

City of South Portland

Arts and Historic Preservation Committee

Workshop Meeting

March 4, 2015, 7:30-9:00am

Planning Department, Sawyer & Ocean Sts.

MINUTES

Present: AHPC members Jane Batzell, Kathy DiPhilippo, Tex Haeuser, Amanda Larsen, Jessica Routhier, and Aimée Turner, plus Christopher Closs (representing Greater Portland Landmarks), David Latulippe (representing Priority Real Estate Group), and Jon Jennings, Assistant City Manager. Absent: Rob Schreiber, John Schwartzman, Scott Whitaker.

Jessica Routhier called the meeting to order at 7:30am.

It was agreed that David Latulippe, as a member of the public, would be offered at least 5 minutes of direct address to the committee, and that the committee would engage him in Q & A as time and topic allowed.

**1. Overview of Armory project plans:**

Tex presented the aerial schematic of the Armory property and abutting properties, the view from the street (using Google Maps, it was the view from Broadway looking south to the façade of the Armory), a to-scale schematic with signage areas indicated both on the façade of the building and free-standing in front of the building, with a variety of potential allowable sizes (according to the current guidelines). AHPC members conveyed concern about the size and placement of signage. Jane asks if there was ever a plan to put in pumps while also retaining the Drill Hall. Jon says that the Drill Hall must be removed in order to install the underground storage tanks because of nearby wetlands; and Tex added that the Drill Hall is “in really bad shape.” The DEP will weigh in on the wetlands issue later on in the timeline of the overall project.

**2. Report and recommendations from Greater Portland Landmarks**

Christopher Closs, Preservation Services Advisor from Greater Portland Landmarks (GPL): began by saying that he is pleased South Portland has formed this committee. Chris explained that the Armory was named a “place in peril” a few years ago. He distributed a handout with some recommended language changes to the working “Conditional Armory Zone” (CAZ). According to Chris, the Armory is eligible for the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP), and it may be eligible for grant money as the repurposing project gets underway. If a grant application is submitted, it will trigger a review by the NRHP and consideration by the Maine Historic Commission. (The state office conducts roughly 3,000 reviews each year pursuant to 1966 federal law.) At this time, GPL has not taken a public position on the issue, although Chris indicated concerns about the historic importance of the Drill Hall, which is 80% of the footprint of the building. He said it may be eligible for a tax credit, but it’s “late in the game” for a tax credit.

The committee then invited David Latulippe to speak about his goals for the project, which he described as to celebrate the building and bring it back to life, while also giving it a new purpose. The intent is to repaint the building, restore the masonry, keep the original look and feel, as well as keep the appearance consistent with the Fire Station. The issue of signage limitations is sensitive because it's unusual for a gas station to position pumps behind the building. Signage is important for their business' awareness. He is amenable to changing the pylon sign to a monument sign, but is concerned about adequate height of the sign, especially in regards to winter snowbanks. He expresses that he wants to work with us to make this project go forward. He refers to the artistic rendering, highlighting the pennants on the façade: these are not intended to be additional commercial advertising but to be community-based (Red Riots, etc). Also, the three flagpoles would likely have the US, Maine, and POW-MIA flags, but he welcomes community input (especially on the nature of the 3<sup>rd</sup> flag; if a South Portland flag existed, that would be appropriate). In response to a question from Jessica, David indicated that his company will be seeking an easement for the gazebo, which would create a seating area for the Armory's businesses as well as the Greenbelt walkway. They are also asking CMP to re-landscape their frontage.

### 3. Discussion: Recommendations for historic preservation

The committee clarified its recommendations for historic preservation by suggesting revisions to the current proposed zoning language as follows (indicated by ~~strikeout~~ for omissions and underline for additions): \*

#### Sec. 27-1202. Conditions (CAZ).

The following conditions shall apply to the Conditional Armory Zone:

- (a) The South Portland Arts and Historic Preservation Committee (hereinafter "AHPC") shall have the opportunity to review proposed changes to the existing building and to make recommendations for modifications.
- (b) Prior to commencement of any redevelopment of the Property, all exterior masonry art work on the Drill Hall portion of the Property shall be documented in both written and photographic format. Such masonry art work on the Property shall either be reused or else conveyed to the City of South Portland (hereinafter the "City") at no expense to the City via a bill of sale. The City shall identify a department to act as custodian for such building elements.
- (c) The Head House, the Tower, and the masonry end parapet wall of the Drill Hall shall be retained and maintained.
- (d) Wherever possible, original materials on the Head House and remaining Drill Hall parapet shall be retained and repaired.

- Wherever this is not feasible, replacement materials will as fully as possible replicate the original features in material and design. For example: best efforts shall be made to match the style of window and paint color used in any building improvements made to the Property to the style of window and exterior paint color ~~currently existing and the abutting Central Fire Station building~~ original to the Armory building.
- (e) ~~Best efforts shall be made to maintain the masonry end parapet wall of the drill hall.~~
- (f) Two outdoor pad sites for the display of public art on the Broadway side of the Property shall be provided to the City. The Property owner shall retain the right to approve, in advance, the size of the art work to be displayed on such pad sites in order to ensure that the art work does not interfere with the visibility of Property's businesses.
- (g) The Property owner shall enter into a permanent Façade Preservation Agreement with the City to ensure that, after the removal of the Drill Hall portion of the building, the ~~front and two sides~~ Head House and the Tower of the Armory building shall be preserved. The permanent Façade Preservation Agreement shall be recorded in the Registry of Deeds.
- (h) The Property owner shall grant the City an easement for a future walking path connecting the Greenbelt Walkway and Hinckley Park; the exact location of the easement shall be mutually agreed upon.
- (i) Except where restricted, a vegetated buffer shall be planted along the easterly side of the Property, from the gas islands canopy to the Property's intersection with the northern side of the Hudson Road paper street, that will screen views of the gas station from the property line. The Planning Board may require additional landscaping and buffering for the site.

\*Note that minor changes to the final wording were made via e-mail following the meeting.

#### **4: Discussion: Recommendations for exterior signage/public art**

The committee clarified its recommendations for signage by suggesting revisions to the current proposed zoning language as follows (indicated by ~~strikeout~~ for omissions and underline for additions): \*

##### **Sec. 27-1206. Signs (CAZ).**

In the Conditional Armory Zone, development proposals shall include a signage plan to be approved by the Planning Board for any and all signs proposed to be located on the Property, including, but not limited to, a specification of their size, illumination, landscaping, setbacks, locations, heights, and construction materials; provided that signs shall be restricted as follows:

- (a) All signage shall be integrated into the original architectural design of the building and shall not damage or permanently alter the historic fabric of the building.
- (b) No, flashing, rotating, or intermittent signs.
- (c) No portable or temporary signs shall be allowed in the front or side yards.
- (d) No electronic message signs except for the gas pricing.
- (e) Building Signs: A maximum of two (2) signs are allowed on the front façade of the Armory building no larger than eighty (80) square feet individually or one hundred twenty (120) square feet in total. A maximum of one (1) sign is allowed on each side façade of the Armory building no larger than thirty six (36) square feet individually. Signs are allowed on the rear façade of the building no larger than one hundred and twenty (120) square feet in total. Building signs shall not be internally illuminated. No commercial signage is permitted anywhere within the central area of the Head House's front façade—the entrance area bordered on each side by raised brick pilasters. No commercial signage is permitted anywhere within the central area of the Head House's front façade—the entrance area bordered on each side by raised brick pilasters.
- (f) One free-standing monument sign with a maximum height of eighteen (18) feet from the ground and a maximum sign area of one hundred (100) square feet is allowed on the Property but only in the Broadway front yard; provided, however, that a second free-standing monument sign with a maximum height of eight (8) feet from the ground and a maximum sign area of forty-eight (48) square feet may be allowed if only a single front building façade sign no larger than eighty (80) square feet is used instead of the two front façade signs allowed pursuant to subsection (c) above.
- (g) Canopy signs are allowed on the sides of the gas station canopy over the gas islands and shall be contained within the canopy fascia. The height of the canopy fascia shall not exceed four (4) feet.
- (h) Signs may be further restricted in size and height if in the determination of the City's Traffic Engineer the location of a proposed sign would constitute a traffic safety hazard without modification of the sign dimensions.
- (i) Up to four (4) pendant fabric signs are allowed on the front façade of the Armory building so long as the pendants do not advertise a business or a product.

\*Note that minor changes to the final wording were made via e-mail following the meeting.

#### **5. Review of final recommendations for zoning language**

The committee agreed that Jessica should type up the final recommendations for changes to the proposed zoning language and circulate it to the committee ASAP. It was also agreed that Committee members could suggest minor corrections via e-mail.

#### **6. Adjourn**

Jessica adjourned the meeting at 9 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Aimée L. Turner.