



Amesbury Technical Review Committee

May 7, 2025

City Hall Auditorium

62 Friend St.

9:30 am

In attendance: Robert Serino, Nipun Jain, Lauren Blatchford, Chief Nolan, Jim Wilson, Nick Cracknell, Howard Snyder, Lisa DeMeo, Amanda Armington, and Becky Frey

Absent: Joseph Buckley, Chief Bailey

Nick Cracknell called the meeting to order at 9:33 am.

Nick Cracknell commented that the purpose of the preliminary review is to provide initial comment before they applicant goes before the Planning Board for preapplication. The TRC is an advisory Board to the Planning Board. The purpose is to get comments and concerns from city departments. The applicant will provide a brief overview of the project. After the preliminary discussion they can reach out to departments individually to discuss the issues. The focus of the TRC review is horizontal construction. The Design Review Committee looks at vertical construction and advises the Planning bBoard as well.

Informal Preapplication Review:

1. 38-40 Prospect St.

Geno Ranaldi commented that he was pursuing a Historic Preservation Special Permit. He has owned two two-family structures for 10-12 years and has been more of a landlord than a developer. The initial goal was to renovate what was there. He had talked about putting an ADU on the site and worked with OCED to brainstorm other options. The Historic Preservation Special Permit will allow for creating another lot to build a single-family home and the historic preservation of the two existing structures. They worked on parking and dressing up the site with pavers and landscaping. It would involve a subdivision of the lots and they are here to see if any departments have concerns on this plan.

Nick Cracknell commented that Geno had come into the Inspection's Department to talk about a detached ADU and that triggered OCED to weigh in. The proposal avoids adding a large garage at the intersection where it doesn't belong. They looked at putting in a single-family home on the property and improving the existing structures. Geno has purchased 30 windows for the buildings that are not architecturally appropriate. He is willing to use them somewhere else and put in the right historical windows, brick sidewalks and parking improvements to make the site work. He will rebuild the porches in the spirit of what was there originally and improve the landscaping.



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Rob Serino clarified that they were putting in a new single-family residence at 38 Prospect St. and fixing up the existing two two-family structures. Geno Ranaldi confirmed that was correct.

Nipun Jain commented that they applicant should work with public safety to be clear on the correct addresses before pursuing a building permit.

Lisa DeMeo commented that it was a good project. The driveways and sidewalk intersections on the plan is not how it is there. They will need to understand the changes. There should be an access easement for everyone to use that back driveway. There is not a tremendous slope but there is one from the back of driveway to the street. They should evaluate if a driveway drain or porous pavers would be needed to prevent runoff into the street. Geno Ranaldi commented that the plan shows porous pavers at the base. Nick Cracknell commented that the common driveway does exist today and questioned if Lisa DeMeo was talking about drainage on the apron or the whole driveway. Lisa DeMeo responded that it be good to understand the square footage of runoff to evaluate what is needed to capture the drainage.

Nick Cracknell commented that the curb cuts now are wider than shown on the plan so there would not be a driveway expansion. The only addition is where the two cars are parked. There is less pavement in aggregate on the site because they are making some of the existing driveway narrower. This plan would create two lots. The existing two-family structures will stay on the same lot and the single-family home will be on a separate lot. Whoever owns the two structures will own the driveway maintenance. The If two family structures are ever converted to condos, then they would need to make sure there's a maintenance easement in the condo docs.

Lisa DeMeo commented that DPW would need to understand sewer and water connection. Geno Ranaldi confirmed they would work with the existing connections. Lisa DeMeo commented that when they have plans for the sewer and water they will need to come to DPW to talk about it.

Nick Cracknell commented that they should show how the solid waste will be managed and snow storage. Any HVAC equipment locations should be shown on the plan. They should be in the back of the property.



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Rob Serino commented that the new construction will need to follow the new fire code, they would like to see the existing structures brought up to current code as well. Geno Ranaldi confirmed they could do that.

Nipun Jain commented that the elevations should be discussed with the Design Review Committee.

Rob Serino motioned to send a favorable recommendation with the comments listed below be addressed by the applicant. Seconded by Jim Wilson.

- The applicant shall meet with DPW to determine the drainage needs, sidewalk improvements, and utility connections for the proposed project.
- In addition to building the new single-family home under the current fire code, the applicant shall bring the two existing two family structures up to current fire code.
- The applicant shall present this project to the Design Review Committee who will review the lighting, landscaping and building design.
- The applicant shall clearly show the lot lines on the site plan given they are proposed to change.
- The applicant shall present a snow management plan and show snow storage areas on the site plan.
- The applicant shall clarify the solid waste management plan.
- The addresses for all structures shall be approved by public safety prior to applying for building permits.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. 1-9 Oakland St.

Stefano Basso represented the applicant and commented on the design. The existing mill building was originally a carriage mill building. There are three stories on the Oakland Street side. The proposed project is to convert it to a mixed-use structure. The additional story is shown in gray above the existing roof line. There is an existing elevator tower. The proposal is for a 124-unit apartment building with 3 commercial spaces on the end wings of the building along Oakland Street. There will be parking in



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the front courtyard off Oakland St. and a garage access from the existing building. There are seven artists' live/work studios. There will be a large new addition off the back of the building, and it will be a 6-story structure. There will be 3 levels of parking garage and 3 levels of housing above. The lowest level garage will be accessed off Chestnut St. There will be a residential lobby off Chestnut St. and two building stairs access and two elevators. The second level is mid-level in the garage and accessed by the courtyard parking ramp. The main level is off Oakland St. They are proposing to add a sidewalk along the front of the building. They are concentrating the drive aisle in one location and working on the traffic memo now. There will be parking access to the third level garage on the left side the building. There will be a few apartments on this level and a trash room. The sprinkler room will be on the bottom left corner of the building. The fourth level of the whole building will be all residential and it will be a mix of studios, one bedroom, and two-bedroom units. There will be trash chutes in middle of the building. The fifth floor will be all residential and the wing on the right is a different floor level than the rest. They will have a 5-foot setback from the existing façade. There is a roof deck accessed by a fire elevator and stairs. The mechanicals would be on the roof. It would be solar ready to allow future solar panels.

Lisa DeMeo questioned if they considered a green roof. Stefano Brasso responded they have not discussed it.

Stefano Brasso commented that the elevations show additions in dashed red. The overall look and feel is to restore the historic nature of the mill building and create complementary additions.

Steve Sawyer, engineer, commented that they plan to replace the existing fire and water service. Prior to that they will perform a flow test to confirm the pressure. This site is urban, the building covers 88% of the site. For stormwater they could provide some infiltration in the upper part of the parking lot. They need to be careful of infiltration because they have been going through an environmental cleanup. This site provides the ability to provide a substantial amount of infiltration underneath the garage structure. They will be able to reduce the impact of storm water in the city. The sidewalks are in rough shape along that building. The perimeter sidewalk will be fully replaced with a 5-foot sidewalk to protect the pedestrian way. This property has been surveyed numerous times. The good news is that they just finished the boundary survey, and it came up the same as previous surveys done by GM2 and Cammett. The new building will maintain the 1-foot setback for the garage. There is an existing sewer between the ironwork company, and it angles through the garage at the corner. That will need to be relocated. There are two major site aprons right now and they have a



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bituminous sub section. They will coordinate with DPW on this. The slope is 8% into that lowest level. The other major curb cut is off Oakland St. where access to the main level of the garage is. This is a typical urban application.

Chief Nolan questioned if the parking garages were connected inside or individual levels. Steve Sawyer responded that they were individual levels. Chief Nolan questioned if there was courtyard in the back near the new addition. Stefano Brasso responded that the courtyard width varies based on open air requirements. It is just a little wedge. Nick Cracknell added that it was not really a courtyard. It is a wedge shaped area which meets setback requirements but it would not be an active use. Chief Nolan questioned how much space was between this and the metalworks building. Steve Sawyer responded that it was more than 10 feet less than 20 feet. Nick Cracknell questioned if the garage was enclosed with a ventilation system. Steve Sawyer confirmed that was correct.

Howard Snyder commented that he has worked on a similar project and suggested looking at a purple roof for water infiltration. A purple roof would have an economic trade off. It collects stormwater and infiltrates it. The ground level artists live/workspace is a contemporary living style. They could consider other lifestyle spaces. They should consider other modes of transportation and how deliveries would work. It would make sense to have deliveries in close proximity of the mail room.

Lisa DeMeo commented that they may want to find a way to block access to the wedge to prevent debris from getting in there. A purple roof is worth investigating. The front of the building is on Oakland St. The other side is not on Chestnut St. it's on County Road. That is not a public street. They will need easements for the perimeter sidewalks. When this application comes in, they will want to see the inverts etc. filled in. The sidewalks shown go on both sides of right of way. Also, when a car is on Oakland Street, the stop sign at Chestnut is across the street. It should be on the neighbor's property, but cars are parking up to the curb and they eliminated the sidewalk. It makes it a bad intersection. Stefano Brasso commented that the overall goal of the project is to make a more walkable neighborhood.

Rob Serino commented that he liked the building design. That building needs help and fire department can help work through the fire code with you. Fire will need an access door to that wedge. The other concern is access around the back to the side of the building. They need access to get people who may be trapped on the upper-level floors. The building will be sprinkled and have a fire alarm, so that will help too.



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Stefano Brasso confirmed they were working with code red on that and can coordinate a meeting.

Chief Nolan questioned why type of new construction this was. Stefano Brasso responded that it was a type 3 over a type 1 garage.

Nick Cracknell commented that this was an exciting project. He has been through that building several times and it is fantastic that they are making that level of investment in Amesbury. They have done a good job integrating the new with the old. The added volume behind and on top will help bring the building back. They are small units 600 sf and up to 1000 sf. There is a good mix of units, and it meets a gap in the housing needs. They should not need more parking than what is proposed. It will be important to understand how they plan to assign parking and support the commercial businesses on Oakland St. The artist live/workspace could be designed to be commercial ready. It would be more interesting if the commercial use increased. They could consider studio spaces next to the lobby.

Lauren Blatchford questioned if these would be apartments or condos. Stefano Brasso responded that the current plan was apartments.

Lisa DeMeo commented that there is lighting on the building on the Oakland St. side. It would be good to put lighting on the County Road side as well.

Nick Cracknell commented that he was confident the City could work on the intersection concern Lisa DeMeo raised. They will need to coordinate with the abutter on the stop sign. The existing steps that go from Oakland Street to Chestnut Street are a nice feature and it would be good to keep them and add a handrail if possible. They will need sidewalk easements and to work on who is maintaining them. They will need to make it a public sidewalk to activate the pedestrian way. Stefano Brasso commented that they will coordinate to find the best process to work with the sidewalks, steps, and easements. Nick Cracknell commented that they should start with public works but coordinate with the other departments because it's a policy decision too. The applicants are doing a historic preservation special permit. They will need to go to the Historical Commission. The trash will be internal, and he is assuming it will be internal and private pick up. Stefano Brasso confirmed that was correct. Nick Cracknell commented that this will need to go to the Design Review Committee. The chimney probably needs a better cap. It would be good to also have a canopy over the garage entrance.



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Nipun questioned if any part of the existing building will be demolished and rebuilt. Stefano Brasso responded that it would not. They are just adding some openings. Nipun Jain commented that they should talk to DPW on the stormwater management. Steve Sawyer confirmed they would coordinate with them on that. There are some historical cross easements behind the building. They are working to have a list of the easements and make sure they are all properly resolved.

Nick Cracknell motioned to send a favorable recommendation with the comments listed below. Seconded by Chief Nolan.

- The applicant shall meet with DPW to discuss water, sewer, stormwater, sidewalk easements, and transformer location.
- The applicant shall ensure that existing easements are properly resolved.
- The applicant shall consider keeping the stairs on Chestnut St.
- The applicant shall present this project to the Design Review Committee.
- The applicant shall present this project to the Historical Commission.
- The applicant shall consider a purple roof to address drainage.
- The applicant shall consider alternate modes of transportation and provide parking for scooters, bicycles, and an area for delivery trucks.
- The applicant shall discuss public safety requirements with the Police and Fire Departments.
- The applicant shall coordinate with OCED on the offsite intersection related issues pertaining to the property located at 2 Oakland St.
- The applicant shall consider putting outdoor lighting on the County Road/ Chestnut Street side of the building.
- The applicant shall consider converting the two studios on the interior courtyard into artist live workspaces or commercial space to activate the courtyard.

Nick Cracknell commented that they were welcome to come back even before they file to make sure everyone is on the same page.



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Nipun Jain commented that they should add a letter from a traffic consultant that they should discuss which intersections should be looked at specifically in that study and signage.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. 45 Main St.

Mike Dumaresq and architect Aileen Graf were present to speak on the application. The Fuller Building was built in 1901 and located in the heart of downtown. Most of the building is original. It has not been altered in the 125 years. The Fuller family owned it, and Mike Dumaresq bought it in 2013. It has been fully occupied since they owned it. It has been hard to do significant upgrades with tenants in place. They are looking to change the second and third floor to residential floors. There will be 2 units per floor. The basement has a Boy Scout space on the left side and the right side has storage and a bathroom. They will put fire protection in the basement and fully sprinkler the buildings. The first floor is currently a one lease retail space. There are 13 foot ceilings and they are considering building out a mezzanine level to give more square footage or make space for a separate tenant. They are considering adding a hall space to access the basement from the outside. The entrance is off Friend St. They are creating space to raise the exterior elevation of the back space between 3-5 feet. The second floor will have 2 residential units and they will provide good views of Market Square. They are looking to replace the existing windows with historic windows. The intent is to try to keep the main stairwell area as original and keep the renovations in the residential space. The exterior of the building top is stained glass and that would be maintained along with the storm windows on the other side. The first-floor street level storefront has all single pane glass and that would remain. They are proposing to add windows on the Friend St. side. There will be an addition on the Friend St. side, and they will raise the roof line to increase the height of the storefront windows. The property line goes right up to Fortune Bar. There is a narrow alleyway with the fire escape. They are proposing to put waste barrels in the alleyway. The existing skylight is original. The chimney would come down and they plan to cap it. The building has natural gas heat, and they are looking to put in full electric heat. National Grid verified they can get power flow to the building. The third floor has a fire escape door. That would be enclosed to allow for a bedroom. They will replace it with historic brick or a dense glass door. They will also brick in the second-floor window to make a bedroom. They will repaint the front of the building tin. The first floor will remain retail space. They will put a Knox box in the alleyway. They have informally met with the Historical Commission.



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Rob Serino commented that they will need a third-party review on this. There is currently no fire protection in that building. They are talking about enclosing and moving fire escapes and they will want a third party to review it all.

Aileen Graf commented that the changes are very minor to the back. The back area will be independent of the front space.

Rob Serino commented that there are not a ton of physical changes, but the occupant use is changing. It is not a heavy lift, and they want to see these projects work. They will need an engineer stamp to sign off. Chief Nolan questioned if they were raising the roof. Mike Dumaresq responded that the raised roof is the roof line level. There is no parapet. If they go all electric, then the mechanicals will need to go on the roof.

Nick Cracknell commented that they would need to screen the mechanicals.

Lauren Blatchford commented that there was not any parking so that is a concern from the police department. Mike Dumaresq commented that the regulations state parking needs to be within 500 feet of property. They looked at the vacant lot on 33 Mill St., and that may be an option. They have also spoken with John McGinnis about renting spaces in his lot.

Nick Cracknell commented that the hope was to get a long-term arrangement for parking. They need to be careful to not choke out projects with the parking issue. OCED is working on a zoning amendment for off street parking like Newburyport has. There would be an option for a payment in lieu of parking so the city can work on a way to solve the parking downtown. There needs to be a relief valve to allow projects to proceed without leaving the city holding the bag with no other viable solutions. In respect to 33 Mill St., the property is under agreement, and it would allow for a more permanent parking situation with easements. He is hopeful that works out as a viable option or there are resources to address the issue.

Nick Cracknell commented that the new raised roof is an asset if it has a taller parapet and people could access it. That would be an asset to the tenant and condo convertibility. Just something to consider. Nick Cracknell questioned if they were redoing the building letters or keeping it as is. Mike Dumaresq responded that they were keeping it as is. They will be restoring the door going up to residential floors. Nick Cracknell commented that they should provide a detail on the windows. Nick Cracknell questioned if the new addition on Friend St. was a brick addition or wood.



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Mike Dumaresq responded that the idea was to frame the windows in wood. The doors are flush with the facade. Aileen Graf commented that they needed to meet ADA regulations with the elevations. Just the entry area will be at grade then there will be steps.

Nick Cracknell questioned if the door could swing in and meet fire code. Rob Serino responded that the door has to swing out for fire code.

Nick Cracknell commented that he liked the metal fence and encouraged them to think about putting in a period 1900 storefront. He suggested not infilling the windows on Friend St. being bricked in. They should keep a half window or a door to the roof deck. They can discuss this more at DRC. They could consider keeping the fire escape even if it is not overly functional. They could retrofit it especially if they create roof deck.

Rob Serino commented that a lot of options will depend on what will work. Nick Cracknell commented that they could look at making a casement window on the third floor and have a platform out on the fire escape. They should consider saving one of the metal window shutters in the alley and put it somewhere in the building. They should work to save as much as possible within the building with the historic exemptions in the building because this is a gorgeous historic building.

Nipun Jain commented that given the architectural value of the interiors, they should consider using that as a handbook. They should keep with images used in residential and lobby spaces. It will be very valuable to collect that data and use it for marketing for historic preservation. The narrative should be detailed about improvements, repairs, and replacements.

Nick Cracknell commented that it would be important to keep all departments in the loop as they proceed with the project review.

Jim Wilson motioned to send a favorable recommendation with the comments listed below. Seconded by Nipun Jain.

- The applicant shall work with the Fire Department to coordinate a third-party review.
- The applicant shall work with OCED on the parking plan.
- The applicant shall present this project to the Design Review Committee.



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- The applicant shall present this project to the Historical Commission.
- The applicant shall provide a detail / or cut sheet for the windows and doors.
- The applicant shall provide a detailed narrative outlining the improvements, repairs, and replacements throughout the project.

The motion passed unanimously.

Administrative:

1. Minutes 4-16-25

Rob Serino motioned to approve the minutes from 4-16-2025 as presented. Seconded by Chief Nolan. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Rob Serino motioned to adjourn 11:35 am. Seconded by Nipun Jain. The motion passed unanimously.