

## CITY OF DOVER

### HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

JULY 17, 2025

The Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, July 17, 2025, at 3:30 PM as an In-Person Meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers (anchor location) and virtually using the audio/videoconferencing system Webex. With Chairman Czerwinski presiding, the other members present were Mrs. Richardson and Ms. Horsey (virtual). Mrs. Mason was absent. (There is currently one member not appointed.)

The Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mr. Salzano, and Mrs. Savage-Purnell.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Ms. Horsey moved for approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Mrs. Richardson and the vote was unanimously carried 3-0. Mrs. Mason was absent.*

#### **ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING OF MAY 15, 2025**

*Ms. Horsey moved for approval of the Meeting Minutes of May 15, 2025, with any necessary corrections, seconded by Mrs. Richardson, and approved 3-0. Mrs. Mason was absent.*

#### **COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS**

##### **Summary of Applications 2024 and 2025**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned in your meeting packet was the Summary of Applications. We report on Applications from 2024 and 2025. Today you will actually be considering your third Application of the calendar year. For the other Applications you have reviewed this year, no additional steps have occurred with those; and those meaning the Old Post at Loockerman Plaza and then the Biggs Museum Expansion Phase I with selected removal authorization in place now. Going back to 2024, you reviewed a total of nine (9) Applications. A lot of them have had some type of action happening with them. The most recent change is the Legislative Hall Parking Garage that is moving through its process to finalize its Site Plan. I think we are down to maybe one or two agencies for that at this point and then they will be moving into any kind of Building Permit process. Their DNREC Approval came in last week.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions on the Applications. There were none.

##### **Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2025**

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this chart brings us through the end of June of 2025. We have had a total of 22 Applications for Permit in the Historic District. All of them were eligible for Planning Staff review or they were interior items that are not subject to Architectural Review Certification. The Historic District Commission was involved in three of the Applications at some point. The more recent Applications have focused on some minor exterior improvement projects such as siding, roofs and a Temporary Sign Permit.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if there were any questions on the permit activity.

Chairman Czerwinski asked what type of material was being used for the siding replacement. He asked if it was like the original vinyl. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that the siding replacement was for 32 West Loockerman Street which is the Loockerman Square mixed-use building that has the apartments, office space, and some retail on the first floor. I believe there was some type of similar T1-11 siding on parts of that building. We can certainly double check that for you.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there were any other questions; there were none.

#### Department of Planning & Inspections Updates

No new updates.

#### **NEW APPLICATION**

HI-25-02 Mixed Use Building at 120 S Governors Avenue – Public Hearing and Review for Recommendation on Architectural Review Certification for the construction of a four story, 169,080 SF Mixed Use Building including a grocery, retail and restaurant spaces, a child day care, 120 apartment units, and a roof-top courtyard with site improvements of a parking lot, a courtyard, and landscaping. The parcel contains 1.70 +/- acres. The property is zoned C-2 (Central Commercial Zone) and subject to H (Historic District Zone). The property is located on the west side of South Governors Avenue and halfway between Reed Street and West Loockerman Street. The owner of record is Downtown Dover Development Corporation c/o Downtown Dover Partnership. Property Address: 120 S. Governors Avenue, Dover. Tax Parcel: ED-05-077.09-01-44.00-000. Council District 4.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that this is a proposal for a four-story mixed-use building with a mixture of commercial and residential units that are being proposed. As part of the process, there is an Architectural Review Staff Report that is prepared that gives a narrative about the project, the different Code provisions and *Design Standards and Guidelines* for the Historic District that you need to be looking at as well as a series of Staff Recommendations. The location of 120 South Governors Avenue is to the north of Loockerman Street which is at the bottom of the image here (as she referred to the slide presentation) its the main parcel shaded in blue. You can see that it expands the full width of the block between South Governors Avenue, which is on the right-hand side and then South New Street is on the left-hand side of the block. There are several adjacent parcels to the north of this large tract that are not within the Historic District but may involve improvements in those areas as it moves through the Site Development Plan review process that it will have to go through. The building is on a property that is zoned C-2 which is the Central Commercial Zone and also found in the Historic District Zone. Anytime you have new construction in the Historic District, it is going to be subject to the process called Architectural Review Certification. This property previously held what we call and know as the Acme building. The demolition of that building has occurred. That occurred after the request for its demolition appeared before this body in June of last year as application HI-24-05 and that was approved for demolition of that mid-20th century commercial building (grocery store building) that was there. The narrative does include some information on the historic development of this parcel, but that commercial building was the last in the line before this new proposal here. The property is fully located in the City's Historic District Zone. I will also note that the property is within the National Register of Historic Places in the Historic District, known as the Victorian Dover Historic District, but that previous commercial building was considered a non-contributing building to that district.

The project proposal today, as we will hear more from the Applicant about its details, is a mixed-use building. It is 4-stories in height. As part of the project, there is part of the parcel that would be developed as a parking lot and then there's other associated site amenities that would be proposed for improvement or new construction, things like sidewalks, placements of trees, and the like. With this property being in the C-2 zoning district, there are some design standards related to that. Our report outlines the code compliance items related to setbacks. They are meeting those with the placement of the building overall. The C-2 zone does allow for a building of four stories in height as the maximum building height is ten stories or 125 feet. This Plan proposes four stories at 60 feet for this project. In reviewing this project, the Historic District Commission is charged with looking at the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*, specifically mostly focused on Chapter 4 where new construction is discussed and the appropriate kind of guidelines and standards for doing such a new construction. There are also some references to Chapter 3, which is where each kind of building element and materials are discussed in greater detail. For new construction, they're really looking at things related to the massing of the building, like how does it present itself to its street and its adjacent neighbors. And also, things like orientation, size, overall portions of things like walls to window, and those types of criteria. The Planning Staff in doing the Staff Review Report always gives a series of Comments and Recommendations in regards to the project. Those are found on the Report beginning on page 7. Staff is recommending conditional approval of the Architectural Review Certificate, finding that the building is of a compatible design with adjacent buildings and would meet the intent of the *Design Standards and Guidelines*. We believe that their use of the various brick finishes takes cues from the adjacent and greater Downtown Dover area, and how the facade particularly is broken up, it really, even though it is one overall building could be easily read as several smaller buildings along a streetscape area. The other Staff comments that are included in the Report, ask some questions about things that probably should be clarified. The Applicant may actually focus on some of those as we continue a review on this project. I'd be happy to circle back to those comments after we hear from the Applicant and if the Historic District Commission members have other questions. But at this point in time, I think your time is best used in hearing from the Applicant and the details of their project. There are a number of the project team members here. I'm not sure who is taking the lead today.

**Representatives:** Mr. Todd Stonesifer, Chair of the Downtown Dover Partnership Board, Mr. Michael Henry, Becker Morgan Group, Ms. Candice Schuster, CoreStates Group, Ms. Leslie Smallwood-Lewis and Ms. Meagan Whetstone, Mosaic Development Partners.

#### Presentation

**Mr. Stonesifer** stated that he lives at 115 N. State Street, Dover, Delaware. I'm also the Chair of the Downtown Dover Partnership. Just to paint a little picture, we would like to present to you as much information as we can to make your decisions easier. We may miss the mark. If so, please ask us questions and if not, then wonderful. We did a good job. I'm here with my team. I'm simply the Chair of the Board of Directors and we have established a wonderful team over the last couple of years. So, in 2021, we set out to find out what the solution is to make Dover more attractive. And the solution is we went through a planning process for a little over one year. We engaged community members to give us input, and the community came together wonderfully to provide feedback and to build through this process where they provided information. We took the

information and collected that into iterations of ideas, brought it back, presented it, they gave us more feedback, we went back and drilled down into finer details.

The Plan was delivered to us in January of 2023. Part of that Plan was that we would find Staff and have someone dedicated to implementing this Plan through a Property Development Director. I am pleased to introduce Mr. Ken Anderson. Then we'll meet the rest of our team: Jed with Colonial Parking, Monica and JD Bartlett with EDiS Construction, Candice Schuster with CoreStates Group, Leslie Smallwood-Lewis and Meagan Whetstone with Mosaic-Colonial Associates, and the Civil Engineers of the Becker Morgan Group. This was a one-year process just to get us to the overarching Plan that conceptualized this. We have now been working on the implementation stages to get us to this point.

**Mr. Ken Anderson** stated that he is the Property Development Director Consultant for the Downtown Dover Partnership. I am so excited to be at this portion of the project. In my role over the last 18 months, I've primarily been responsible for the assessment with some key structures that are specific to our Downtown Dover Master Plan. As a result of site assessments, overseeing the bid and procurement process, identifying remediation requirements from some of the structures, and having to come before you previously for a couple of little structures where we had to get permission to demolish certain buildings.

I'm grateful that through all the community input that we got as part of that process, all the feedback, and the menagerie of phone calls we received while demolishing buildings. While doing remediation, we have successfully gotten to this point. I think this building is a benchmark and is iconic representation of what this Master Plan is all about.

When Todd asked me to come and participate with this incredible team, this is what I was looking forward to. At this moment, I'm grateful that when we came to you regarding our request to demolish the old Acme building, you gave us unanimous consent to do so. As a result, concurrent with all these other activities that we just heard about, the design process took place by this team. We are at, I think, an incredible next step and next phase of the Master Plan. Thank you for your input today as we look forward to going forward.

Mr. Stonesifer mentioned that we'll turn it over to Meagan and Leslie from Mosaic Development Partners. They are the ones really driving the train on this design and leading the charge.

Hello, I'm **Ms. Meagan Whetstone** the Senior Vice President at Mosaic Development Partners. I'm here today with those Development Partners. What we are really trying to talk to you about is the broad sweeping market identity for this project. You know, a healthy walkable city comes with the verb and people to drive it. And so, what we are trying to do with this Site is not only embrace outcomes of the new Mobility Center but also pay attention really carefully to New Street and make sure that there is no real backdoors, which is an incredibly hard thing to do in a building that is supposed to have grocery and retail and all these amazing things. We're trying to do it really carefully because within that Historic District, the scale has to be at the pedestrian level. So, what we're hoping to achieve here is something that fits the cadence along Governors really matches the identity of the town. And also allow for people to really inhabit the space. What we are envisioning in the residential part of this is affordable luxury units that are going to be delivered at kind of a market luxury level, but with different funding mechanisms used on our

capital stack side to enable people of any income level to join in on this project and be part of the community.

It's not really, you know, for any one type of person. It's for everybody, but really providing a high level of care and community within the building itself. With that, a lot of the units have requirements, but there's a really high level of mix so we can have emerging professionals as well as families starting to enjoy this space as they're looking to put permanent footing down in Dover. The retail is along South Governors. A lot of times the grocery store actually heads back to most of the space because it all requires refrigeration. So, what we've done is have three special little micro-retail pieces along Governors to kind of give startup space back to the community and to provide a front door. Then the grocery store itself is more extended back into the building. It is accessible for both sides just thinking about the way people will engage with the building itself.

Mrs. Melson-Williams noted that Michael Caine from CoreStates Group has also joined us online.

I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Candice Schuster of CoreStates Group and she'll talk to you more about the architectural realization as well as the programming along the street.

Good afternoon. My name is Ms. Candice Schuster and I'm the architect for 120 South Governors. I'm the Associate Director of Housing for CoreStates Group, formerly known as Bernardon. The proposed community is a four-story multifamily, mixed use, mixed income residential property offering thoughtfully designed apartments while maintaining the historic character. Exterior and shared spaces help in reinforcing the street grid and the historic pedestrian connectivity. The ground floor of the building is programmed to serve a variety of activities which promote the urban experience. Key occupancies will include a grocer, a cafe, a daycare, and three small retail and restaurant spaces that are perfect for small businesses serving a community. This building concept proposes two front doors as Meagan previously stated which gives revitalization to New Street as well as Governors Avenue. These two spaces will give use to the exterior courtyard located at the rear of the building to help stitch in the existing community. There is surface parking at the back that will accommodate both the grocer and the daycare. The upper floors are a mix of studios, one beds, two beds, and three beds with an outdoor rooftop courtyard above the grocer.

### Rendering

Although contemporary in design, the development's architecture respects the historic context rather than replicating the neighborhood structure. The building incorporates the guideline principles of scale, rhythm, proportion, and materiality. It enables the structure to harmonize with the surroundings and avoid appearing foreign in the community, while introducing additional contemporary textures and materials to complement the historical context. The building massing follows the surrounding historical communal vernacular. The building is scaled with the urban fabric of Dover's Downtown context. The southern façade is four stories while the facade steps down to the north of the building where we have two-story adjacent buildings to weave in with the fabric that's existing there. The facade lends itself to more of a neighborhood aesthetic to fit in with a local community. The dynamic process of the facade allows for a pedestrian friendly walkway both on Governors Avenue and New Street. It also creates identifiable entry points at

the corners of the building as well as the residential entry in the center. The facades are treated with brick, masonry, and historic talent aligned with the context in the surrounding neighborhoods. Decorative cornices and bandings align with the historic cornice heights within the district, upper floors are treated architecturally to blend and maintain focus on the first story. Large storefronts on the ground floor with tall narrow windows are to maximize the comfort of the units and the aesthetic of the overall building. Railings will tend to hold historic character while using modern materials. The façade will feature a primarily retail frontage alternating between masonry piers, glazing, and premanufactured panels. The brickwork employs varying orientations, particularly in the column bases and at the cornices or perceived cornice lines of the building. This technique ensures the harmonious line of Dover's historic vernacular. All street facing elevations, follow the brickwork pattern up to varying cornice lines that step down as you get more into the residential area of Dover that's on the north side of the property. These design choices reflect the commitment to honoring the previously received public input, integrating the contemporary style with historical contexts, and aligning with the *Design Standards and Guidelines* of the City for the Historic District Zone.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if the Board members had any questions? He mentioned that he had questions. Mrs. Richardson mentioned that she had questions, but would like to see and hear the full presentation before asking questions.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was anyone else presenting? There were no other presenters.

Mrs. Richardson mentioned that she was in favor of the project and was also impressed.

Mrs. Richardson asked about the off-street parking on page 16 of the pictorial presentation. It shows a hedge. The presentation shows a hedge and a hint of a low fence. Will the final design include both a fence and a hedge? If you don't have a fence, someone is going to walk right through it.

Mr. Mike Henry (Civil Engineering Team of the Becker Morgan Group) replied that right now, only a screening hedge has been shown, but there is a possibility; we just haven't proceeded that far at this point. Mrs. Richardson said she would recommend it.

Okay there is a screening requirement and the hedge meets that, but I'm asking if there's going to be a fence condition because if there's an illusion of it maybe you can't really see it on that.

Ms. Leslie Smallwood-Lewis mentioned that they were also concerned about putting up a fence and creating an optics of that the community is not welcome and we don't want them in; sometimes provides that illusion. So, we want to make sure of that because there is going to be interior space that public installations might be able to occur. We don't want it to look like we are closed off. It's something that we just want to make sure that we consider collectively.

Mrs. Richardson mentioned on page 4 of the pictorial presentation it stated that there are 14 parking spaces. She asked will there be a maximum time limit on parking in these spaces? The proposal indicates that this parking lot is to accommodate the needs of residents, business owners, and shoppers. And if it's going to be the employee of a business, they are going to come in at 7:00 o'clock in the morning and park all day, when they only have 30 minutes.

Ms. Smallwood-Lewis mentioned that primarily, this parking has been envisioned to serve the grocery user, which is a big because of the size of the grocery actually really requests further needs, really high turnover parking and not a lot of them. Another use we're envisioning is for leasing so you can come in and then daycare drop off is a huge part of it. That's kind of why it's a wide lane and for fire lane use. It is more of a temporary stay lot with the parking envisioned across the street.

Mrs. Richardson said but back to part of my original question. Do you plan to have a limit, like a 2-hour parking limit on these spaces like the rest of the town? Ms. Smallwood-Lewis responded by saying that it has not been considered yet, but certainly could be considered. Mrs. Richardson stated that she would recommend it.

Mrs. Richardson asked on what street will the entrance to the parking lot be located? On page 5 of the pictorial presentation, it indicates that it will be on Minor Street, which is just an alley. Is that how you are going to get into the parking lot? It's one way, you know, the one entrance and then the other side is the exit.

Mr. Henry replied the parking will come off of New Street. It's basically a U-shape. Minor Street is technically a paper alley that doesn't truly exist.

Mrs. Richardson asked, is it the same entrance as the truck access to the back of the grocery loading area? Mr. Henry replied yes.

Mrs. Richardson mentioned it appears that there is only one return for grocery carts which are located on South Governors. Are there other areas planned? Will there be a routine collection of carts which have not been returned? For example, if carts were left near where customers parked.

Ms. Weststone replied that they are going to park across the street in the parking garage. Mrs. Richardson said then they are going to leave the carts up there. They are not going down and pull them (the carts) across the street.

Mrs. Richardson asked if they are in the parking lot, do they come in the back door? There's only one cart return area and it's looking to be at the front of the grocery store away from where anyone is going to park.

Ms. Weststone replied we have discussed these operational questions with the grocer as well as the parking team to understand the best-case scenario for them. Likely, it would be an operational exercise by the grocers themselves. The grocery has two entrances and so that the hallway in between that funnels in the middle is envisioned as that collecting space for the shopping carts. Should we need to add more (cart) parking in the same parking lot or elsewhere we can certainly consider it. Right now, the grocer that would go here is a smaller on their footprint and more of a grocery basket type. So, it's not envisioned that they would need it and they're not heavy cart users.

Mrs. Richardson mentioned that she understood. She assumed that it would be the grocer's responsibility, but the concern was it didn't look like you could return your carts through the backdoor. It was only at the front of the grocer.

Ms. Weststone replied that it is also in the back. There will be a sliding door to connect to that corridor.

Ms. Horsey asked if she could interact with that because she had the same question about the shopping carts. We have shopping carts left all over the Dover and it's a huge problem. I would suggest that this grocer please charge \$0.25 (twenty-five cents) like Aldi's. They don't have any carts anywhere. They are the one place where you get your quarter back after returning the cart. She would really like to see that.

Mrs. Richardson asked why we are using three different types of bricks versus staying consistent (reference page 7, item IV #2 of the submitted proposal)? This is reminiscent of the smorgasbord of material used on the Dover Library. She has heard many comments around town after the library was built that it was obvious a committee put that building together.

Ms. Schuster mentioned looking at all the different materials here, it can seem like a lot. We studied this building for quite a long time as was said previously. When we got all of the opinions and the public's comments on this building, we decided that to fit in with the neighborhood of Dover and to really stitch into the fabric that we were going to go for more of a communal façade. That look is where you kind of start getting these different materials. Now, we are very careful that these materials relate to each other. It may be a different brick color, but the brick size may stay the same. The portions of the building are going to stay materially continuous in that section. We are not mixing and matching different materials within the same portion of the building where we have one brick type. We are keeping that and then we are having a separate façade look. We are doing something that compliments that, but it's not matching the building to get one cohesive building feel although the scale is breaking down to more of a pedestrian level.

Mrs. Richardson stated that she did understand that, and you did clarify that in your initial comments.

Mrs. Richardson, other than two very plain metal cornices, the design doesn't seem to include any decorative historical details that other buildings in the area have. That is a disappointment to her (see picture of Priscilla Block another historic building in the area). I'm not seeing anything historical in this building.

Ms. Schuster mentioned when we were looking at this building, we certainly wanted to have a nod to the historical context of Dover, which is very important. The building should feel like it fits. We did also look at the building having a little bit more of a contemporary look to kind of lead the future building opportunity. We can certainly look at putting some cornices in, but I think the way that the cornices lay out with this façade kind of stepping down feels appropriate too to the building façade.

Mrs. Richardson said it is very plain. It doesn't add anything to it.

Ms. Whetstone stated that I think one thing about replicating what is there is respecting it, which we do because we are trying to pull the columns up and really connect it to the edges to get

context and those kinds of cornices. I don't think they are in the drawings, but you can kind of see them in the rendering where you start to get a little more play with the brick and articulation. I think one thing that we're thinking about, you know, is the marketing of this space and bringing people down. It is also a second layer of bringing additional private investment in with other people. And so its having that kind of fresh feel while merging it into the middle. Plain, we don't want plain. So, we will absolutely look at that and how it kind of demonstrates the shadow lines coming together to become clearer. I think that's coming back to what we're talking about with the pedestrian scale. You really feel it when you're on the ground floor. But also coming back with the bricks. You're coming down Main Street and every single brick building is brick and it's worn brick, but they come from a very slightly different place. It is a slightly different clay, and they are all a little different as you march your way down. That's kind of what we are trying to do; so, you feel like you're not just walking past a monolith and it's something to get past, but it's something to stop and consider. So, with this lens of trying to bring people in and trying to make something familiar for everybody. Within a historic district, it has to have that scale. From an investment perspective, you know making people understand you know Dover is doing something here and it's something really cool. And what does that look like? So, it looks like a little bit of everybody but with that same rhythm and then with that same scale demonstrates I think you're speaking to. That is our vision.

Mrs. Richardson said okay, thank you.

Mrs. Richardson said none of the windows pictured in the pictorial presentation reflect any hint of historical connection with the area. They are all modern windows.

Ms. Schuster mentioned that with the window sizing and proportion of the window, we tried to match what was in the vernacular. That means tall and more narrow in size. The materials of the window are going to be more modern. I think that kind of lends to the type of living that's going to be happening in this building and the users at the end of this using these apartments. But with the proportion of the windows, we try to match the historical context.

Ms. Whetstone mentioned on the brick buildings, you're seeing a black frame on the windows and on the newer stuff, you're seeing the white frame. Coming back to that play of old and new, the brick is kind of replicating the idea of more of a warehouse window look. So, it's old and it's going to be reminiscent of what's already typically within the brick frame. I'm wondering if this is a render issue because it's so early in this concept is reading a little flat. It would be more set in. We would get shadow lines. There are millions on there that you would start to see. We can definitely take a look at how that could read with modern materials in a more contextual way.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked if they could look at page 15. I think that page would probably help a little bit in the discussion you are having about cornice lines, windows, and old versus new.

Ms. Whetstone said that it is absolutely helpful. I defer to my team for all of the technical stuff, but that's not my strength. I do want to just note from a more global approach to this is the Master Plan. That is what Mosaic was brought in to focus on and to make sure that there is a true impact on Downtown Dover. In order to do that, there's constantly a balancing act that has to occur where we respect your City, because we love it so much. It's got such a quite feel to it because of its historic background. But we also know that it's very important to meet the needs of

what people are looking for now in their living environment. And a lot of that has to do with a somewhat of a fresher look, the windows, the balconies, how things are laid out, and the amenities that will be in this building. We are charged with making sure that we actually do what was put into the Master Plan. We know and have done this so much that we know what these future residents and commercial tenants are going to be looking for. We are always having this push and pull between what the social needs are going to be for the future residents and tenants and how do we respect the City of Dover to make sure that comes out. It's not going to look exactly how everything else does in Dover because we won't achieve the ultimate goal of really densifying and bringing in a kind of a new generation of residents to Downtown Dover.

Ms. Horsey mentioned overall I really like what you have done here. I think you have achieved the goal of making it people's street level friendly facade. I do have one comment on this north end which is on the right side of the slide is that it seems to be what you see first. It is plain and kind of white and it will definitely show a little more. I was thinking possibly that could be a slightly darker color or maybe a little more interest in just the plain facade that it reads now because it looks like a white cube. So, that would be my only comment. I think you have answered a lot of questions that I had. Some of them were similar to Mrs. Richardson questions. The only other question I might have would be the trees. Are they hopefully canopy trees, or do we know yet or is this too early in the process? I would urge you to plant some canopies to bring in the shade because as we all know, that's what makes Downtown's livable are the trees. Thank you.

Chairman Czerwinski commented that overall, the design is really nice. I think it is a postmodern kind of look. Mixing the old and new, he appreciates that. I think that the idea behind it is wonderful. My concerns about it are as follows. I think when she was talking about the cornices, I think there's an issue when you are dealing with cornices and trying to draw the eye down. So, what you're trying to do is you're drawing everybody away from the higher elevations or higher facade. I think you need a little bit more detail than just putting sheet metal or sheet aluminum because that's what it is going to be or represent the cornice. What we are talking about it simple, either incorporating that within the brick structure by making the cornice itself brick and then adding maybe some bracketing or some dentiling that adds a little bit of design elements to that. Because if you're going to draw people's eyes down and you are going to respect the historical architectural features of Downtown Dover, you are going to have to make those little features.

I say just some simple bracketing or dentiling on the corners. I would hope that maybe you would stick with brick instead of trying to use aluminum. What you're trying to do, and I'm not an architect myself, but, you know, there's a fine line between trying to draw people's eyes down and being brutalistic within building design. Because effectively the top half of the building is not existent; there is no design elements up there. It's just the box, the white box. And so, if you're going to draw people's eyes down, I would ask that you enhance the details of those areas that you want to pop out. I think the idea of making the north elevation and darkening it down to like a gray might work, you know, just to break up the white. I understand what you're saying is you want that to disappear. One of my biggest problems is the south elevation. What I'm finding with these new buildings, and we typically do this all the time, is we ignore the elevation and put everything out on the facade and then there's nothing on the (side) elevation. And the thing is, this is a four-story building. So, from Loockerman. that building is going to stick out. If you have

just an elevation with the brick and then the rest of it is just the white, you are going to see a white building from Loockerman. It is going to be a featureless white building going all the way back. I'm asking that on the south elevation is wrapping that brick building all the way around for twelve bays on the elevation side of the building. Because we have another building on the Water Street where they just did the façade and it's very painfully obvious when the roof ends right there at the façade. It cuts off, you can just see where there's no roof there and there is no features. It's going to be the same thing right there especially from Loockerman where all you're going to see is that brick ending at the corner. You are just going to see a plain white building going all the way down to the rest of the building. So, I asked if you could wrap the facade of the south side around the elevation instead of just having to stop. On the back, it's kind of weird because you have the features. Go to page 16 and at the rear of the building, you go to a wainscoting which is kind of weird. The wainscoting really kind of brings out a warehouse look to the building. I'm not sure if that's necessary. I would just stick with the white going all the way around the back. The wainscoting gives off the feature of a warehouse; it's not necessarily attractive. And then where the grocery building is, you kind of lose all the architectural features and you basically have the rear of a hospital right there. So, I would ask that for the grocery area to put a little more features on that to match the rest of the brick, because that looks really sterile. But basically, it's like the emergency entrance to the hospital and especially from New Street. It's going to be extremely visible if you're walking. You want something that looks neighborly and that doesn't really look neighborly. So, I'd ask that you continue that same sort of treatment as far as the brick with the columns.

Ms. Whetstone mentioned that they are all in set brick panels and it can be a little difficult to see, but okay.

Chairman Czerwinski mentioned they are very subtle. Ms. Whetstone said okay.

Chairman Czerwinski said it's a square box back there. That's another thing I see. But like I said, overall, I think the building design is very well executed. I just wish architects would look more at the elevation sometimes to give a little bit more respect to the elevations. We have the same thing with the other project with parking garage where the side stops, and it just becomes concrete along the whole back side of it. And these are big structures. So, when you are talking about massing and height these things are absorbing everything else, whether it's the Kent County Family Court Building, or whether it's this. These buildings will be seen from blocks away literally because everything else is two to three stories. So, all I ask is to respect the elevations. I know we talked about the facades, but I'm trying to get away from the facade so we can get more into the building to look like a complete building instead of just adding stuff onto the front of it. Ms. Whetstone said okay.

Chairman Czerwinski mentioned as he referred to the Staff notes that this project has unusually not a large number of questions that are brought up in Staff notes. The Staff summary for this was in the Review Staff Report for this project in Section 6. In Section 6, there is a whole list of details that were not clarified in the project and some of it was highlighted by my counterparts here. And so, to me it's kind of hard to go ahead and approve an Architectural Review Certification when you have two or three pages of unclarified details. It's not on the building but the bushes, the fences, the masking of the parking lot, and things like that. If Staff does recommend, then we can go ahead and approve it. However, we need strict adherence to Section

6 of the Review Staff Report to make sure that everything's been addressed to Staff's satisfaction to make sure the project gets pushed through.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if any of his counterparts have any further questions?

Ms. Horsey stated that she thinks they also have to include all the comments in question seven. There are a lot and as long as you are all aware of these and are working on them, I don't really have a problem with this.

Mrs. Richardson asked if they could get clarification on your page 8 of the Staff proposal at the very top: clarify the window glass area material if it's mirrored or colored glass. Ms. Schuster replied that the windows do not have mirrored or colored glass.

*The public hearing is open.*

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there was anyone who would like to speak.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that we do have one individual that joined us online and that's Michael Caine from the CoreStates Group. He did not have any comments.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there were no written comments received by any members of the community.

Mr. Tom Smith: I live at 36 The Green. I thought the comments so far have been really good. First, I'd like to say that this morning when I was emptying the garbage, I looked out and I saw the facade on the side of the new parking garage that's for the Family Court had been built. The windows there looked fantastic. I thought, geez, this parking garage is beautiful; and you know, how can a parking garage be beautiful? It was really terrific. It was so good that I wrote a note to Bill Lenihan congratulating him. In some sort of the same manner, my daughter bought a new electric car, a very fancy car. She loved the car, but on the front of it there's a grill. And the grill is totally fake. And you can see right through the grill. You can see the metal of the regular car. And it was just sort of objectionable. In the same way, all the different facades that we're talking about, in some respect to me, are a little objectionable. I think that the facade should be specific for a purpose. To make a distinguishing difference between the residential and the retail, is important. That part is good. I think that in some respects; this may be a little overdone. I think it might be too much, especially if you talked about the hospital appearance with the marketplace; you know, I totally agree with that. I briefly looked over the Plans and I saw where the third and fourth floors that were residential had different colors on the side. And I thought, "Well, what's the reason for that?" And I'm thinking that it's more like the library. Do the windows open because the windows are tricky here and I could see them overtime being not as attractive. For instance, the windows in that parking garage are spectacular, with the trim and so forth. I thought that something needs to be done to dress up the windows here. If they open that's kind of important. That makes them more attractive than if they don't open.

Chairman Czerwinski asked for clarification if the windows open or don't open? Ms. Whetstone asked if he could be more specific regarding which windows. Chairman Czerwinski said any

apartment windows. Ms. Whetstone replied that the residential windows are operable. For the portions of the windows are operable. The storefront on the ground floor, those are fixed.

Ms. Schuster mentioned for clarification that this building is going for a really, really high level of sustainability. We are not only considering LED, but also Passive House. And so, as we explore the Passive House, which is like a Net Zero, it's a really incredibly resilient and environmentally responsible type of building. That might limit our ability to do operable windows, but it would only be because of that reason we would not.

Chairman Czerwinski asked is that something that you actually had in your design. I assume that you had it in the design elements for the building that there was supposed to be a "green" building. Ms. Schuster replied yes. Chairman Czerwinski said he was just checking.

*The public hearing was closed seeing no one else wishing to speak in the room or virtually.*

Chairman Czerwinski commented that there are a lot of Staff notes that would have to be questions that have to be addressed. I know there's design elements that I would like to see and then I don't want to approve the Application as is: the problems with the cornices and the change of the wraparound of the façade onto the elevation on the south elevation. They did it on the north but not on the south.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that I think we can probably ask the applicant to clarify that question on the north and the south elevations because I think that it is in our packets if there's questions about material on those.

Chairman Czerwinski mentioned that page 13 shows the elevations. If you look at the south elevation it is a little confusing of how it is presented. It has the south and then the north, but is the north, I assume at the bottom?

Mrs. Melson-Williams replied we are on page 13, and it's the interior of the courtyard. This is a u-shaped building if that helps you. So, the page before it, page 12 is actually the true, I guess, north elevation and south elevation of the building.

Chairman Czerwinski mentioned that he was satisfied with that. Perhaps we request a redesign of the cornice with more elements.

Mrs. Richardson stated that she would prefer to seek more Historic District details included. I understand the basic concept. I appreciate that you did your homework and went around to the different historical details around town and took pictures. I'm not seeing where they've been incorporated into the design.

Chairman Czerwinski mentioned that he could see what they were talking about regarding the Victorian window massing.

Mr. Stonesifer mentioned regarding the elements that you would like to see, can we approach this from a conditional approval and have Staff and Planning help us work through that in the interest of time? We are open and certainly open to doing all the suggestions.

Mrs. Melson-Williams noted that Planning Staff to the Historic District Commission are making a recommendation on the Architectural Review Certification for this project. So, if you have specific concerns, you can note those in making your recommendation. The ultimate issuance of the Architectural Review Certification for this project will be issued by the Planning Commission as part of their review of the Site Development Plan for this project, because it's required to go to them. The Staff presented a series of comments and recommendations. A number of these are, I would consider them more minor things, or they may be things that are more in the realm of some of the Code requirements that the Planning Commission would be looking at: things like screening of that parking lot area, some of the other tree planting requirements, and those types of things. Some of them are truly comments or things that were not real clear, such as that window glass area.

Then its clarifying what the material truly was in the Presentation that we had received in their graphics package. So, there are a number of things that way. Certain elements that were not real clear, like is it mirrored (the glass) or tinted? We have determined that answer is no. What are the certain edge treatments for things like the railings and other elements of the building or site detailing. I think as the project progresses they will be flushed out. But if there is certainly some particular elements or design features of the building that you have concerns with, your action on the recommendation for this building could certainly articulate those.

*Chairman Czerwinski moved to forward a motion of the Recommendation of the Architectural Review Certification for Conditional Approval of the Architectural Review Certification of HI-25-02 Mixed Building at 120 South Governors Avenue with inclusion requirements of complying with Section 6 of the Staff Review Report to be in compliance with those. In addition, with a requirement for consideration for redesign of the north and south elevations and façade cornices to incorporate the brick elements with the possible dentiling and/or bracketing. With one or the other to improve the cornice presentation of the building to better reflect the Downtown Dover area. The motion was seconded by Ms. Horsey and approved 3-0. Ms. Mason was absent.*

Mrs. Melson-Williams summarized the motion that your recommendation regarding this Application is for conditional approval of the Architectural Review Certification. It's subject to compliance with the items identified in Section 6 (of the Review Report), which is the Staff Comments and Recommendations, and then to consider potential design changes on the north and south elevations and cornice areas to add potentially more brick in certain areas and/or cornice detailing.

Mrs. Melson-Williams noted that a written Notice of Decision, the information found in this Report and the action of the Historic District Commission will be forwarded to the Planning Commission. It will accompany your Site Development Plan once that is filed. That next step of a Site Development Plan review process is with the City's Planning Commission.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Review of Permits Referred to Commission**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that there were no Permits to specifically bring to the Commission today.

**OLD BUSINESS****Certified Local Government (CLG) Program**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned as you know in the past the City of Dover had the opportunity for grant funding. At the federal level, it has taken a bit for the Historic Preservation Fund monies to even to be released for FY'25 for State of Historic Preservation Offices and for Historic Preservation Offices to even have access to that funding. I believe there's been some steps in what I've read in recent weeks to release what would be FY' 25 monies.

I have not heard anything from the State of Historic Preservation Offices as to their intent of them opening that Grant cycle especially when they have concerns about availability of FY'26. So, if you have interest in those things, certainly take a look at the National Trust or Preservation Delaware who are following those issues more closely regarding Historic Preservation funding at the Federal level that then translates to the State.

**Implementation of 2019 Comprehensive Plan**

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that this is the time of year when we actually have to be submitting an Annual Report regarding how things have been progressing and the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Planning Staff will be working to finish that Report to get that to the State Office. There are not any particular items to bring to you on that today.

Chairman Czerwinski asked if there were any questions or comments before we adjourn?

*Mrs. Richardson moved to adjourn the meeting seeing no other items of business, seconded by Ms. Horsey, and unanimously carried 3-0 of the members present. Mrs. Mason was absent.*

Meeting adjourned at 4:49 PM

Sincerely,

Maretta Savage-Purnell  
Secretary