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**84 Pleasant St - Public Comment for HDC August 6, 2025**

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**From** WSPLLC GBLLC <workingstiff@comcast.net>  
**Date** Sun 8/3/2025 6:16 PM  
**To** Izak Gilbo <igilbo@portsmouthnh.gov>  
**Cc** Matt Beebe <matthewdbeebe@comcast.net>

 1 attachment (316 KB)

06 B0A6 Applicant rendering.pdf;

You don't often get email from workingstiff@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

As the owner members of Working Stiff Properties, we are very concerned with preserving the historic beauty and integrity of the Pleasant / State /Church block.

We have gone to great lengths—personal expense and labor—to restore 92-94 Pleasant St, from commissioning knives to cut historically accurate exterior trim and mouldings, to engaging an historic mason to repair the brick foundation, matching brick and grout even at layers unseen on the surface.

The developers for State and Pleasant have already demonstrated their lack of priority in this area given the demolition by neglect of the historic Times Building. The ZBA has approved additional height beyond what is allowed at 84 Pleasant. They did so despite the fact that the developer and members of the ZBA acknowledged that the extra height was not actually necessary. (see transcript and video of the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting.) So we ask the HDC to consider the unnecessary height in context of historic preservation of the townhouses at 86-94 Pleasant, the Court and Pleasant block, and the downtown historic district overall.

Allowing the extra height at the rear of the “Louie’s Building” will create a massive blank CMU wall hovering over Church St, Court St., and our property at the corner of Pleasant and Court.

For context, the City and its planning boards were eager to say goodbye to the former “whale wall” by Vaughn Mall, citing it’s overwhelming mass.

By allowing the extra height at 84 Pleasant St, the HDC will allow the creation of such an overwhelming, out of character, and definitely not historic façade. There have been thoughtful and historic restorations not just of our property, but at the “Pumpkin House,” the Black History Trail house, and the Treadwell mansion—direct abutters to 84 Lincoln. In addition, the new “whale of a wall” would be in view from the Langdon House, as well as the painstakingly restored mansion at Pleasant and Junkins.

We ask that the HDC honor these efforts as well as their duty to oversee the appropriate preservation of and development in the historic district, and insist on only the height allowed by zoning.

What’s more, I invite the HDC to inspect the extant rear façade of the original townhouse at 84 Pleasant from our el roof. Yes, much of the **original clapboarded facade, including windows, remains**, and was discovered when firefighters, during the 2017 State Street Saloon fire, removed a section of plywood that was covering the gap between the original façade and the CMU addition. I recommend the HDC see for themselves how much of the original, preserved façade still exists, and consider working with the Floros group to devise a new plan which preserves and truly honors the original 1850s row of townhouses and the surrounding historic neighborhood.



As the owner members of Working Stiff Properties, we are very concerned with preserving the historic beauty and integrity of the Pleasant / State /Church block.

We have gone to great lengths—personal expense and labor—to restore 92-94 Pleasant St, from commissioning knives to cut historically accurate exterior trim and mouldings, to engaging an historic mason to repair the brick foundation, matching brick and grout even at layers unseen on the surface.

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We ask that the HDC honor these efforts as well as their duty to oversee the appropriate preservation of and development in the historic district, and insist on only the height allowed by zoning, if that.

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We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the matter.

Barbara Jenny & Matthew Beebe

**Images that illustrate the inappropriateness of the Floros’ group proposed addition height.**

Existing conditions:

To scale Photoshop rendering of proposed massive wall, POV from street:









Existing CMU addition, POV from Black Heritage Trail headquarters



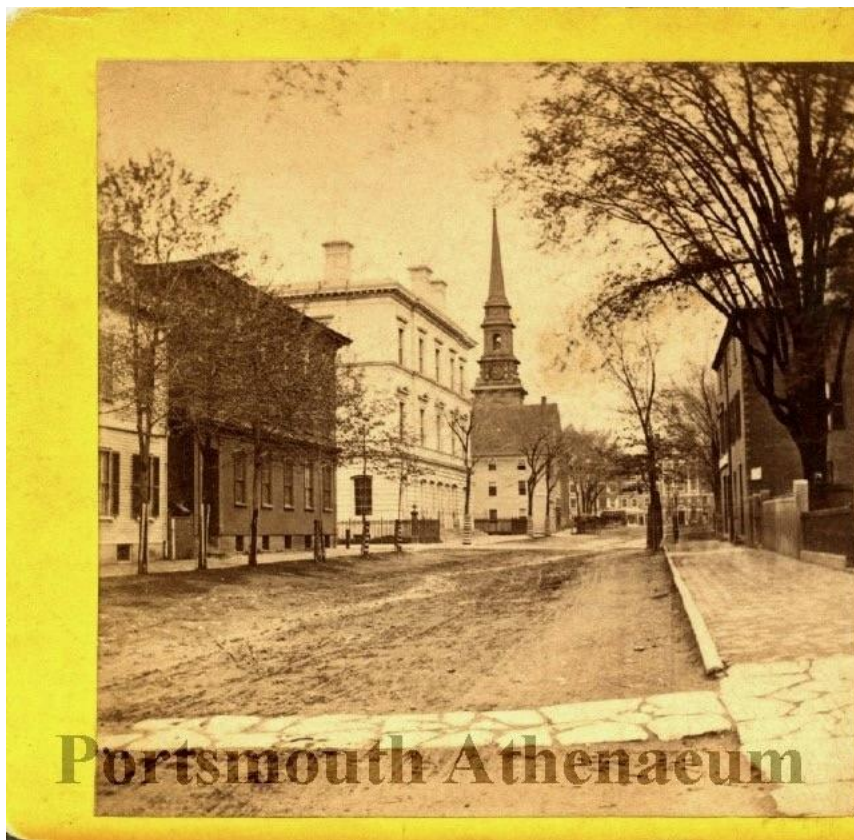
Proposed massive blank wall - POV from sidewalk in front of BlackHeritage Trail headquarters



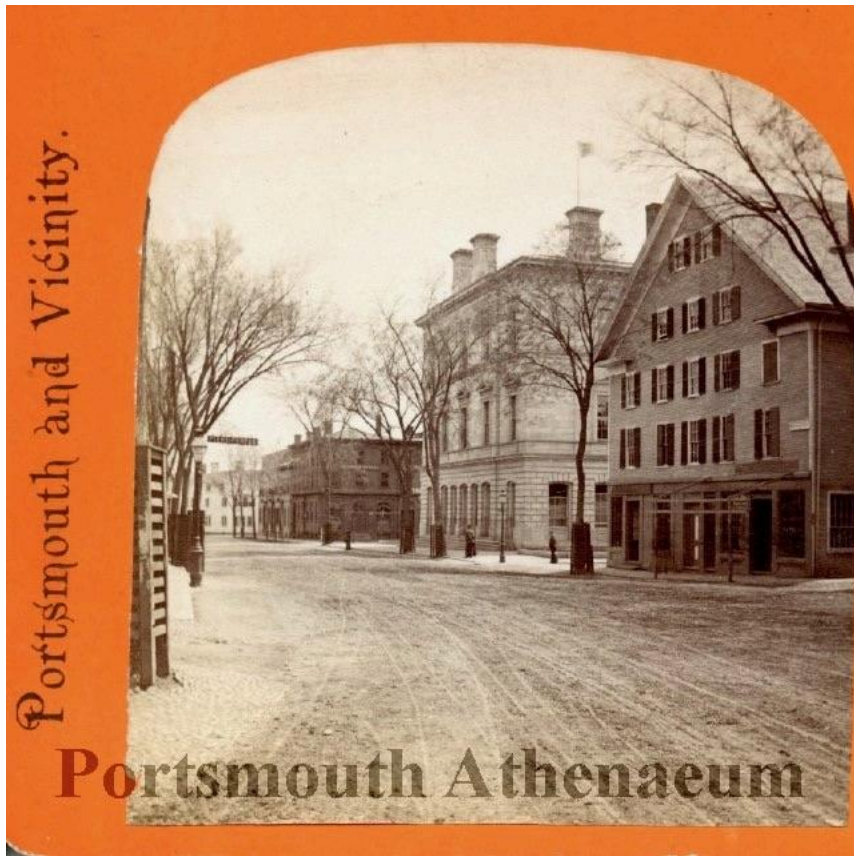
Applicant's own renderings (note: windows since removed as not allowed as per IBC)

84-88 Pleasant and original State St Saloon building —note heights





view of State and Pleasant from Market Square-note heights



Working Stiff Properties LLC  
94 Pleasant St A  
Portsmouth NH 03801



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**Webform submission from: Historic District Commission > Body Blocks**

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**From** City of Portsmouth <webmaster@portsmouthnh.gov>

**Date** Tue 8/5/2025 8:42 AM

**To** Izak Gilbo <igilbo@portsmouthnh.gov>; rbaydoun@gmail.com <rbaydoun@gmail.com>

Submitted on Tue, 08/05/2025 - 08:42

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**Name**

Patricia Bagley

**Email**

[patbagley@aol.com](mailto:patbagley@aol.com)

**Subject**

August 6th work session 134 Pleasant

**Message**

To the HDC Chair and Commissioners,

We received an abuttor's notice regarding Mr. McNabb's proposed "renovations and additions" to 134 Pleasant St. Yesterday I scrolled through the packet to understand that this is a makeover of the current Citizens Bank. I have always thought the Citizens Bank building could benefit from a makeover, and wondered how it was ever approved. This proposal, however, is not an improvement. It's just different. As best I could view it, my initial impression is that it looks like a modern fire house or perhaps a public works building. Governor Langdon must be turning in his grave.

We built our house on Pleasant Street surrounded by historic homes. We bought the land with the already-approved plans, meaning that we did not design it. I am absolutely certain that our house would never have been approved if a modern structure had been proposed. Yes, there used to be a supermarket on the bank site, but three wrongs do not make a right. There are ways to improve the bank building that would be respectful to the historic neighborhood, as well as to the neighbors who must sustain their properties in a historic manner.

And I might I add, they do so willingly.

Mr. McNabb is capable of "renovations and additions" of any magnitude. This is not a place to make a glass statement.

The Langdon family bequeathed land to the City to keep a bucolic view from the mansion up what is now Junkins Street to Langdon Park. Yes, there is a parking lot there, but it is free to the public as the family had wished the property not to be commercialized. The family had a vision, and maybe we should respect it. Do we not encourage tourists to come here to visit the Mansion and understand the historic contributions the Langdons made as far back as the Revolution? That is what has made Portsmouth Portsmouth. That is why we have the HDC.

I think the National supermarket, the Citizens Bank building, and this proposal all have, and do, violate and disrespect the historic contribution the Langdon Mansion has given to Portsmouth. We should not have a double standard, one for residents and one for developers. It is within your purview for the HDC to impress upon a citizen developer that other citizen neighbors value the historic nature of this neighborhood. The neighborhood deserves his respect and your wise direction to regain what we lost.

I apologize for the repetitive use of "historic", "respect", and "citizens", but that's the point.

With much respect for all you do,

Pat Bagley

**bcc-email**

rbaydoun@gmail.com, igilbo@portsmouthnh.gov

**Meeting: Historic District Commission**

**Date: August 6, 2025**

**RE: 134 Pleasant St**

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

August 3, 2025

The old Citizen's Bank has been an eye sore since it was built. This is a chance to put something that actually reflects the historic homes across the street and next to this property and has some grace to it. This is not even close to that.



The presented building is nice BUT it reads like a State Police Barracks along our Highways. There are currently state rest area buildings and state liquor stores that have a more of a historic look and character than the presented structure. There is a lot of room for improvement.

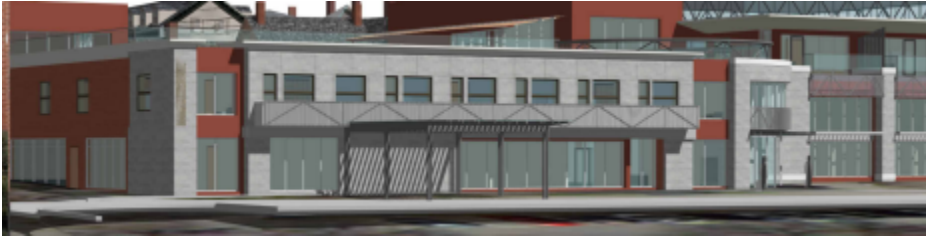
Yes, it is next to the 1960's style Court House. Yes, it is a bank. What is important is to notice how it abuts historic houses next store. It is across the street from a beautifully restored home at 143 Pleasant St. It is down the street from the just restored and carefully added on to old Elks building. Who would want to look at this all day from their living room window. This building is missing warmth in color, texture and design. The front windows could be a double hung or even a paned style to present a welcoming institution and to tie into the abutting buildings. The pillars along the side could be rounded or be covered in a beautiful faux or real wood next to some traditional red brick.

The secondary part of this building will face the South Mill Pond and the beautiful homes on Rockland, Kent and Sherburne Ave. Please be aware it should NOT be lit at night. The second part of the building reads more like an entrance to a police station. It's the windows, the metal, just rectangles and straight lines. It might use some clapboard, shakes, scallops and put some arches to match the door on 143. Please send them back

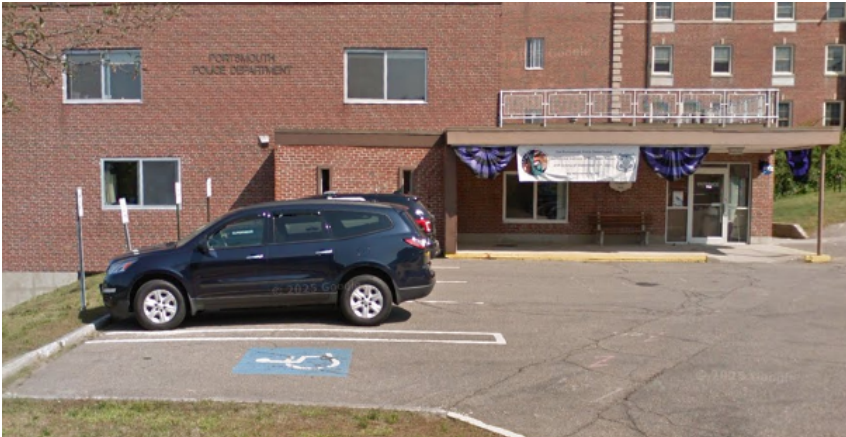


to the drawing board. Even banks should have exterior character, warmth and style, especially in a Historic District surrounded by historic and beautifully restored homes.

134 Pleasant St.



Portsmouth Police Department



Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Bratter  
159 McDonough St, Property Owner

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**Webform submission from: Historic District Commission > Body Blocks**

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**From** City of Portsmouth <webmaster@portsmouthnh.gov>

**Date** Tue 8/5/2025 10:17 AM

**To** Izak Gilbo <igilbo@portsmouthnh.gov>; rbaydoun@gmail.com <rbydoun@gmail.com>

Submitted on Tue, 08/05/2025 - 10:17

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**Name**

Mark Hubbert

**Email**

[hubmw@me.com](mailto:hubmw@me.com)

**Subject**

134 Pleasant Street -Working Session

**Message**

In anticipation of the upcoming Work Session for the proposed renovation and addition to the building at 134 Pleasant Street (Citizens Bank), I would like to assert the following concerns.

- The design of the proposed Kennebunk Savings Bank building to be built at the front of the lot, facing Pleasant Street, is completely out of context with the historic architecture on both sides of Pleasant Street including the Governor Langdon House (143 Pleasant St.), the recently restored Captain Thompson house (179 Pleasant St.), the Jacob Wendell House (222 Pleasant), 212 Pleasant St., the North Church Parsonage (118 Pleasant St.) and the Joseph Sherburne Ayers House (108 Pleasant/232 Court St.).
- This section of Pleasant Street is a significant entry point and approach to Portsmouth's historic downtown. As such, every effort should be made to ensure that any new structures complement and enhance the surrounding historic architecture.
- The existing Citizen's Bank building, though also out of context with the neighborhood's historic architecture, is buffered from Pleasant

Street by trees and grass.

- The proposed building materials of white granite and metal create a jarring contrast to the red brick and clapboard materials of the surrounding architecture.
- The addition of a rooftop deck to the existing Citizens Bank building presents possible noise level issues depending on the number of proposed occupants and usage times.

I urge the HDC to provide specific feedback to Double MC, LLC regarding the need for this project design to conform with the character and context of the historic structures in this neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration.

**bcc-email**

rbaydoun@gmail.com, igilbo@portsmouthnh.gov



**Subject**

Concerns Regarding Proposed Development at 134 Pleasant Street

**Message**

Dear Members of the Planning Board, HDC & City Council,

I'm writing to share my initial concerns regarding the proposed new commercial and co-living development at 134 Pleasant Street. I understand this is an early-stage work session and that many details are yet to be finalized, but as someone who owns a building immediately abutting this property and operates a small business from it, I felt it was important to express my thoughts early in the process.

**Livability and Use Considerations**

The proposed co-living space has 34–43 units with as many as 12 bedrooms sharing a single kitchen and no interior communal space. This raises concerns about how the building will function in day-to-day life. Without an indoor lounge, the rooftop deck will likely become the primary gathering space. This is very close to neighboring residential and commercial properties and will likely increase noise, light spill, and privacy impacts, especially during evenings.

Additionally, it's unclear how the property would be staffed or managed, which makes it difficult to assess how issues would be addressed if they arise. While co-living is an emerging housing model in some cities, it is untested in Portsmouth, and we don't yet know how this type of housing will impact neighbors living in close proximity when the subject property has such limited indoor and outdoor space.

If the city does pursue co-living models in the future, I believe it would be more appropriate to begin with a location where there are no immediate abutters or residential properties within just feet of the proposed units. And I hope any such project would include clear operational and safety oversight protocols from the outset.

**Parking Impact**

One of my strongest concerns relates to the parking strain this project would introduce. My business currently has 7 off-street parking spaces, and we rotate their use between staff members while others must rely on public parking. We already face frequent challenges with staff, clients, and visitors unable to find reasonably close spaces, especially since the nearby 72-hour lot fills quickly.

The proposed project would house 34 to 43 residents, yet only 10 on-site parking spaces are being allocated. This imbalance will absolutely result in increased pressure on already-limited public spaces during business hours. As a company that operates primarily between 8:30-5:00, we will be directly affected by the influx of new residents competing for the same limited street parking.

There is an explicit CUP Criterion (10.243.23) requiring that a project demonstrate that “traffic and parking generated by the development will not have an adverse impact on adjacent streets or public parking.” I do not see how this proposal could meet that standard—not on its own, and especially not in conjunction with the already-approved developments at the Treadwell and JJ Newbury sites.

I’m already facing challenges that disrupt closings, client meetings, and daily operations due to parking scarcity. This project would make those problems significantly worse.

### Design and Historic Character Concerns

In addition to functional concerns, the proposed building’s size, design, and materials are out of character with the architectural rhythm of Pleasant Street.

The design features large, flat walls and modern materials that sharply contrast with the surrounding historic buildings.

Unlike the existing structure, which is set well back from the street and allows for natural light and green space, this proposal brings the building forward, creating a dense and imposing façade that would alter the pedestrian experience and diminish the open feel that defines the area.

We have seen the long-term regret that came from the removal of the Langdon Parsonage House and the construction of the First National Stores. While the existing Citizens Bank building may not be ideal, it at least maintains a modest scale and does not dominate the streetscape.

### Personal Impact as a Local Business and Property Owner

As a small local business owner, I want to share that this proposal has left me deeply anxious. My husband and I purchased our building for its charm, light, and location, and we’ve worked hard to care for it. We’ve completed masonry repairs, addressed wood rot, updated paint, and continue to maintain the green yard space that we and our clients enjoy.

We use our yard for small team and client gatherings, and it plays an important role in how we operate. The proposed development would create a looming presence directly on our lot line, threatening to block natural light and privacy and compromising a space that is central to our business culture.

As a qualified real estate professional, I can also attest to the fact that this project, as proposed, would have a significantly detrimental impact on the value of properties in the immediate neighborhood. Light, open space, historic architecture, and the quiet nature of this stretch of Pleasant Street are all direct contributors to property value. Each of these elements would be substantially and negatively affected by the scale, design, and function of the proposed building.

I don't have the legal resources to hire representation like some developers do. I can only hope that the voices of local property and business owners like myself will be given equal consideration in determining the future of this street and neighborhood.

### Past Precedent

I also feel it's worth recalling the Hearth Food Garden project, which was similarly presented as a community asset. Despite strong early enthusiasm, the model shifted quickly: guests were discouraged from lingering, and ultimately the space closed and remains vacant today. I don't share this to criticize, but to illustrate why early promises must be accompanied by practical, enforceable plans for long-term success.

### Closing Thoughts

I understand that some of these concerns may fall outside the scope of this initial work session, but I wanted to ensure my full set of initial reactions and concerns were submitted as soon as I learned of the proposal just days ago.

I also want to make clear that my intention is not to oppose development for the sake of it, nor to speak against any individual. I appreciate the investment Mr. McNabb has made in Portsmouth and understand that development plays an important role in our city's growth. My hope is that this project can be reconsidered—or significantly refined—in a way that truly benefits both new and existing members of our community.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Erin Proulx  
Proulx Real Estate  
118 Pleasant Street

### **bcc-email**

rbaydoun@gmail.com, igilbo@portsmouthnh.gov



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**Webform submission from: Historic District Commission > Body Blocks**

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**From** City of Portsmouth <webmaster@portsmouthnh.gov>

**Date** Mon 8/4/2025 9:27 PM

**To** Izak Gilbo <igilbo@portsmouthnh.gov>; rbaydoun@gmail.com <rbaydoun@gmail.com>

Submitted on Mon, 08/04/2025 - 21:27

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**Name**

carl ward

**Email**

[carljamesward@gmail.com](mailto:carljamesward@gmail.com)

**Subject**

Objection to the 134 Pleasant St Project

**Message**

I reside at 202 Court St. – the old Firehouse and I have several significance concerns regarding the 134 Pleasant St project that I request the HDC considers when reviewing the application:

1. A newly constructed section (3-4 stories) on the west side of the proposed building will completely block my current water view of the South Mill Pond. The proposed new structure will result in me looking-out at the side of a building which will likely affect my home's value.
2. The same new west section of the building will block the southern sunny exposure which currently provides enjoyable sunshine in my bedroom. The building will result in me losing the sunny exposure and put my room in the shadow of the building.
3. The roof-top outdoor deck that is planned will result in me losing the privacy that I currently enjoy on my outdoor patio. Individuals who congregate on the outdoor deck of the building will look directly down at me while I try to enjoy relaxing in privacy on my patio.
4. The contemporary / modern design of a very large structure is together, completely incongruent with the historic district's look and feel. The sheer scale and volume of the proposed building will by nature, overshadow many of the other historic buildings in the area.

It is my hope that the points I outlined above will result in the HDC directing the applicant to revise their plans to resolve my four significant concerns. Please feel free to contact me for any further perspective at carljamesward@gmail.com.

Many thanks in advance for your consideration. Sincerely, Carl Ward

**bcc-email**

rbaydoun@gmail.com,igilbo@portsmouthnh.gov

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## 134 Pleasant St. — Parking Impact on Parrott Avenue Lot Requires Formal Demand Study

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From Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

Date Tue 8/5/2025 12:44 PM

To Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

Cc Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

You don't often get email from peter.smith@me.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Planning Board Members and Historic District Commissioners,

The applicant for 134 Pleasant St. proposes 34 co-living bedrooms but only the ordinance-minimum **9 on-site parking spaces** (1 space per 4 bedrooms). That leaves **25 vehicles** (or more) to hunt for on-street or municipal spaces.

### Why this matters

- **Parrott Avenue Lot is the only free municipal lot downtown.** It sits **directly across Pleasant Street** from the project entrance.
- The lot has **187 spaces** and is already “**heavily used by employees and residents of downtown,**” according to the City’s Downtown Parking Focus Group report .
- Residents living 100 feet from that lot will have a built-in advantage over visitors or downtown employees: they can see an opening, walk across the street, and claim it before anyone driving in can circle the block.
- If even half of the unaccommodated vehicles ( $\approx 12$  cars) migrate to that lot, they would consume **6 % of the total free capacity**—capacity the City’s own parking strategy reserves for low-wage downtown workers and out-of-town visitors.

## Ordinance hooks

- **CUP Criterion § 10.243.23:** a project must demonstrate that “traffic and parking generated by the development will not have an adverse impact on adjacent streets or public parking.”
- **Site Plan Regs § 2.5.3 & § 7.2:** allow the Planning Board to require a **professional Parking Demand & Management Study** when on-site supply is less than realistic demand.

## Request

1. **Require a stamped Parking Demand & Management Study** that:
  - Estimates car ownership using comparable co-living projects (0.7–0.9 cars per bedroom).
  - Surveys existing occupancy of the Parrott Avenue Lot at peak periods.
  - Models the added demand from 25–30 extra vehicles and identifies where they will park.
2. Condition any approval on one or more of the following, depending on the study findings:
  - Purchase of off-site garage permits for all overflow vehicles, or a payment-in-lieu to expand structured parking.
  - A resident lease clause prohibiting use of City free lots and on-street overnight zones.
  - Annual monitoring and reporting of license-plate data to verify compliance.
3. Defer final HDC / CUP vote until the study is complete and any mitigation is incorporated into revised plans.

Without real demand numbers and enforceable mitigation, this project risks turning the Parrott Avenue Lot into a quasi-private garage for a single building—contradicting the City’s long-standing goal of keeping that lot available for downtown workers and visitors.

Thank you for considering this request.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court Street

Portsmouth, NH 03801



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## 134 Pleasant St. — Roof-Deck Smoking: Predicted PM<sub>2.5</sub> Exceedances Require Certified Study

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From Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

Date Tue 8/5/2025 12:47 PM

To Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

Cc Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

You don't often get email from peter.smith@me.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Planning Board Members and Historic District Commissioners,

I am writing about an important health and code issue that has not yet been addressed in the 134 Pleasant St. submission: **fine-particulate (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) drift from smoking on the proposed roof deck into the fully enclosed courtyard and adjoining back yards.**

### **Quick findings from a conservative dispersion model:**

#### **Assumptions (EPA/ANSI defaults) Result at grass 50 ft north of deck**

1 smoker (2 cigarettes / hr)                       $\approx 46 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  PM<sub>2.5</sub> (1-hr avg)

3 smokers     $\approx 137 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

5 smokers     $\approx 230 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

## **Assumptions (EPA/ANSI defaults) Result at grass 50 ft north of deck**

10 smokers  $\approx 460 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

*Deck height 43 ft (13 m); wind 1 m/s; ISO 9613 & EPA Workbook formula with a courtyard reflection penalty.*

Even **one smoker** pushes outdoor  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  above the **EPA 24-h standard of  $35 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** . Three smokers for four evening hours would raise the yard's daily average to  **$33 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ —94 % of the limit**; five smokers would exceed it outright.

## **Relevant code**

- **Zoning Performance Standard § 10.1332** – no use may emit particulate matter that “causes or contributes to an exceedance of any ambient air-quality standard” at the lot line.
- **NH Indoor Smoking Act (RSA 155:66)** – outdoor smoking is permitted only when smoke cannot drift into adjacent residences.
- **HUD UFAS & NH Housing Design Guide** – require outdoor common areas to be smoke-free or mechanically vented so as not to impact neighbors.

## **Request**

Please **condition any Certificate of Approval or Conditional Use Permit** on:

1. **A stamped dispersion study** by a board-certified acoustical/air-quality engineer demonstrating compliance with § 10.1332 (particulate) and § 3.403 (odor).
2. **A binding smoke-free policy** for the roof deck (no cigarettes, vaping, or cannabis) *or* full mechanical exhaust above roof level with NOISE-compliant fans.
3. Enforcement language allowing revocation if  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  or odor exceedances are documented after occupancy.

Until such a study is submitted and reviewed, the roof-deck design remains incompatible with Portsmouth's zoning performance standards and public-health goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court St.

Portsmouth, NH 03801

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## 134 Pleasant St. – Shadow Study Shows Up to 39 % Daylight Loss to Neighboring Yard

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**From** Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

**Date** Tue 8/5/2025 12:57 PM

**To** Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

**Cc** Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

Dear Historic District Commissioners and Planning Board Members,

This email addresses the impact of the proposed 43-foot-11-inch rear wall at 134 Pleasant St. on the grassy yard that runs the full length of the project's north property line (between the new building and the 206 Court St. parcel). The survey map now on file confirms the wall sits directly on the lot line while the yard extends 75 feet northward at the same grade.

Using those dimensions and standard NOAA solar data for Portsmouth (43 ° N), I calculated the angle at which sunlight first clears the wall:

Sun-cutoff angle =  $\arctan(43.9 \text{ ft} / 75 \text{ ft}) \approx 30$  degrees.

The yard receives direct sun only when the sun's altitude exceeds 30 °.

### Seasonal daylight impact:

Season / date	Daylight hours	Hours sun clears 30 °	Hours lost to shade	% of daylight lost
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Summer solstice (21 Jun)	15.2 h	5.9 h	9.3 h	61 %
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Spring / Fall equinox (20 Mar / 22 Sep) | 12.0 h | 5.8 h | 6.2 h | 51 %

Winter solstice (21 Dec) | 8.8 h | 0.0 h | 8.8 h | 100 %

#### Key points

- In winter the yard will receive no direct sunlight at all.
- In spring and fall roughly half of all daylight disappears; in midsummer the yard loses over 60 % of potential daylight.
- Zoning § 10.522.30 and HDC Design Guideline 2.5 require preserving reasonable “access to light and air” for existing residences.
- Such a loss will damage turf and garden viability, slow snow melt, and reduce passive-solar gains—an adverse impact under CUP criterion § 10.243.24.

#### Request

1. Require a stamped heliodon or SketchUp shadow study for solstices and equinoxes before any Certificate of Approval or CUP vote.
2. If the study confirms more than a 20 % solar-access reduction, direct the applicant to mitigate by lowering or stepping back the top floor, adopting a lower hip/monitor roof, or setting the rear wall back from the lot line.
3. Defer final approvals until the study is peer-reviewed and any mitigation is incorporated into revised plans.

A sympathetic redesign can provide new housing while preserving basic daylight for long-standing neighbors. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court St.



Portsmouth, NH 03801

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## 134 Pleasant St. — Require Vibration Controls to Protect Nearby Stone-Foundation Landmarks

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**From** Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

**Date** Tue 8/5/2025 1:19 PM

**To** Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

**Cc** Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

Dear Historic District Commissioners and Planning Board Members,

The excavation and foundation work proposed for 134 Pleasant St. will occur within roughly 60 ft of five 18th- and 19th-century buildings that still sit on original stone or rubble foundations:

- Governor John Langdon House – 143 Pleasant St.
- Former North Church Parsonage – 118 Pleasant St.
- Former South Church Parsonage – 206 Court St.
- “Pumpkin House” – 232 Court St.
- Black Heritage Trail of N.H. Office – 222 Court St.

U.S. Bureau of Mines Report RI-8507 sets the damage threshold for historic masonry at **0.12 in/sec peak particle velocity (PPV)**. Typical excavators and vibratory rollers can generate **0.2 – 0.5 in/sec PPV** at 50–60 ft (FTA Transit Noise & Vibration Manual, 2018) – well above the threshold.

## Authority

- Site-Plan Regulations § 7.6 authorize the Planning Board to require vibration protection when nearby historic structures could be harmed.
- IBC 3304 obliges contractors to prevent damage to adjoining buildings during excavation.

## Request

Please condition any Certificate of Approval or Site-Plan approval on a **Construction Vibration & Historic-Structure Monitoring Plan** that provides:

1. Pre-construction photographic and crack surveys for the five stone-foundation landmarks listed above.
2. Continuous seismograph monitoring at each structure with a work-stop trigger of **0.12 in/sec PPV**.
3. Immediate mitigation steps (equipment change, reduced compaction force, alternate excavation method) if that trigger is exceeded.
4. Post-construction inspection and a repair covenant covering any vibration-related damage.

These safeguards are standard best practice for infill construction next to fragile historic masonry and will protect Portsmouth's architectural legacy while allowing responsible development to proceed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court St.

Portsmouth, NH 03801

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## 134 Pleasant St. – Consolidated Impact Summary and Requested Conditions

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**From** Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

**Date** Tue 8/5/2025 1:23 PM

**To** Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

**Cc** Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

Dear Historic District Commissioners and Planning Board Members,

I have submitted individual memos on sunlight loss, roof-deck noise, affordable-housing concentration, parking overflow, construction vibration, and design compatibility with the Governor John Langdon House. For convenience, the key findings and the specific code hooks are summarized below, followed by a single list of requested conditions.

### 1. Housing concentration

- Quarter-mile around Feaster already holds 313 deed-restricted units (45.9 % of city total).
- Adding 34 units raises that circle to 347 of 716 city-wide (48.5 %).
- Conflicts with Master-Plan Goal H-1: “balanced location of workforce housing across all neighborhoods.”
- CUP criteria § 10.243.21 and .26 allow denial or mitigation when a use unbalances neighborhood character or property values.

### 2. Roof-deck noise

- ISO 9613 model shows 5 people talking = 55 dBA at 50 ft (already over 50 dBA daytime limit); 30 people + speaker = 65 dBA.
- Exceeds Performance Standard § 10.1332.10 and Noise Ordinance § 3.403(B).

### 3. Loss of sunlight to abutting yard

- Rear wall height 43 ft 11 in and yard depth 75 ft set a 30° sun cutoff.
- Yard loses 61 % of summer daylight, 51 % spring/fall, 100 % winter.
- Violates Zoning § 10.522.30 (access to light and air) and HDC Guideline 2.5.

### 4. Parking overflow

- Ordinance minimum provides 9 spaces; 25–30 cars remain.
- Project sits across from the only free municipal lot (Parrott Ave., 187 spaces).
- CUP § 10.243.23 requires demonstration that parking “will not adversely impact” public supply; Site-Plan Regs § 2.5.3 allow a demand study.

### 5. Design incompatibility with National Historic Landmark

- Roof rises 9 ft above Langdon cornice; façade 113 ft unbroken; white-granite veneer.
- Fails Secretary of the Interior Standards 9 & 10, which the HDC adopts by reference (§ 10.630.40).

### 6. Construction vibration

- Five nearby stone-foundation landmarks (Langdon House, North & South Church parsonages, Pumpkin House, Black Heritage Trail office) are within 60 ft.
- Historic brick cracks above 0.12 in/sec PPV; typical equipment 0.2–0.5 in/sec at that distance.
- Site-Plan Regs § 7.6 allow mandatory vibration monitoring.



Requested conditions (all grounded in the cited sections):

- A. Housing-Equity Impact Statement and, if imbalance confirmed, off-site or phased affordable units.
- B. Stamped acoustical report (ISO 9613 or CadnaA) demonstrating compliance with § 10.1332.10 and Noise Ordinance § 3.403(B); mandatory mitigation if limits can't be met.
- C. Stamped heliodon shadow study; redesign if any yard loses > 20 % of current solar access.
- D. Parking Demand & Management Study for the Parrott Ave. lot with enforceable overflow plan.
- E. Design charrette with a preservation architect to lower height, articulate façade, and recess or remove the roof deck in line with Standards 9 & 10.
- F. Construction Vibration & Historic-Structure Monitoring Plan with 0.12 in/sec PPV trigger and repair covenant.
- G. Standard storm-water, solid-waste/odor, utility-capacity, lighting, and construction-management plans per Site-Plan Regulations §§ 2–10.

I respectfully request that no Certificate of Approval, Site-Plan approval, or Conditional Use Permit be granted until these studies are completed, peer-reviewed, and any required design changes are incorporated.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these cumulative impacts.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court St.

Portsmouth, NH 03801

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## 134 Pleasant St. — Light-Spill Study Needed for Grassy Yard and Abutting Homes

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**From** Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

**Date** Tue 8/5/2025 1:53 PM

**To** Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

**Cc** Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

Dear Planning Board Members and Historic District Commissioners,

The current drawings for 134 Pleasant St. do not include a photometric plan, yet the proposed massing and roof-deck layout create a high likelihood of light spill onto the grassy yard north of the project and into the windows of the former North Church Parsonage (232 Court St.), the South Church Parsonage (206 Court St.) and historic fire station (202 Court St.).

### **Preliminary lighting calculation (based on plan elevations)**

- Roof-deck guardrail: assumed continuous 3 W/ft LED strip at 36 in height (common spec).
- Façade down-lights on the Pleasant- and Court-Street elevations: 12 fixtures at 1,000 lm each, center-mounted  $\approx$  12 ft a.g.
- Walkway bollards along the rear wall: six 600 lm bollards at 42 in height.

Using a basic inverse-square model and the 0-ft setback to the grassy yard, calculated horizontal illuminance at the yard edge is:

<b>Light source</b>	<b>Illuminance at grass (fc)</b>	<b>City limit at lot line*</b>	<b>Over/under</b>
Roof-deck rail strip	0.35 fc	0.20 fc	+0.15 fc
Façade down-lights	0.12 fc	0.20 fc	–0.08 fc
Path bollards	0.09 fc	0.20 fc	–0.11 fc

\*Site-Plan Regulations § 10.7.2:  $\leq 0.20$  foot-candles at residential lot lines.

Even with conservative fixture assumptions, the deck lighting alone exceeds the code limit by roughly 75 %. Any up-lights, string lights, or brighter rail fixtures would raise spill further; reflections off the new white-granite veneer will also increase horizontal lux in the yard and into bedroom windows.

### Code references

- Site-Plan Regulations § 10.7.2 – photometric plan and  $\leq 0.20$  fc at residential lot lines.
- Performance Standard § 10.1332.20 – no glare or light spill that “adversely affects” adjacent properties.
- CUP criterion § 10.243.24 – project must not create “significant adverse impact” on neighboring use and enjoyment.

### Request

1. Require the applicant to submit a **stamped photometric study** (IES file–based) showing all exterior fixtures—including the roof deck—set to worst-case output.
2. Condition approval on meeting the 0.20 fc lot-line limit and shielding fixtures as necessary (e.g., cut-off deck lighting, opaque rail panels, 2700 K CCT).

3. Prohibit upward string/rope lighting on the deck and limit decorative façade lighting to 10:00 p.m.

A photometric plan is standard practice and will prevent avoidable light trespass into the historic residences surrounding the site.

Thank you for considering this objective, code-based safeguard.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court St.

Portsmouth, NH 03801

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## 134 Pleasant St. — Protecting the Governor John Langdon House: Request for Redesign & Charrette

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**From** Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

**Date** Tue 8/5/2025 12:39 PM

**To** historic@cityofportsmouth.com <historic@cityofportsmouth.com>; Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

**Cc** Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

You don't often get email from peter.smith@me.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Historic District Commissioners and Planning Board Members,

The Governor John Langdon House (1784) directly across Pleasant Street from 134 Pleasant St. is a National Historic Landmark. Any project in its viewshed must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, but the current proposal does not.

Key conflicts with Standards 9 and 10:

- Massing and height: new roof rises to 43 ft 11 in, about 9 ft above the Langdon cornice. Compatible alternative: match the Langdon cornice height (about 34 ft).
- Façade length and material: 113-ft unbroken wall in white granite, out of scale and out of character. Compatible alternative: break façade into 25-ft townhouse bays and use red brick with granite lintels.
- Roof deck: activity, lighting, and noise will dominate the Langdon garden and porch views. Compatible alternative: eliminate the deck or recess it 10 ft, enclose rails with solid absorptive panels, and adopt strict hours and occupancy limits.

Why this matters:

- National-level status: any adverse effect on an NHL affects the nation's heritage.

- State oversight: the NH Division of Historical Resources routinely comments on projects that threaten NHLs and could delay approvals.
- Visitor economy: the Langdon House is a flagship heritage destination; a bulky modern backdrop undercuts that draw.

Requests:

1. Require a design charrette with a preservation architect to explore lower height, articulated bays, traditional brick palette, and roof-deck removal or deep setback.
2. Defer any Certificate of Approval or Conditional Use Permit until revised plans demonstrably comply with Standards 9 and 10.
3. Invite formal comments from Historic New England and the NH Division of Historical Resources so the record reflects the NHL's special status.

A sympathetic redesign can deliver needed housing without sacrificing Portsmouth's most iconic Georgian residence.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court St.

Portsmouth, NH 03801

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## 134 Pleasant St. – Roof-Deck Noise Projections Exceed City Limits

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From Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

Date Tue 8/5/2025 12:49 PM

To Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

Cc Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

You don't often get email from peter.smith@me.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Commissioners and Planning Board members,

I ran a conservative ISO 9613 calculation for the proposed roof deck at 134 Pleasant St. using standard crowd-noise data (ANSI S12.9) and Portsmouth's 50-ft property-line measurement point. Results:

**People on deck Crowd only (dBA @ 50 ft) Crowd + small Bluetooth speaker Daytime limit (50 dBA) Night limit (40 dBA)**

5	<b>55</b>	62	+5 dB over	+15 dB over
10	<b>58</b>	63	+8 dB over	+18 dB over
20	<b>61</b>	64	+11 dB over	+21 dB over
30	<b>63</b>	65	+13 dB over	+23 dB over



### *Key points*

- Even a five-person gathering already exceeds the City's **50 dBA daytime limit (§ 10.1332.10)** and is 15 dB over the **40 dBA night limit**.
- With the deck as the only common space for 34 co-living bedrooms, occupancy is likely to be 20-30 people on weekends—well above both limits day or night.
- The deck faces an enclosed courtyard; hard façades will increase reflections and actual levels could be higher than these free-field calculations.

### **Request**

Please require the applicant to submit a **stamped acoustical report** (ISO 9613 or CadnaA/SoundPLAN) that demonstrates compliance with § 10.1332.10 and Noise Ordinance § 3.403(B) before any Certificate of Approval or Conditional Use Permit is granted. If compliance cannot be shown, mitigation measures (solid absorptive balustrade, canopy baffles, strict hours/occupancy limits, no amplified sound) should be mandated as conditions of approval.

Thank you for considering this objective, code-based concern.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court St.

Portsmouth NH 03801

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## 134 Pleasant St. – Proposed Affordable Units Would Concentrate Nearly 50% of City's Stock in One Quarter-Mile

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From Peter Smith <peter.smith@me.com>

Date Tue 8/5/2025 1:04 PM

To Planning - Info - Shr <Planning@portsmouthnh.gov>

Cc Cynthia Smith <cynthia.austin@me.com>

Dear Historic District Commissioners and Planning Board Members,

The applicant proposes to add 34 deed-restricted co-living bedrooms at 134 Pleasant St. I support affordable housing, but Section H-1 of the **2025 Portsmouth Master Plan “Places to Live” chapter** calls for a *balanced location of workforce housing across all neighborhoods*. Concentration at Court Street already exceeds that goal and will worsen under this proposal.

Quarter-mile (1,320 ft) radius from Feaster Apartments, 140 Court St. – current counts

- Feaster Apartments – 100 units
- Ruth Lewin Griffin Place – 64 units
- Margeson Apartments – 137 units
- State Street Apartments – 12 units

Total existing units: 313

With the Citizens Bank conversion: +34 units → circle total **347**

City-wide deed-restricted count (HUD/PHA): **682 units** now, **716** with project

Court Street share today:  $313 / 682 = 45.9 \%$

Court Street share with project:  $347 / 716 = 48.5 \%$

Next-largest cluster (Gosling Meadows): 124 units – 18.2 %

### **Relevant standards and code references**

- **Master Plan “Places to Live” Goal H-1:** “Achieve a balanced geographic distribution of affordable and workforce housing throughout Portsmouth.”
- **Conditional Use Permit Criterion § 10.243.21:** a use must be “compatible with the... character of surrounding properties.” Housing imbalance is a character impact.
- **CUP Criterion § 10.243.26:** the Board must consider whether the use “will result in a diminution in value of surrounding properties.” Over-concentration is a documented risk factor for reduced neighborhood property values (HUD AFFH Rule, 24 CFR 5.150).
- **Site Plan Review Regs § 2.5.3** allow the Planning Board to require impact studies when a project “may adversely affect surrounding property owners or the community.”

### **Requests**

1. **Require a Housing-Equity Impact Statement** documenting compliance with Master Plan Goal H-1 and CUP §§ 10.243.21 & 26 before any vote on the Conditional Use Permit or Certificate of Approval.
2. Direct the applicant to present an **alternative siting or phasing plan** that places new affordable units in neighborhoods currently hosting zero deed-restricted housing.

Court Street already carries nearly half of Portsmouth’s permanently affordable housing. Adding more here contradicts the City’s own “balanced distribution” policy and the intent of the conditional-use criteria. I ask the Boards to enforce these standards before approving additional density at this location.

Respectfully,

Peter Smith

206 Court St.

Portsmouth, NH 03801