed fences or decks. No, however, there  
19 will be a patio outside. Pervious material will be used for the driveway. The lot  
20 is 24,000 SF and is nearing 20% coverage as the barn is part of that. Murray  
21 asked about the materials for the pervious driveway but they haven't yet discussed  
22 this as they are looking for something attractive that is easy to maintain and plow.  
23 Patios and driveways are not under the HDC, this comes under the Planning  
24 Board perview.  
25

26 General consensus of the Commission was that the plan was well thought out and  
27 appropriate for the historic district. There is a subdivision of the lot being done  
28 and there will be another presentation before the HDC at a later time for the other  
29 lot. The Pressmans intend to live in the Palmer house in the back lot and are  
30 building this house to control what goes there.  
31

32 The Chair advised that it looks like everything needed is here although the  
33 Commission would like to see the brick detail at the hearing. It was asked if there  
34 is any foundation exposure and whether it will be veneered. Pressman stated they  
35 really hadn't discussed that as exposure is in the rear of the property and will be  
36 minimal. The Chair stated that if the foundation was exposed along the front, the  
37 Commission would want to know the material.  
38

39 Cerbone asked if there are any details the Commission would want shown at the  
40 hearing, adding that the chimney veneer and the material list would of course be  
41 provided. Groppa stated she would like to see a sample of the shutters and the  
42 hardware for hanging them. Groppa also asked about the existing stone wall. A  
43 portion of the wall where the new driveway will go will be taken down, and the  
44 existing stone materials re-used for any rebuilding in other areas.  
45  
46

1           3.     Approve minutes from January 5, 2023

2  
3     M/S/P     Kate Murray moved to approve the amended minutes of January 5, 2023; Irene  
4               Bush seconded; All in favor, including the Chair.

5  
6           4.     Any New Business

7  
8               The Chair asked Jane Finn if the town's lawyer would be representing the HDC at  
9               the hearing on Springer's appeal at the zoning meeting. The lawyer has the  
10              minutes and Findings of Fact.

11  
12              The Chair stated that the preservation company that did phase 1 of the historic  
13              survey, has since been sold and is now owned by Reagan Reudig, Vice Chair of  
14              the Portsmouth HDC. Rowland spoke to Reudig and asked if the preservation  
15              company was ready for more work, because when he spoke to the former owner  
16              and Covid hit, they were overwhelmed. The Chair participated in a zoom  
17              meeting with the Division of Historical Resources, and the intent to submit for a  
18              grant is due in 30 days and the grant application due in June but the Chair advised  
19              that he does not have time as he is traveling for two weeks in June. The Chair  
20              stated unless someone wants to step in, the application may have to wait until  
21              2024.

22  
23              The Chair stated the next part of the survey will be to dig down into buildings in  
24              the historic district, to know when they were built, what architecture is from what  
25              period, about any additions to each property, including the windows, doors, etc.  
26              and what is original and what is not. The next part of the survey would tell us so  
27              much more. Kate Murray asked how clear the instructions for the application for  
28              the grant are. Rowland stated it's only a few pages and you work closely with the  
29              preservation company and you also need budget information from the town. He  
30              said the timeline is doable but with his travel schedule and a new CEO at  
31              Strawbery Banke, he cannot do it right now. Jane Finn proposed that Etoile  
32              Holzaepfel is a good grant writer. Rowland stated the application is filed online  
33              this year, which is something new, and there's no match. Ruth Zikaras asked the  
34              Chair to share the link for information about the grant and the Chair agreed to  
35              forward the link for the fiscal year 2023 application for the CLG Grant, adding  
36              that the link has lots of helpful information.

37  
38              The Chair wanted to discuss the Findings of Fact needed for each hearing, adding  
39              that at last month's meeting in January and again for tonight's meeting, the  
40              Commission used the Findings of Fact used by Portsmouth. Rowland has a  
41              meeting with the New Castle town lawyer on February 7<sup>th</sup>. He did some  
42              research on other towns and provided a copy of Bedford's compliance for  
43              Findings of Fact, a copy of which Rowland provided to all Commission members,  
44              asking that they review. Rowland stated that if the Commission is approving an  
45              application, it is easier to cite compliance with a Finding of Fact. However, if the  
46              Commission is not approving an application, the Commission must cite specific



1 criteria and it is best to address more than one criteria that does not comply, for  
2 the proposal being voted down. Rowland stated that if the application doesn't fit,  
3 the Commission must pick out a certain area of the code that the application  
4 doesn't comply with. The Chair liked the language of the Bedford Findings of  
5 Fact as it appeared easier to apply. The Chair will meet with the town attorney  
6 and be sure the Findings of Fact which Bedford uses is acceptable. Rowland will  
7 also ask the attorney if this needs to go into the zoning ordinance or simply is a  
8 guideline as an HDC tool. Either way, the Chair will be sure it is formalized and  
9 written into HDC guidelines.

10  
11 As for the Master plan language developed so far, the Chair stated that Irene  
12 Bush had some edits on climate change which were incorporated as the  
13 Commission is grappling with preservation techniques to handle water and  
14 storms. The Master Plan committee meets in another week; one member will pull  
15 the google document and will put it into one language because it has been written  
16 by eight different people, so there will soon be a compiled document. Once that  
17 is done, a public hearing will be scheduled for feedback. The old master plan  
18 was about 8 pages, this new one will be much bigger.

19  
20 Groppa asked about technology, wondering if the commission would need to  
21 describe more of what that means because if the Commission doesn't come up  
22 with specific materials and guidelinees, with technology changing every year,  
23 someone will say "this is what everyone is doing". Technology should be  
24 developed into the master plan. Rowland added that solar is also under  
25 technology and solar is the issue now but who knows what the technology will be  
26 in ten years. The Chair stated that there is someone adamant that New Castle  
27 must allow generators. Kate Murray asked whether there are restrictions that  
28 generators have to be 5' from the house and Jane Finn mentioned the solar  
29 restrictions to panels being X inches from the edge of the roof so firemen can get  
30 on the roof. At least generators are temporary for a storm. Groppa stated an issue  
31 to resolve generators would be underground electrical such as in the Wentworth  
32 Association. The streets are so pretty because everything is underground, it's  
33 safer and you don't lose electricity because trees cannot fall on the lines, however  
34 it is very costly and the expense is usually born by the homeowner. Rowland  
35 stated when Portsmouth did the Court Street corridor, they were asked to put  
36 utilities underground but water, sewer, and electrical have to be separate and the  
37 street was not wide enough. There are many factors to putting utilities  
38 underground.

39  
40 5. Adjournment

41  
42 M/S/P Irene Bush moved to adjourn; Jane Finn seconded. All approved.

43  
44 Adjourned 8:29 pm  
45 Diane L. Cooley, Recording Secretary  
46