

Members in Attendance: Julie Gilman Chair introduced the commission members: Peter Smith, Mary Dupre, Pam Gjettum, John Merkle, Jaime Lopez, and Kelly Bergeron.

The Exeter Heritage Commission/Demolition Review Committee conducted a public hearing at the date above date, to discuss the proposed demolition of the following building(s) on Franklin Street:

1 Franklin Street - Tax Map Parcel #72-70 located in the C-1, Central Area Commercial zoning district

25 Franklin Street - Tax Map Parcel #72-75 located in the R-2, Single Family Residential zoning district

29 Franklin Street – Tax Map Parcel #72-77 located in the R-2, Single Family Residential zoning district

Ms. Gilman announced information regarding the Heritage Commission and its duties which are to document, research, and advise and is not a regulatory board. She informed everyone, the board only makes recommendations. She then explained the original meeting was advertised as a joint meeting with the Historic District Commission, but said there wasn't a quorum by the Historic District Commission. Pam Gjettum suggested there might be. Ms. Gilman said that Fred wasn't participating, he was in the audience.

In 1802: Franklin Street was not yet defined.

In 1845: The building that was in existence is the Long Block. The development of Franklin Street area started as a tenement housing; people who were in the workforce lived there. The Exeter Mills Fabric Company. Ms. Gjettum stated in the 1920's. Julie continued by adding carriage manufacturing was also in the area. Ms. Gilman stated there was also a Tavern or two.

1896: In the PowerPoint Ms. Gilman showed the aerial view indicating the great bridge, the Long Block and the Franklin street area was filled in a bit more, simple housing with a couple of 2 family's.

1904: The fire insurance map displayed in the power point showed the Long Block, and 4 residential housing units.

Ms. Gilman referred to the fire insurance map and the numbered homes on Franklin Street #1, #25 & #29 are the houses that will be discussed for demolition.

1913: The same map indicated. She indicated with the pointer #1 Franklin Street and #29

1924: 1 Franklin Street developed as seen now as an Automobile sales and service that was established.

1943: 20 Franklin Street was in the power point, but not in the discussion, just in context as it didn't meet the criteria and was built within the 50 years.

The Heritage Demolition Review Committee had already discussed 26-28 and they felt it was too compromised to remain.

Ms. Gilman read from an article from the Exeter Newsletter of April 19, 1919; the garage was built in 1916 for the son of Albert S. Wetherell, a prominent citizen. She indicated a nice article and is submitting the article for the minutes. She continued to say the physical characteristics of the building are what are seen today. The garage sold Buicks and Chevrolets. The exterior of the building was the first establishment to use the Portland Cement Blocks.

The main blocks are compressed and are chamfered. Ms. Gilman announced there was a letter received from Historic New England opposing the request to demolish the building (also attached in these minutes). They indicated the building is a good example of early concrete block construction and is a well preserved example of an early garage.

Mr. David Choate from Colliers in Portsmouth, a lawyer for the Lamperts; stood up and spoke about his relationship to the Lamperts, their working history and their willingness to bring an esthetically pleasing building to the Franklin Street area. He continued to talk about 1 Franklin Street as having historical merit but that it wasn't safe or suitable for reuse. Mr. Choate said it wouldn't take a second floor. He suggested it wouldn't be feasible to redevelop it, unless the town planned on turning it into a museum. Ms. Gilman asked if there had been any engineers go through it. He said there have been a few but no report on it at this time. He indicated that property is the cornerstone of the development and will defeat the process, to bring Franklin Street to be a cool area, a mini South End in Portsmouth in likeness.

Al Lampert stood and said if there was a fire, the fire department wouldn't go in as it isn't structurally sound, and the steel beams would melt. He said the floors underneath are washed out. He suggested the flow in traffic down South Street and the design for people to walk everywhere. He said if the blocks were wanted, they could have as much as they wanted, but it was economically not going to happen.

Judy Rowan 33 Prentiss Way, a former tenant of the Long Block: Concerned about the disrepair of the existing buildings. She said they were poorly maintained and buildings that have merit not be taken down. She is concerned that the new buildings wouldn't be kept up or maintained as the buildings are now.

Julie Gilman opened back up to the board where Pam Gjettum said she would hate to see the garage go as it was the first car dealership in Exeter in 1916.

John Merkle spoke to the early example of the handmade blocks and Portland cement has withstood this amount of time as an automotive building and is still pretty much intact for the most part. He said he wouldn't feel comfortable to blatantly tear it down.

Julie Gilman asked for a motion and they will rule on the properties individually as they are so different. Pam Gjettum asked for assistance on the wording for the motion. Julie added "recommendation and to preserve" in the wording. Pam Gjettum said given the architectural value for the town she would like to keep it then John Merkle seconded. Ms. Gilman asked if there was any more discussion. Pam announced realizing they didn't have any teeth. Ms. Gilman asked for a motion to recommend to not demolishing. Not many spoke up so she asked to hear more response and read the motion again. The question was asked and all voted to not demolish #1 Franklin Street.

Ms. Gilman stated that Pam is recusing herself from the discussion about 29 Franklin Street as she is an abutter.

The next building in question was #25 Franklin Street. Ms. Gilman looked to the commission to see if losing one building would impact the town's heritage. She said the state of the building is in its original state and is used for a residence. She opened the discussion to the public. There being none, discussion went back to the board. John Merkle asked if the buildings were to be looked at individually or as a whole in a historic view. Jaime Lopez said he didn't want to see it go, it is a beautiful building. Pam Gjetum asked what vinyl siding could do to a building and if the siding was removed would the building collapse. John Merkle said it was hard to say.

Judy Rowan from 33 Prentiss Way asked if this were the last meeting on these buildings and where does the process go after this. Ms. Gilman explained this proposed project has come to the Historic District Commission in part. The Historic District Commission tabled the 3 buildings within it, #20-Al's Garage, #26-28 next to it, and #1 Franklin St. – white garage will be discussed at the HDC and the decision of the proposed work had not been decided and explained that at this meeting they are discussing the demolition and would it be a loss for the town to lose them. Julie then explained after the HDC, and it goes forward, Ms. Gilman suggested Judy go to the other meetings moving forward if she would like to discuss anything further. Ms. Rowan asked if her remarks were a contribution to this community. Pam Gjetum announced that the 2 buildings are not in the Historic District.

Frederick Kollmorgen of 70 Front Street asked for clarification if the buildings are in the Historic District, the board said it wasn't. Fred asked to whom the recommendation from the Heritage Commission goes, to demolish or not to demolish. To the Building Inspector whom then will inform the property owners. The owner of the properties can demolish it, John Merkle added, and that the Heritage Commission can delay it for 30 days. The Heritage Commission advises the Planning Board the Historic District Commission or any land use board. The owner has 30 days to appeal the decision. Julie asked for a motion to release to be demolished or recommend the building not be demolished, but be maintained. John Merkle made the motion to recommend the building not be demolished. Jaime Lopez seconded. The motion carried. The Vote: Unanimous in recommending maintaining the building.

Pam Gjetum recused herself from voting on #29 Franklin Street as she is an abutter. John Merkle asked for clarification on which building was in question as it is very much in likeness to the one next door. The buildings are in their original form Julie stated. John recommended the building not be demolished. Mary Dupre added because there is more than 1 building built in that era and two examples of the historic nature of the buildings, she agreed with John Merkle.

Judy Rowan asked if there are three houses in question. She asked Al if the 3rd house next to the parking lot is being demolished and he stated he wasn't the owner of that property. Judy also asked if the three buildings were currently being maintained, the likelihood of others who own property there would join in and maintain the neighborhood, being developed within the historic content. Julie asked if there were comments from the board. There were none. Mary Dupre motioned to recommend not demolishing the building. Peter Smith seconded. There was no discussion. The Vote was taken and all agreed to recommend the three buildings not be demolished.

Julie stated their business was done for the evening and asked for a motion to adjourn. Kelly Bergeron moved to adjourn and John Merkle seconded. The Vote was in the affirmative to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted


Leigh A. Burley

Admirably Equipped Garage

Save for a little cement work for which warmer weather is desirable, the exterior of Hon. Albert S. Wetherell's garage on Franklin street is completed, and the interior is virtually finished. The garage is already open for certain lines of repair work and houses several Buick cars of the latest design. It is an admirable building for its type.

It is built of cement blocks, which make a pleasing exterior and assure safety. In dimensions it has a frontage of 40 feet with depth of 60 feet. At the left of the entrance is a pleasant office, about 12 feet square, with closet and toilet, with large plate glass window at its front. There is another at the opposite side of the entrance. At a rear corner is a repair shop of 18 by 20 feet, and all remaining space constitutes the garage proper, which will accommodate 15 of the largest cars.

The floor is of concrete. For the first five feet the walls have received a cement coating in brick tint and all above, including the roof and trusses, is in white. With its numerous windows the interior glows with light.

The repair shop is separated from the garage by partitions rising to the roof and its metal-sheathed door is fireproof. The shop will be equipped with all needed tools and appliances, much already installed. The repair work will be directed by Mr. S. P. Adams, of about three years' experience in Exeter.

The building is lighted by electricity and equipped for steam heat.

The principal contractor was Mr. Irving W. Brown, of North Hampton.

April 17, 1914



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November 21, 2013

Exeter Historic District Commission
Attention: Chairwoman Pam Gjettum
10 Front Street
Exeter, New Hampshire 03833
VIA FAX

RE: 1 Franklin Street, Exeter, New Hampshire

To the Honorable Chairwoman Pam Gjettum and Commission Members:

On behalf of Historic New England, the nation's oldest, largest, and most comprehensive regional heritage organization and our 18,000 members in forty-two states, I write today in opposition of the application to demolish the historic garage structure located at 1 Franklin Street that is currently before the Historic District Commission.

As you are aware, Historic New England owns and operates the historic Gilman Garrison (c.1709), at 12 Water Street, as one of its thirty-six house museums (one of our five museums in the state of New Hampshire). Our organization has owned this property since the 1960's which has given us a long presence in Exeter and directly leads to our concerns regarding the future of this historic garage.

Overall, 1 Franklin Street is a contributing property to the Exeter Waterfront-Commercial Historic District, a National Register Historic District. The building (c.1910) is a good example of early concrete block construction and is a well preserved example of an early garage. Like many early garages, it is situated in an area of town that once held a larger concentration of wheelwright shops/carriage manufacturers (essentially representing a continuum from the era of the horse to the automobile age).

Historic New England is highly selectively as far as commenting on matters before local historic districts, but occasionally an application rises to the level that raises more global concerns or threatens our own museum properties, which this obviously has the potential to do. Our philosophy relating to preservation relates to protecting layers of history to provide an understanding of the evolution of an area and its architecture. 1 Franklin Street is significant to that story – and allowing for its demolition and for new construction to occur would remove the early 20th century story from the community, which would be an unfortunate result.

Under Exeter's Preservation Guidelines (hereinafter "the Guidelines"), demolition is referred to as a "last resort" and it is also noted that "less drastic alternative[s] may be available to deal with existing structural or design flaws." The Guidelines only allow for demolition in three

of early concrete block construction and is a well preserved example of an early garage. Like

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November 21, 2013

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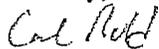
situations: (1) where new construction would relate better to the community's context (or is essentially appropriate because a non-contributing resource is being demolished); (2) there is documented economic hardship relating to the continued ownership of the structure; or (3) there is clear and documented structural instability or deterioration.

The notice received by Historic New England does not reference the basis of this demolition request. If economic hardship or structural concerns are the primary driver, we respectfully request that particularly close attention be given to these claims to avoid pretextual justifications for demolishing this structure to promote an intended development incompatible with retaining the current resource.

If, however, the argument is based upon the appropriateness of the new construction to the area, please consider the significance of this garage in making your decision. Notably, in listing the Exeter Waterfront-Commercial Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places, the National Park Service has already determined that 1 Franklin Street relates or contributes to the collective significance of this historic area. The early 20th century automotive story is fast disappearing from our landscape and cultural memory and surviving examples of this form of vernacular architecture should be preserved whenever possible. The fact that the predominant architectural styles represented in this area date from earlier periods is not a justification for the demolition of this later structure.

In conclusion, Historic New England respectfully requests that the Commission deny the applicant's request to demolish the 1 Franklin Street property – confirming the importance of early 20th century architecture to the area. At a minimum, should the demolition ultimately be approved, Historic New England would strongly urge that this site be documented with Historic American Building Survey (HABS) level documentary photography to ensure that a visual record of the property is preserved. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Carl R. Nold,
President and CEO