

NASHUA HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, October 27, 2025, 6:00 p.m., City Hall, Room 208

HDC Members:

Ald. Derek Thibeault (left at 6:55 p.m.)
Robert Vorbach
Lisa Law
Paige Hultman

Also present:

Carter Falk, Deputy Planning Manager/Zoning

MINUTES:

August 25, 2025:

MOTION by Mr. Vorbach to approve the minutes as presented, waive the reading, and place the minutes in the file.

SECONDED by Mrs. Law

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Michelle Earnest (Owner) 40 Concord Street (Sheet 67 Lot 99) requesting approval to install a swim spa in back yard behind garage. RB Zone, Ward 3. [POSTPONED FROM 9-22-2025 MEETING].**

Voting on this case:

Ald. Derek Thibeault
Robert Vorbach
Lisa Law
Paige Hultman

Evan Davis, 2 Davis Court, Nashua, NH. Mr. Davis stated that he is Ms. Earnest's nephew, and is representing her this evening. He said that she is requesting to install a swim spa in back of her house, it would go on an existing pad. He said that it is considered an accessory structure, and it meets all setbacks and other related dimensional criteria.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR:

No one.

SPEAKING IN OPPOSITION OR WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

No one.

END OF PUBLIC HEARING, BEGINNING OF PUBLIC MEETING:

MOTION by Ald. Thibeault to approve the application as submitted and presented.

SECONDED by Mr. Vorbach.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0.

2. **The Teas Family Revocable Trust, Frank Teas, Trustee (Owner) 93 Concord Street (Sheet 47 Lot 37) requesting approval to remove an existing shed and replace with a new shed in rear of property. RA Zone, Ward 3.**

Voting on this case:

Ald. Derek Thibeault
Robert Vorbach
Lisa Law
Paige Hultman

Applicant not present, the Commission to move forward with the Agenda.

3. **The Kristina K. Pennella & Christopher M. Sokul Rev Trust of 2025 (Owners) Randy King (Applicant) 61 Concord Street (Sheet 47 Lot 17) requesting approval to add full height screen panels to front porch (facing Concord Street). RA Zone, Ward 3.**

Randy King, Contractor, Nashua, NH. Mr. King showed the Commissioners some photos of the porch area from different vantage points, from further away, and some close up photos of where the panels would be going. He said that they would be in front of the railing, and similar to what they have at the corner of Stark Street and Concord Street. He said that there would be two panels in each section, and one or two in the side. He said that the panels would be 102 inches high, approximately 41 inches wide. He said that he may have to put a center brace, most likely a 1" poplar, which is a solid material.

Mr. King showed a photo of the screened molding, and the porch itself. He said that there would be no screen door with the panels, and if a brace is needed, it would go right in front of the rail, so it would not be noticeable from the street. He said that there is a lot of vegetation that covers the porch.

Mr. King passed around a sample of the screening material to the Commissioners.

Ald. Thibeault asked if there was ever a screen on this porch in the past.

Mr. King said not that he is aware of, and doesn't believe it had.

Mr. King said that due to the vegetation, it hides some of the porch.

Mr. Vorbach said that all natural material are proposed, other than the screen, it's non-reflective screen, and architecturally, it will blend in with the rest of the house.

Mr. King said that the frames will be painted black, the same as the posts.

Mr. Vorbach said that in context, it works, it belongs

Mrs. Law said that it's not structurally changing the building, and will be unobtrusive

Mr. Vorbach said that it is infill, and the architecture is remaining untouched.

Mr. King said the braces will be painted black to match, and will put the braces across the front where the railing is, if necessary. He said it will look nice.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR:

No one.

SPEAKING IN OPPOSITION OR WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

No one.

END OF PUBLIC HEARING, BEGINNING OF PUBLIC MEETING:

MOTION by Mr. Vorbach to approve the application as submitted and presented, and said that he appreciates the level of information for the Commissioners to review.

SECONDED by Mrs. Law.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 4-0.

Mr. Falk said that this request does not require a building permit, but is a change to the outer elevation, so that is why it is here, and they can go ahead with the project.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Discussion: 10-12-14 Amherst Street. Mr. Falk said it is just a discussion, there will not be any voting this evening.

Jonathan Halle, Architect, Warrenstreet Architects, Manchester, NH. He said he is joined by Lisa Mausolf, LM Preservation, Reading Massachusetts, and Henry Och, CEO, Harborcare.

Mr. Halle said that they were before the Commission a couple months ago, with the context of wanting to satisfy the Historic District Commissions concerns about the development of this parcel. He said that the Commission requested a report with regards to the assessment of the existing buildings, which has been done, and Lisa has done as well, and spoke with Nadine at NHDHR, and she will elaborate more on that.

Mr. Halle asked the Commissioners to flip to the last couple pages of the packet, they've tried to come up with something in terms of what they feel contextually reflects on some of the architecture that's in the neighborhood. He said that the top sketches are views along Amherst Street, and showed the parking lot side, and Auburn Street is on the opposite side. He said that they're trying to work with contextually what they've found for architecture around the mansard roof, the scale element along Amherst Street, there is a colonnade, porch, that comes in off Amherst Street, and sidewalk that runs down to the entranceway, there's a little tower element, and are trying to reuse the existing cupola on the existing building, just in terms of reflection there. He said that the scale of the building goes from three stories down to one story, and that is based on the use within the building. He said that in the back of the building, there is an enclosed courtyard, and the architecture gets simpler in the back, and the main focus is on Amherst Street. He said that their biggest concern is to satisfy the Historic District Commissions concerns of the aesthetics, and is interested in the Commissioners thoughts.

Ald. Thibeault asked if they are using real brick.

Mr. Halle said more than likely, it would be a thin brick.

Mr. Halle said that the challenge is building roughly 30 beds, 26-28 apartments, is that you have to get to a certain density to make it work, and with NH Housing money and subsidy money, it is going to be about \$300,000 per unit. He said that they originally thought that they could work out a deal with 1 North Main Street, and there was thought about combining the lots with Bangor Savings Bank, but that fell apart when Bangor decided not to expand into New Hampshire, they pulled back and are not moving forward. He said that they believe that they have a solid scheme moving forward.

Mrs. Law said that the buildings to be taken down are more of a colonial style, and asked how they'd try to include that kind of look besides just the tower.

Mr. Halle said that Ms. Mausolf can talk about the existing architecture.

Ms. Mausolf said that she submitted a report, included in the package. She said that she's been inside and outside the building with Warrenstreet and Harborecare. She said that both buildings are contributing in the National Register District, which includes over 150 buildings, and neither building is singled out, or called out as one of the truly spectacular buildings, there was just minimal information available. She said both buildings have been extensively and repeatedly altered for different uses. She said that going through the buildings, it's a maze, they've been very well used, with a lot of changes inside. She said 12 Amherst Street, with its cupola, has a presence that is more definitive on the streetscape, and both buildings were constructed about 1860, and 12 Amherst Street was known as the dwelling of George McQuestion, who sold lumber and flour at Railroad Square, he only owned it for a short time, until the 1870's, and moved to Boston and had an ongoing lumber business in East Boston, and died in 1892. She said the next phase, Charles Roby was the owner of Nashua Box and Lumber, bought it around 1904. She said that when she went to the Telegraph, was able to find changes mentioned, he put in a porte-cochere on the building, leaded glass was put in, palladium windows, and basically updated the building for his daughter's wedding, and the reception was held there. She said he also had an impact on the streetscape in the parking lot that serves the building, the building was wiped out because he wanted a lawn there, and after Roby's death, another interesting use of the building was that of Lords Inn, there was an on-going restaurant in Railroad Square, but when he approached the Roby's to buy the former Roby house and turn it into an Inn, further compartmentalizing but also adding on a whole lot more that Mr. Roby or Mr. McQuestion would recognize today, so he made

a number of changes as well, and in the 1940's, this building, as well as the carriage house in the back, became doctors' offices on the first floor apartments upstairs, and then Harbor Homes acquired the buildings in 1991. She said that the building was sheathed in aluminum siding before the National Register, some brackets were lost, and many windows were later replacements, and the porte-cochere was removed sometime after 1969.

Ms. Mausolf said that inside the building, there are some nice details, beautiful front staircase, some windows, some great doorknobs, but between the doctors offices and Harbor Homes, and before that, the hotel, the first floor doesn't have a lot left. She said for 14 Amherst Street, has even more alterations, and was never quite as prestigious or impressive as its neighbor. She said it appears to be built by Dana Gould, who was a freight manager for the railroad, but the name most associated with the property was Charles Campbell, who bought the house in 1869, he was an auctioneer and a real estate broker, so he may have made some changes to the building. After the Campbell heirs sold the building in 1895, it had a succession of changes, it took in lodgers, there was at least one other auctioneer that owned it for a while, and he had rooms to let, so it had an evolution that was harder to discern. She said that when the National Register nomination was written, it was described as Greek Revival, it does have a handsome front door entrance, but apparently, when the nomination was written, there were corner pilasters, there was a slate roof, no siding, so there were a number of changes at that time, and this building was bought by Welcoming Light in 1995, and there are a number of changes when you look at the Amherst Street facade, the main core of the building, you still see the massing, and can recognize the building to the wing. She said that the building has a lot of modern windows, a lot of casement windows, the bay windows, some vinyl windows, and in the back of the building, there is a porch, but then there is a whole wing with casement windows and it's hard to know when that came about, and inside, there are few remaining things, there is a nice front stairwell, a lot of simple moldings, four-panel doors, and there are some nice mid-century things, such as the kitchen.

Mr. Halle said that they received an email from Mr. McPhie, some information suggesting that the buildings were eligible, or on the National Register, and that they had to defend what is proposed.

Ms. Mausolf said that both buildings are on the Register as part of the district. She said that she consulted with Nadine Miller, who works at NHDHR, who is doing a Section 106 review for the project. She said that some of the things that were in Mr. McPhie's letter are just not true, but Ms. Miller said it doesn't matter if the buildings are being individually eligible for the purpose of Section 106, they don't differentiate individual, or being part of the district has equal bearing, so there is no reason to analyze whether they're individually eligible. She said that she's written several dozens of National Register nominations, and could not get that building individually listed, due to alterations, George McQuestion was an interesting individual, but it didn't apply to this building, there are better Italianate buildings even in the district than this one, so she couldn't see nominating it for George McQuestion or an Italianate, it's a wonderful contributing building to the district, but individually, it does not rise above that.

Mr. Halle said that it's in the district, so they'll go through the 106 review, and Nadine will probably come back with an adverse effect, based upon the district, and we will probably have to do something, whether its an interpretive display, or some mitigation to document what was here.

Ms. Mausolf said that their office likes to look at the final design, for compatibility, and how it fits within the context of the district along Amherst Street, and that process is ongoing, and she submitted the request for project review back in September, and heard back from them, so they're well aware of what is going on, so it's an ongoing process.

Mr. Halle said that the idea with multi-family housing proposed, architecture seems to be more like wallpaper, it's a box and they put scab things on the outside, one of the things they looked at is that the current zoning allows four stories in this district, which would not be what they want to do, simply because nothing around it is anywhere near that, and that corner is defining, so they are trying, with the mansard roof that they found on multiple buildings, this is still a flat roof building, the mansard would extend above the roof line, it would give a screen wall for roof equipment, and with this proposal, you would not see that, so the mansard roof is contextually responding to the neighborhood, it ends up reducing the apartment size inside, but still within the parameters of what NH Housing requires for square footages. He said a pitched roof on this, simply because the building is about 70 feet deep, would make the roof so much higher, and would make the building seem so much bigger in mass, and the mansard roof helps to bring it down, reducing the feeling of how big the building is.

Mr. Vorbach said one of the issues he deals with is things that have been poorly changed over time, there is a lot of examples in the district that are buried under vinyl or aluminum, and it has altered the character of what we have. He said the alterations made have not improved the architecture, it changed it poorly, and that's consistent with too many places in the district. He said that as far as the loss of these two buildings, their value has been diminished over time, there are too many missed opportunities, architecturally. He said he appreciates the effort to be contextual. He asked if they could do a contemporary building that is contextual, instead of borrowing details from what is around the property, could it be contextual and contemporary, just a thought. He said that all he asks is that colleagues bring their "A" game to the City, bring a building that is really good. He said that this is a challenging project.

Mrs. Law said that its on a main thoroughfare, there are beautiful buildings all around it, and when you stand in the square and look around, to think about the beauty of First Church, and they want it all to fit in, there are other homes near here that are stately that face it. She asked if it breaks her heart to see two historic buildings come down, and asked Staff for the City code for the Commissions responsibility here, and that is what the Commission has to make their decision on, so how do we help the City progress, how do we maintain its character, homelessness is a huge problem here and this is addressing that, and 28 new units is good, so the Commission has to weigh all these factors for the best of the City.

Mr. Vorbach said that these buildings could have been taken care of in a much better way, and given back to the historic district architecturally as they were, and not modified as they have been, the modifications have been poor. He said that these buildings have been poorly managed over time, they do not have the architectural character that they should have, and they are buried in vinyl or aluminum. He said that he sees elements that he appreciates and likes, and sometimes, architects can try too hard to be contextual.

Mr. Halle said that the hard part is that in order to make an affordable housing project work, its density. He said it's about \$300,000 per unit, and everything that they're applying for now needs a waiver, as they can't meet the total development costs model, it just doesn't happen. He said the hard part is how they reflect on what is there, but not in a way that it becomes too expensive to build. He said it's a tough piece of clay to model, when you're looking at massing's of what repeats along Amherst Street as you go up the street, there are breaks in the mansard, that is the true scale.

Mr. Vorbach said that the scale of what is proposed belongs.

Mr. Halle said that they didn't want to come in with a more contemporary version, and not have it work.

Mr. Vorbach said a good example of what not to do is on Main Street, the Methodist Church. He said that what is evolving here fits, and appreciates the effort to bring good architecture in the City. He said he understands the challenge of cost, and the vision of the project. He said that what is evolving here is a lot better than a lot of things he's seen before. He said that there is no mandate to be modern, and there's good things here.

Ald. Thibeault said he appreciates what they're trying to do, especially apartments for people that need them. He said if it were up to him, he'd have a Heritage Commission in Nashua, so we can look at all historic buildings in the City, not just the ones in the district. He said that for the existing structures, they've had so much modification that they don't seem to have any specific event, or a former Mayor didn't live there, or wasn't some kind of big thing, there were some minor historic things here. He asked if they build this, and need a modification, would they be required to come to the Commission, since it's no longer historic.

Mr. Falk said that most likely they would, as anything that requires a building permit for exterior work would, or, if they change the outer appearance thereof, such as the case earlier tonight when the owners were putting up the screen panels, which did not require a building permit.

Ald. Thibeault said he hates seeing something new in an area like this, but does not have any other ideas to make it different, the best thing is to do it well, and it is for a good reason.

Mr. Vorbach said that he felt the same way, and went over there and stated that the changes that have been made have really damaged the architectural integrity of these two buildings, and we'd lose these two buildings, but look at the math, first, it's what's been done close by, and it's done well, or kept and maintained well, and his opposition to those going away is lessened due to how they've changed over time. He said that there is a rich history in the district, but as this evolves, it's not over-scale, it's not too much, and appreciates the attempt to keep materials at a minimum, but use contextual materials, it's not overkill.

Mrs. Law said that white would fit in the contextual area, the brick color, it could be white clapboard, and it would fit.

Ms. Hultman said that when she looked at the plan, it wasn't the colored version, and her initial thought was that they don't want it to look like the Christmas Tree Shop, with the multi-colors, and it being along Amherst Street, and right up to the sidewalk. She said that she likes the back of the building a little better than the front, it looks more residential.

Mr. Halle said that the back is much more utilitarian.

Ms. Hultman said it just looks more residential in the back.

Mr. Halle asked if the Commission would support that. He said that the struggle is that if it has clapboard all around, the massing of the building would stand out, it would be a much bigger feeling building as you drive down Amherst Street. He said that there are essentially three elevations along Amherst Street, and the argument in his office was perhaps to make it look like three different houses, but that starts to look like Christmas paper. He said that they came forward with a consistent three brick massing's along the front, simply because it seems more solid in the design solution, and a little more quality over the wallpaper approach. He said it's not to say that

Lisa's suggestion that the brick becomes white clapboard, if you play with color, the idea is that it would be a lick and stick kind of brick solution, simply because of cost, thin brick.

Mr. Vorbach said if you think about texture, the combination of clapboard and shake, that can be explored, and doesn't think the massing would dramatically change if it were not thin brick.

Mr. Halle said that there is not a lot of shake in that area.

Mrs. Law said that her house has shakes.

Mr. Vorbach said that there are some other examples, and there are some great brick homes on Concord Street.

Mr. Halle said that his question moving forward, a non-profit doing this, there is a lot of risk to make it happen, and one of the things that they can't afford to have happen is to stall when they come to the Planning Board with this, because at that point, they are all in, committed, with a deadline. He said he needs to know, walking away tonight with all the suggestions, and will continue to refine, but if this scheme comes back, if he would get support from the Commission. He said that the site is extremely small, and they are reusing the existing curb cut on Amherst Street. He said that they have nine parking spaces, two of which are in front of the dumpster that they would manage, that is primarily for staff, and these residents do not necessarily have cars, they could, but the population generally does not. He said that there is a small enclosed green space in the elbow of the building in the back, but beyond that, it is shoehorned into the lot, and can only go up.

Mr. Vorbach said that they are in the right direction in terms of scale and height, it fits.

Ms. Hultman said that when Mrs. Law mentioned not using brick, just having the two colors, that may be good.

Mrs. Law said it could call less attention to it.

Mr. Falk said that when the Universal Unitarian Church came before the Commission, they brought two different drawings, one with a white and one with a gray trim, and it was nice to see the two options, and asked if that is possible, to show an option "A" and an option "B".

Mr. Halle said that it's a possibility, and doesn't necessarily want to design a building by consensus like that, it can open a can of worms.

Mr. Vorbach said that the sense of scale on Amherst Street, and likes turning the corner to this, it's on the interior, or parking area, that is a good sense of scale, it doesn't have to be so crisp.

Mr. Vorbach said that they've made significant effort to be contextual, the scale is important, and appreciates it.

Ms. Hultman said for the picture, the bottom left, if it is coming from Main Street.

Mr. Halle said it is driving down Amherst, towards Main, on Auburn St. He said that is one of the corners that he can do some landscape in, to take the harsh edge off the stair tower. He said that the whole idea with the colonnade was to bring the entrance, and take people off Amherst and bring them down to the entrance to the building, the furthest massing is only one store, it's the

congregate five-bed apartment, it is a different program, different than the one and two bedroom apartments that are in the main building.

Mr. Halle said to Mrs. Law's point, he can see the brick going away, and having it be white clapboard, or a color, but cringes at the possibility of blue green, with white, it still looks like its one building, and could save some money doing that.

Mr. Vorbach said it would be a quieter presence, but the brick is dramatic, one, two, three, and then the two, so more of a consistent façade or elevation would help, it doesn't need to be dramatic, and a subtle use of color, it doesn't have to be a painted lady, perhaps subtle, historic colors.

Mr. Halle said white on white is not a bad thing.

Mrs. Law said it's traditional in its own way.

Mr. Vorbach said the black and white drawings had some interest, but when he looked at the color renderings, it stood out more.

Ms. Hultman said that she was drawn to the back of the building than the front, it just looks a little more residential than commercial.

Mr. Halle said it looks like they're heading in the right direction.

Mr. Vorbach said that he appreciates the effort and the design, and they're on the verge. He said that the materials will be key. He said it can be a beautiful architectural building, that belongs, with simple materials and subtle colors.

Mr. Halle asked if they can make the application in the next couple months, and asked if they need to have Ms. Mausolf back at the table.

Mrs. Law said that only half of the Commission is here, and the other half hasn't heard any of this, they're not in attendance, so the next time they present, it could be to a totally different group.

Mr. Halle said with the government shutdown, the funding is up in the air, and grants that they expected moving forward, aren't there, and it may go on until the new year.

Mr. Vorbach said that it was a very detailed and thorough presentation architecturally.

Mr. Falk said that Ald. Thibeault had to go to his Board of Alderman meeting, so there are only three members left, but he was here and is aware of the case at 93 Concord Street. Committee members were ok with it going forward, and Mr. Falk said that he would contact Ald. Thibeault about this for his concurrence. He read the advertised case as follows:

The Teas Family Revocable Trust, Frank Teas, Trustee (Owner) 93 Concord Street (Sheet 47 Lot 37) requesting approval to remove an existing shed and replace with a new shed in rear of property. RA Zone, Ward 3.

Voting on this case:

Robert Vorbach
Lisa Law

Paige Hultman

Mr. Teas said that he was tending to his sick mother earlier, and came from seeing her. He said that they are looking to replace and improve the shed that is on the property, which cannot even be seen from the street. He said that the shed does not meet the setback requirements, so the new shed will meet the setbacks. He said the existing shed is dilapidated. He said that the shed company will be installing it next Spring.

Mr. Teas said that they are having a side door on the shed, to gain access to it on a different side, and will have a cupola on it.

Mr. Vorbach said the new shed will be better, and aesthetically, is a nice look, and has no issue with it.

Mr. Teas said that the shed is coming from Reeds Ferry Sheds.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR:

No one.

SPEAKING WITH OPPOSITION OR WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

No one.

END OF PUBLIC HEARING, BEGINNING OF PUBLIC MEETING:

Mr. Vorbach said that it belongs aesthetically.

MOTION by Mr. Vorbach to approve the application as submitted.

SECONDED by Mrs. Law

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Falk said that according to the HDC By-Laws, election of Officers takes place in October, for a Chair and Vice-Chair. He said that perhaps it would be best to wait until more of the Commissioners are present.

Mr. Vorbach said it would be best to wait.

Mrs. Law asked who the Chair is now.

Mr. Vorbach said it was Mariellen MacKay, but she is no longer on the Commission, and he is the Vice Chair.

MOTION TO ADJOURN by Mr. Vorbach at 7:15 p.m.

CF/cf