

TOWN OF DOVER HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

- Paul McDougall
- Robert Wagner
- Michael Murray
- Rafael Rivera
- Linda Mullin

COUNTY OF MORRIS
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- William Shuler - Alternate I
- Keith Titus - Alternate II
- Paula Mendelsohn - Secretary
- Peter King Esq. - Commission Attorney

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MINUTES October 20, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman McDougall called the meeting to order at 7:35pm

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Commissioners Titus, Shuler, Mullin, Murray, Rivera, Vice Chairman Wagner and, Chairman McDougall

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Paula Mendelsohn, Board Secretary and Peter King, the board Attorney.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

ADEQUATE NOTICE OF MEETING was read by the Board Secretary.

MINUTES: Motion to approve the minutes from September 15, 2025 was made by the Chairman Paul McDougall and seconded by Commissioner Titus. **All in favor vote. APPROVED 7-0.**

RESOLUTION:

- Motion to approve Resolution **HPC25-02 Pan Pizza**, Block 1210 Lot 6; also known as, **27-29 E Blackwell St** was made by vice Chairman Wagner and seconded by Chairman Paul McDougall. **All in favor vote. APPROVED 7-0.**
- Motion to approve Resolution **HPC25-08 Excel Treatment Center**, Block 1325 Lot 16; also known as, **58 North Sussex St** was made by vice Commissioner Mullin and seconded by Chairman Paul McDougall. **All in favor vote. APPROVED 7-0.**

CASES –

HPC25-07 4 W Blackwell St, Block 1217 Lot 7; also known as **4 W Blackwell St.** located in the Downtown Historic District. The applicant proposes the division of the commercial area into two commercial spaces.

Attorney Bianca Pereiras appeared on behalf of the applicants for the property at **4 West Blackwell Street**, requesting a **Certificate of Historic Review** for **limited exterior modifications** to the existing mixed-use building. The property currently features **commercial space on the first floor** with **apartments above**.

The proposed work includes **modest façade updates** and the **division of the existing commercial space into two smaller commercial units**. Attorney Pereiras noted that **one expert witness** would provide testimony in support of the application. Ms. Pereiras presented the applicant's **licensed architect**, Mr. Manuel Pereiras who confirmed that his professional licenses are current and that he has testified before the Commission previously as an expert witness.

The architect testified that the proposed work includes reconfiguring the ground-floor storefront to accommodate the creation of two commercial units. He noted that the building has undergone numerous alterations over several decades, including the installation of asphalt shingles and later vinyl siding over the original façade. Based on the age, condition, and method of installation of these materials, he stated that the underlying historic façade is likely to be in **significantly deteriorated condition**, including cracked brick, punctures, and damaged trim.

The architect cautioned that any exploratory removal of siding would require permits and would likely reveal deterioration that would be **cost-prohibitive to repair**, potentially jeopardizing the viability of the project. He emphasized that the applicant purchased the property approximately one year ago and is attempting to make improvements that are both historically appropriate and financially reasonable.

The Commission discussed various options for improving the appearance of the storefront without requiring full restoration of the concealed underlying façade. Several members expressed concern about the existing **1980s-era fake stone veneer**, noting that it is inconsistent with the historic character of the district. The architect agreed and suggested replacing the stone veneer with a **flat-panel façade system**, such as fiber cement with appropriate trim, to create a cleaner, historically compatible appearance. Commission members referenced nearby buildings where similar treatments have been used successfully.

There was discussion of incorporating additional architectural details, such as a decorative panel or medallion above the door. Ms. Pareiras conferred with the applicant and reported that they were **amenable to revising the lower façade design** in accordance with the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission indicated that a **revised rendering**, including material samples, color selections, and details of the proposed lower façade improvements, would be required for further consideration. The applicant agreed to submit updated plans and to coordinate with the Construction Official regarding appropriate color palettes.

Ms. Pereiras inquired whether the Commission could authorize any portion of the work, such as the window and door reconfiguration, to allow the applicant to move forward while the revised façade design is being prepared. The Commission stated that it could not approve any design

elements that have not yet been reviewed and noted that the applicant will also be required to appear before the Zoning Board, which typically expects the HPC to have reviewed and approved the complete exterior proposal.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the applicant's willingness to revise the design and reiterated its goal of ensuring improvements that are consistent with the historic character of the district while remaining mindful of cost considerations.

Motion to carry the application was made by Chairman McDougall and seconded by Commissioner Titus. All in favor vote. **APPROVED 7-0.**

OLD BUSINESS-

- **At the Hop**

- Commission members reported no recent contact from the property owners.
- The last communication indicated that the owners would reach out when ready. The Commission agreed to attempt one additional follow-up to solicit updates.

- **Dover Furniture Building**

- Updates on the façade work were limited. The property is currently under construction, but no formal updates have been provided to the Commission.
- Concerns were raised regarding potential safety and liability issues during winter months due to ongoing construction.

- **Redevelopment/Redistricting Impacts**

- Commission members requested clarification on how redevelopment plans supersede HPC review authority.
- It was noted that, under current redevelopment guidelines, the Commission may have limited input, typically restricted to aspects such as color or minor façade details.
- Members expressed difficulty in following the interaction between HPC review and Planning Board oversight under redevelopment approvals.

- **Ground Floor vs. Upper Floor Renovations**

- Members discussed the challenge of projects where only the ground floor is being renovated, leaving aging or deteriorated upper floors in place.
- The Commission considered whether it is appropriate to require phased improvements for the entire façade over time.
- It was noted that phased renovations could include setting specific timelines for addressing upper-floor improvements, similar to past cases.

- **Historic Character and Façade Preservation**

- Members emphasized the importance of maintaining historic consistency, while acknowledging that exact restoration may not always be feasible.
- The Dover Furniture building was cited as an example where partial façade improvements were completed, providing an enhanced historic appearance even if full restoration was not undertaken.
- Grant funding and historic easements were noted as effective tools for ensuring long-term preservation and adherence to historic design standards.

- **General Observations**

- Members discussed the importance of visual cohesion within the historic district, noting that improvements to one portion of a building should ideally complement the remainder of the structure.

- The Commission acknowledged that phased or partial improvements are sometimes necessary, but encouraged setting expectations for future work to ensure district-wide aesthetic integrity.

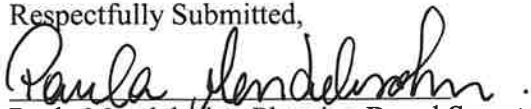
NEW BUSINESS-NONE

PUBLIC DISCUSSION – NONE

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Chairman McDougall and seconded by Commissioner Titus. All in favor vote. **APPROVED 7-0.**

Meeting adjourned 8:36 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paula Mendelsohn", written over a horizontal line.

Paula Mendelsohn, Planning Board Secretary

Date approved 12/15/25.