

RE: 1 Congress St
Meeting: HDC 05/11/22

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

May 10, 2022

Page numbers are from the Meeting Packet (starts pg 166)

If one were to look at the elevations presented for 2 Russell Street Building 1, it came in at 72' and that was where a building height of 60' with the North End Overlay District is allowed. This building shows an elevation of 72' with a building height of 45' on Congress and an elevation of 73' where a building height of 40' exists along Haven Court.

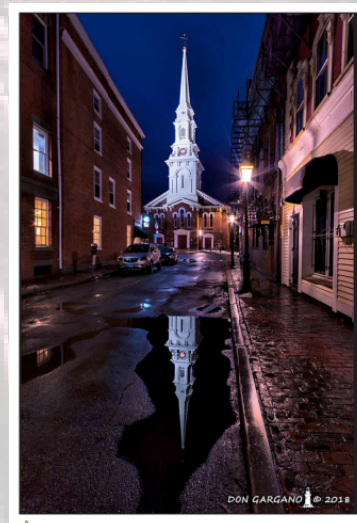
Both 2 Russell St and 1& 31 Raynes were reminded to be authentic, not piecemeal buildings together with different architectural styles as well avoiding the Disney look. Those two structures are not located in the heart of historic downtown. This building is. It starts on Congress with a restoration of the bank, down High St for the restoration of the hotel and then switches to an ultra modern look.

What is most disconcerting is this committee spent a good period of time during the March 9th work session discussing this project, yet this latest rendition seems to have left out many of the concerns and comments of this committee. There seem to be changes to the ground/first floor which was proposed as a restaurant/bar, support area, car elevator and stairwells. Its new configuration is difficult to tell, looking at H3.33, H3.35 (pg 183,185). H3.14 (pg 173) shows this revamp as a drop off area, restaurant, support area, car elevator, lobby and stairwells. However, this latest plan does not seem to show many of changes suggested by this committee.

All of the new design seems completely out of place with the restoration on the front and out of character within the core of the historic district. The truncated prism will forever steal the light from the beauty of the Old North Church at night as well as ruin any future photographers from being able to take a full frontal picture of the church. Once installed the clear pictures will fade due to conflicting light, as this watermark. The perceived shadows of lines on the opposite building will not very likely be understood as a replica of the old fire escapes. Restoring one piece of ladder and turning it into art would.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Bratter
159 McDonough St
Portsmouth Property Owner



DON GARGANO © 2018

March 9, 2022 Minutes: WORK SESSION Project architect Tracy Kozak was present on behalf of the applicant, as well as developer Mark McNabb and landscape architect Terence Parker. Ms. Kozak said the

project was to restore the buildings on Congress and High Streets and add 4-story addition on the back. She said the project team was working with the City to develop greater alleyways and that a skyway bridge to the city garage would be built but reviewed at a later time. Mr. Parker briefly presented the landscape plan and said it could potentially connect the east and west portions of Portsmouth. Chairman Wyckoff said the new building seemed to project out further than the other buildings. Ms. Kozak said the front wall was aligned with One Congress Street and they were proposing an awning that projected over the sidewalk. Mr. McNabb said they stepped the building back to respect the opera house. Ms. Kozak said One Congress Street wasn't parallel to the property line and the opera house was a few degrees off. She said the proposed building would be three stories with a short fourth and underground parking. She said the skylights and dormers would be on the same floor to bring in light, and the windows were larger as they got away from Market Square. **Mr. Ryan** said he appreciated the restoration of the two original buildings and bringing back some of the elements. He said the massing worked and that it referenced the historic district. **He asked what the intention was for some of the unconventional elements.** Ms. Kozak said it was to get light to emerge from darkness. She said the windows were bay windows but without the flat part in the middle to get some shadow lines across the façade. She said they called corner windows. **Mr. Ryan asked about the series of different windows on the street level.** Ms. Kozak said they would open horizontally but were shown on different levels as they opened and would lift up off the sidewalk. She said the corner element was a wayfinding element that recalled the church steeple and alluded to the clock tower mechanisms and also represented light. Chairman Wyckoff suggested that it be made more representative of the North Church by making it a steeple or having a clock rather than look like something from a Kansas farmland. Ms. Kozak said it was a truncated square prism and was a play on the clock tower steeple. **Vice-Chair Ruedig** said it was all very clever and that Ms. Kozak's explanation helped her understand and appreciate it more. She said the new building and design were cleverly done. She said she liked the gradation of the window openings and **thought the use of the corner windows was interesting.** She thought **the shape of the roof might be a bit too much of a projection of the eave line.** She said it was a big addition to the block but thought it was done in a way that wasn't necessarily bigger in height and respected the historic buildings. **Ms. Doering said she was concerned that the arch at the top of the opera house would be obstructed.** **Ms. Kozak said she would take some perspective views of it.** Ms. Doering said she appreciated that part of the building was set back to create a shadow but thought it would be more effective to move the rest of the new building back so that it didn't line up 100 percent. She asked what would be done to the Congress Street side. Ms. Kozak said they wanted to put a dormer because of the giant firewall that didn't line up and that the dormer would balance it more. **Ms. Doering said she thought it was too fancy for the building under it,** and Ms. Kozak agreed. **Mr. Adams said the balcony arrangement was too overdone on Congress Street.** He said the windows broke all precedent for him and that he didn't care for the angled windows sticking out from the front of the building. He said he couldn't imagine the erector set-looking thing on the corner. He said the combination skylights and dormers nestled the way they were was awkward. **He was puzzled by the need to do the roof portico over the entryway to the opera house,** and he thought the building's semi-classical mansard type roof was out of scale and didn't relate to the building. **Mr. Brown said the awning over the opera house didn't make sense and detracted from it.** Mr. McNabb agreed that the awning needed some work. Chairman Wyckoff said the awning didn't belong on the opera house. He asked what the building's material would be. Ms. Kozak said they wanted a stone masonry base and an upper granite or terra cotta. **Chairman Wyckoff said the roof was too convoluted, with the dormers, skylights, overhangs and so on. He said the first-floor windows didn't work for that particular site, and it was further discussed.** **Ms. Bouffard said she was concerned about the awning over the opera house because it added to the other superfluous things. She agreed that the roofs and dormers were busy and detracted from the uniqueness of the front buildings. She also thought the balcony wasn't necessary.** Mr. Ryan said he liked the creativity that was being brought to the building. Chairman Wyckoff said the Commission seemed comfortable with the size of the building. He opened the public comment session.

RE: 161 Deer St (88 Maplewood)
Meeting: HDC 05/11/22

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

May 10, 2022

Here is the link to the original plans approved by the HDC July 11, 2018 and then extended on October 15, 2018 for your review, if desired:

https://files.cityofportsmouth.com/files/planning/apps/DeerSt_161/161_Deer_Street_Lot_5_HDC_7-11-18.pdf

The presented massing is helpful but what was shared at the Planning Board was this structure is proposed to be a 4 story with a penthouse. Unfortunately the proposed height does not match the Building Height Standards for this lot and the water table is high, therefore the grade will increase said height.

The most important items were the number of proposed units were going to match the actual proposed parking on-site and there would be some spaces available for the commercial units as well. Both could change but as of today just those two aspects of this proposal seem like very positive changes compared to the original massing and proposal.

It will be a pleasure to see if this realistic approach to development continues throughout the entire proposal.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Bratter
159 McDonough St
Property Owner

Izak Gilbo

From: Katie Miller <magjdkd@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 5:25 PM
To: Planning Info
Subject: HDC Work Session Regarding # B- 1 Walton Aly

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

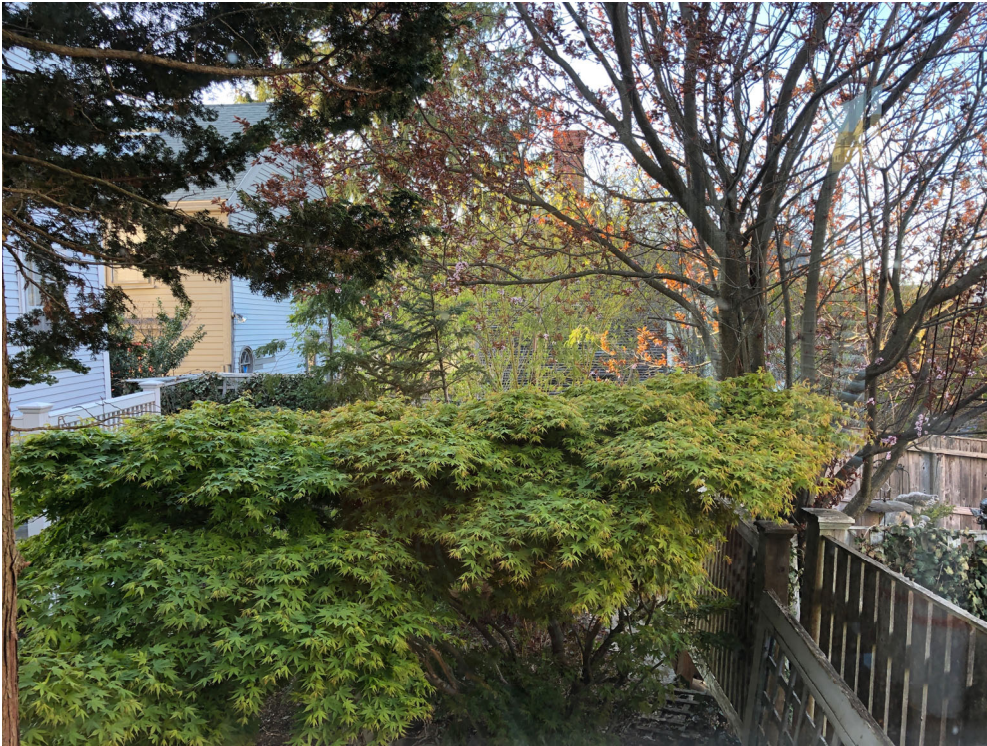
We purchased our home at 51 Gardner Street in 2007. It is directly on Gardner Street, with one side of our property adjacent to a brick courtyard and the other side is our small driveway. But the backside of our house, where our kitchen looks out, is our green space. We see a quadrant of our neighbors' back yards including 1 Walton Aly. There are trees and shrubs and birds and squirrels. We enjoy it every season because in a very dense neighborhood it IS the green space.

The new owners of 1 Walton Aly are proposing an addition to the house and a garage in the middle of this green space. They would be adding to the denseness of the buildings and reducing the open space that is already so limited in the South End. We feel it is important to maintain the current open green space rather than fill the area with another unnecessary structure, specifically the garage.

The plan proposed shows the garage set back in the yard over 10 feet away from the back corner of the 1 Walton Aly house which puts it directly in line with the view from the back of our house. This means 32 feet from our kitchen windows we would see an 18 foot long garage - directly in our view. It would look like someone had dropped a large building in the middle of the back yard instead of being placed in the driveway. We also do not have the height measurement of the garage but are certain this will add to the inappropriateness of the placement.

While we support the Woods and Meinardi 's effort to improve the property we do not want the garage built where it is proposed but would not have an issue with the garage being built in the current driveway .

A photo showing the view from our kitchen windows.



Sincerely,

Katherine Miller
John Magane
51 Gardner Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

RE: 1 & 31 Raynes Ave
Meeting: HDC May 11, 2022

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

May 10, 2022

Comparing the April plans to the May plans only a few things have changed on the residential building. Entrances were recessed and glazed and it states the cornices were lowered but it was difficult to notice any difference. The set back was identified as 8 INCHES!!

What was noticeable on page 62 of the packet (Plan 2.3) was when the building was raised 1 story the height towers over the historic buildings and cemetery on the other side of the street.

The lower windows which look like garage doors have been discussed at nauseum and have not changed at all, here are some options available. Try to focus on the windows and not the walls around them. All of these open completely per the Internet.



The hotel does show some changes comparing April to May, page 63 of packet, Plan 3.0. It still does not show the setback for the top floor. It still towers higher than 145 Maplewood, AC Hotel and 53 Green St above 3S Artspace. All three of those developments had to come down to 3 stories next to 3S, *leaving this one out may very well open a can of worms*. The vehicular entry on the rear (pg 65, Plan 3.2) has been minimalized as requested. The entries are shown as glazed and recessed as well, not sure why the glazing was added. There seem to be two canopy styles. One is black with chains and one is light gray without (pg 63, Plan 3.0). The black could accentuate the doorways and tie in with the windows, the black line by the masonry band and those black squares all around the building.

Plans 4.0, 4.1 and 4.2 (pg 69-71) show the asked for view of both buildings next to each other and the North Mill Pond.

The buildings now look like the old shoe factories which were scattered throughout Portsmouth. The hotel could create less focus on the light gray corners and entrances if they were changed to the same color as the top of the structure with black accents and canopies. The area by the garage entrance of the hotel has a very plain look but it goes well with the very traditional feel. The recessed doorways and entrances really help to keep the buildings from looking quite as massive. The angled area of the hotel by 3S helps to give a little more light through there but still overshadows 3S, compared to 53 Green St and 145 Maplewood, both further away (pg 66, plan 3.3). If the drop down is not desirable, the angled corner could be brought back even further (5 to 10') which would open that entire area up and may give a less imposing view on 3S Artspace.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these thoughts,

Elizabeth Bratter
159 McDonough St
Portsmouth Property Owner

RE: 2 Russell St/0 Deer St
Meeting: HDC 05-11-22

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

May 10, 2022

Page numbers are from the packet.

The choices for the building windows and materials are appreciated. The materials for the art wall, Bldg 2 View B (pg 112) don't seem to be included. Two questions loam; Will it be snow pressure and snow plow proof? Is there somewhere that such an art exhibit could be viewed to get an idea of if bigger is better? The art wall seems to be 39' tall.

The 3D massing was difficult to use for the first time, hopefully a "tour" will be provided at the HDC meeting. Looking at the front of Building 1 where it steps down to 3 stories. The elevations show it will be 60' tall there. Building 2 sits at 82' to the roofline and Building 3 sits at 83' to the roof line. Having walked that parking lot it didn't seem that there was 20' of grade there. The mass of these 3 structures is overwhelming even with the great architectural designs.

Building 1's corner on Maplewood, with its rounded area and its metal sprandles does look similar to a large train station in Boston or Berlin, sadly the train station in Portsmouth was just a quaint building across the street but it does seem related to the train tracks. The new windows with smaller panes on Building 3 actually perpetuate the train station motif and take away the original submarine look. Those smaller panes may also save some poor birds from flying into them regularly. All will hopefully receive window dressing and other art on the upper floors to reduce bird impacts; the sitting area might not be so pleasant if it's covered with dead birds.

The materials which have the large train station feel seem to keep the appearance of the building less enormous. Here are some I liked: Building 1 Bay 2 (pg 106), Building 2 View A option 1 (pg 109), Building 2 View B (pg 113), Building 2 Bay Studies (pg 127) Bay 3 Bay Windows, Building 2 D for materials (pg 131), Building 3 Bay Studies Bay 2 (pg 147), not sure if the Bay studies included the sharp metal faced corner by the Sheridan.

These 3 buildings have NO Portsmouth feel. They look like they should be in Boston. The massing seems enormous and overwhelming. Sadly directly across the street is Port Walk, another Boston style group of buildings which seems to be lacking in architectural imagination. Looking at the North End which used to be filled with single family homes from the 1800's, it is evident the zoning which was chosen there, CD5 with heights of 2-4 stories- 50' AND the North End Incentive Overlay District doomed the entire area. Developers combining lots just made the whole zoning even worse. Preaching to the choir doesn't change the situation, sadly many residents had a completely different vision for this area.

Please do what can be done to reduce the mass of these structures. The architecture at least matches the RR tracks in theme. It seems like it will nicely bookend the North End island of non-traditional buildings by providing lots of brick on the buildings and sidewalks which could tie into traditional brick styles of 1 & 31 Raynes Ave next to the preserved homes from the 1800s.

Thank you for your continued service to try and preserve some of the key parts of Portsmouth's original structures and large developments.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bratter
159 McDonough St
Portsmouth Property Owner