

CHATHAM BOROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
March 21, 2023 7:30 p.m.

Chairman James Greener called this Regular Meeting of the Chatham Borough Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. This meeting was held in the Council Chambers, Chatham Municipal Building. All legal notices had been made for this meeting. A televised recording was made of this meeting.

Names	Present	Absent
James Greener, Chrmn.	X	
Council Member Carolyn Dempsey	X	
Council Member Frank Truilo	X	
Lynn Magrane	X	
Karen Franklin	X	
H.H. Montague	X	
Justin Strickland	X	
Brigid McMenamin	X	
Liz Holler, Recording Secretary		X

Public Comments

There were none at this time.

Discussion Items

Post Office Plaza/BCUW – Tom Toronto & Mike Scro

Chrmn. Greener explained to the public the responsibilities the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has in reviewing this application. The HPC has to review how well the architecture of this building fits in with the context of this property.

Chrmn. Greener turned the floor over to Tom Toronto, president of the developer, Bergen County United Way. Mr. Toronto explained that he and Mr. Scro are in charge of developing this property at Post Office Plaza, in fulfillment with the Borough's obligation for Affordable Housing. Mr. Scro, is an architect with Z+ Architects. Mr. Toronto and Mr. Scro are charged with constructing 15 affordable housing family units.

Mr. Scro submitted his professional credentials. He also described the experience he has had in helping other towns choose quality housing that fits in with the character of the town.

Mr. Scro assured the HPC and the public that Mr. Toronto and his wife maintain their properties impeccably.

Mr. Scro explained that he and Mr. Toronto have looked at an inventory of the larger scale homes in Chatham. He noted that the building entrances in the Borough have to be clearly defined. Covers will be installed over all the entrances of their Post Office Plaza (P.O.P.) affordable building.

Mr. Scro discussed how the material and scale of the building was decided on. He stated that the building's sustainability design will work with the Borough Engineer. He pointed out that NJ has recently adopted the new State Code requiring more rigorous energy measures, as well as enhanced ADA requirements. The plans before the HPC will accommodate the new ADA space requirements. A high-powered envelope will be constructed..

Mr. Scro described the strong gable roof-lines that will be created with interesting peaks. The brick veneer will have varying heights and will be installed along the base of the building. James Hardy composite-clapboard is being proposed for the siding, with limited accents of white board batten.

Mr. Scro explained the mixture of the white and grey colors to be painted on the building. These two colors will provide a nice balance to the building, as well as a classic look. The height of the building will be 45 feet 5 inches at the tallest ridge. The transom windows are really for aesthetics.

Mr. Scro discussed the proposed exterior lighting. Downward lighting will be installed at the entrance. There will be no lighting projecting out towards other buildings. The building will be ADA compliant and will be fully sprinklered.

Chrmn. Greener felt that this would be a good time for Commissioners to submit their questions to Mr. Scro and Mr. Toronto.

Chrmn. Greener asked for more details on the windows.

Mr. Scro discussed the double-hung windows that will be installed at all locations of the building, except in some cases where casement emergency windows for bedrooms will be created. He noted that when this occurs, a simulated check rail will be employed.

Mrs. Franklin pointed out that the plans had originally proposed two floors for the building. Why did it go up to three?

Mr. Scro answered that the initial plans accommodated 15 units in two floors. After speaking with the civil engineer, Mr. Scro discovered that did not provide enough room remaining to provide parking and pedestrian access around the building. Mr. Scro stated that the footprint of the building came down in size.

Mrs. Magrane asked if the tower component of the structure was actually for the elevator shaft.

Mr. Scro explained that the top of the watch-tower will be for the mechanism of the elevator. This tower will be under the building height requirement.

Mr. Truilo confirmed with Mr. Scro that the building will be 2 stories at the Bowers Lane side, and 3 stories at the remaining areas. A kind of a blend of 2 stories/3 stories will result. Mr. Scro pointed out that an effort was made to be sensitive to the homeowners across the road at Bowers Lane.

Chrmn. Greener asked about the brick façade of the building.

Mr. Scro answered that typically a full brick veneer is used in situations like this; however, he will listen to any comments the Commissioners may have on this aspect. Mr. Scro discussed the sidings that will be installed. He recommended pre-made corner moldings be installed.

Chrmn. Greener asked about the proposed shutters.

Mr. Scro explained that these will be good quality shutters, not vinyl. He recommended paneled shutters; however, he will listen to what the HPC prefers.

Mr. Strickland asked if there were more exterior lights beside those installed for the exits and entrance ways.

Mr. Scro answered that he and Mr. Toronto would like some lighting to provide secure and safe conditions around the building; however, no upward lighting will be proposed.

Chrmn. Greener agreed that upward lighting is not favored by the HPC. Also, the HPC is concerned about the light temperature pf the fixtures selected.

Mr. Scro stated that LED lights will be installed which are fabricated to emit light temperatures similar to incandescent lamps.

Commissioners and Mr. Scro discussed the proposed lighting in the parking lot. Mr. Scro said he will try and make the lighting as residential as possible.

Council Member Truilo noted that the Planning Board will be looking at the sidewalk and lighting plans in the near future.

Mr. Scro stated that he and Mr. Toronto will meet the requirements of the Borough Code so all the egress and exit lights are attractive and shine downward. Mr. Toronto agreed that lighting is a sensitive area.

Mr. Strickland had concerns about the 3 tones of siding being proposed. It did not seem to be in keeping with the historical nature of the town.

Mr. Scro agreed that this use of different tones is not a classic historic look.

Chrmn. Greener explained to Mr. Strickland that Mr. Scro has mixed these colors to break up the massing of the building. Mr. Scro will be using materials that will be in context with the Historic District. Chrmn. Greener felt that Mr. Scro's biggest task with this application is to break down the mass of the building.

Council Member Truilo and Mrs. McMenamin asked Mr. Scro to please review the renderings of the building, as viewed from each direction.

Mr. Scro put the renderings on the easel. He identified each rendering, showing what the facades would look like on the southwest side, the southeast side, the northeast side, and the northwest side.

Mr. Montague asked if there will be a basement.

Mr. Scro answered that there won't be a full basement. Maybe a small machine room will be installed by the elevator.

Mr. Montague asked if there was any thought to making the rooftops flat, not peaked, to create an area for the tenants to relax. This concept was not universally endorsed by the HPC.

Mr. Scro answered perhaps an area like that could be considered. It could be created behind the roof peaks.

Mrs. McMnamim asked if any thought had been given to putting the 3-story section on the side of the building that few people will see.

Mr. Scro felt the 2-story side would be a more appropriate sight for the people who live across the street at Bowers Lane.

Mrs. McMnamin noted that almost everyone drives into the P.O.P. parking lot and almost no one drives to the very end of Bowers Lane.

Mr. Scro felt the side of the building facing the parking lot will be in scale with the amount of asphalt that is involved. An effort was made to make the two sides of the building attractive and articulate.

Mrs. Franklin asked if it would be possible to lift the current design and spin it just slightly.

Mr. Scro answered that the current proposal was the best solution for the parking arrangement. He and Mr. Toronto had to work around the building's footprint.

Referring to the first floor plan, Council Member Truilo noted that there are 5 entrance/exit points. Two of these points are for exit only. Is there any way to reduce this number to 4 entry points for security reasons? Is the Bowers Lane entrance really needed?

Mr. Scro explained that the Bowers Lane entrance will give a front porch feel; however, it could be sacrificed.

Council Member Truilo asked that he just consider that suggestion. It's not a major issue.

Mr. Strickland agreed with an earlier suggestion made by Council Member Truilo, that there could be an increase in the amount of brick at the base of the north and west building elevations, thereby creating a better relationship with neighboring buildings.

Mrs. Franklin asked if there will be EV charging stations in the building's parking area.

Mr. Scro answered yes.

Chrmn. Greener asked if the public had any questions or comments.

Jo-Ann Soroczynski, 3 Lincoln Ave., felt that the vertical planking made the building look much larger than it really is. However, she thanked Mr. Scro and Mr. Toronto for providing adequate space between their building and the train tracks. It will definitely help with controlling the noise from the trains.

Mr. Scro answered that he will look into that clap-board situation.

Joyce Martinsen, 64 North Hillside Ave., reviewed the proposed parking arrangements with Mr. Scro.

Val Clarke, 21 Fern Ave., stated that she liked the plans. She appreciated that a basement will not be excavated.

Council Member Truilo asked Mr. Scro if he had any idea when his paperwork will be deemed complete, thereby allowing them to go before the Planning Board.

Mr. Scro answered that the paperwork will be submitted this Friday.

Council Member Dempsey thanked Mr. Scro and Mr. Toronto for their presentation. She appreciated that their plans will be using quality material. She felt the staggering of the second and third floors will be attractive.

Mrs. McMenamin agreed with Council Member Dempsey's and Ms. Clarke's remarks. This is the only P.O.P. design that hasn't sparked outrage among Chatham residents.

Mr. Montague wished there had been a little more clarity on the traffic flow situation.

Summing up, Chrmn. Greener felt that a great deal of architectural skill had gone into such a good design. He was glad the idea of permanent building materials had been decided on.

Chrmn. Greener stated that the HPC will write a report to the Planning Board, giving their views on this application.

Chrmn. Greener made a motion that the HPC approve this design for the Post Office Plaza Affordable Housing building with the following suggestions:

- 1) The applicant consider adding more brick to the perspective on the lower right to “tie it in” with the Post Office building & the Cottage Deli
- 2) Consider possibly eliminating one entrance for security reasons
- 3) Consider possible black-out windows at the tower

Mrs. Magrane seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken. All Commissioners voted aye. The motion passed.

#### HPC Flag Award

Mrs. Magrane and Mrs. Franklin had a possible candidate in mind. They will pinpoint the exact address and submit it to the HPC for their consideration.

Chrmn. Greener thanked Borough Administrator Steve Williams and his technical staff for arranging this televised meeting tonight.

The meeting adjourned.

The next Chatham Borough Historic Preservation Commission Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 12, 2023, 7:30 p.m., Room 301, Chatham Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Liz Holler  
Recording Secretary

