

Meeting: Historic District Commission

Date: October 7, 2026

RE: 163 Deer St

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

Please take 5 minutes to drive down Deer St from Maplewood, from Foundry Place to Maplewood but MOST importantly from Bridge St, starting at Islington to Deer St. This will help with the dimensional and architectural character of what is being proposed relevant to what is there.

The proposed building is in the beginning stages of formation on paper. This is the best time to consider various options as the 6 Lot trade with the City hopefully is coming to a close. The promise of a public park and green space has turned into dust.

Link to originally submitted proposed building from 2018:

https://files.portsmouthnh.gov/files/planning/apps/DeerSt_163/163_Deer_St_Lot_4_021418_HDC_Submission.pdf

Notice in the **2/14/18** plan set **3.1A** 163 Deer St and 238 Deer St height and references to each other. The heights of the two buildings across from each other gives the corner of Bridge and Deer a little relief from the massiveness of the other buildings. Comparing the 2/14/18 submission to the 10/8/26 submission; please review plan set **HN 3.03** (2026). Notice that relief has been removed and now there is a row of huge buildings, all much higher than the 50' allowed in this zoning. Penthouses are allowed but the previous submission (2/14/18) tied that use of space in more subtly. Please be aware the 2018 structure has a very factory/school look.

Link to current submission:

https://files.portsmouthnh.gov/agendas/2026/HDC/October+07%2C+2026/DeerSt_163_HDC_WS_100726.pdf



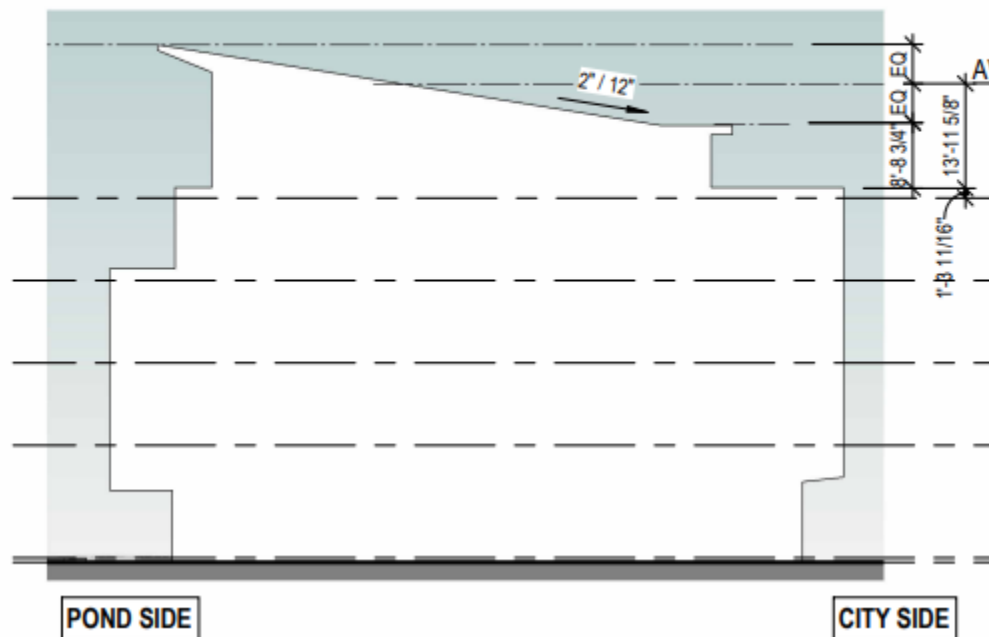
238 DEER ST

238 Deer St, across the street from 163 Deer St.



163 Deer St 2018 Submission

From Maplewood Looking South
1" = 100'-0"



163 Deer St 2026 Submission

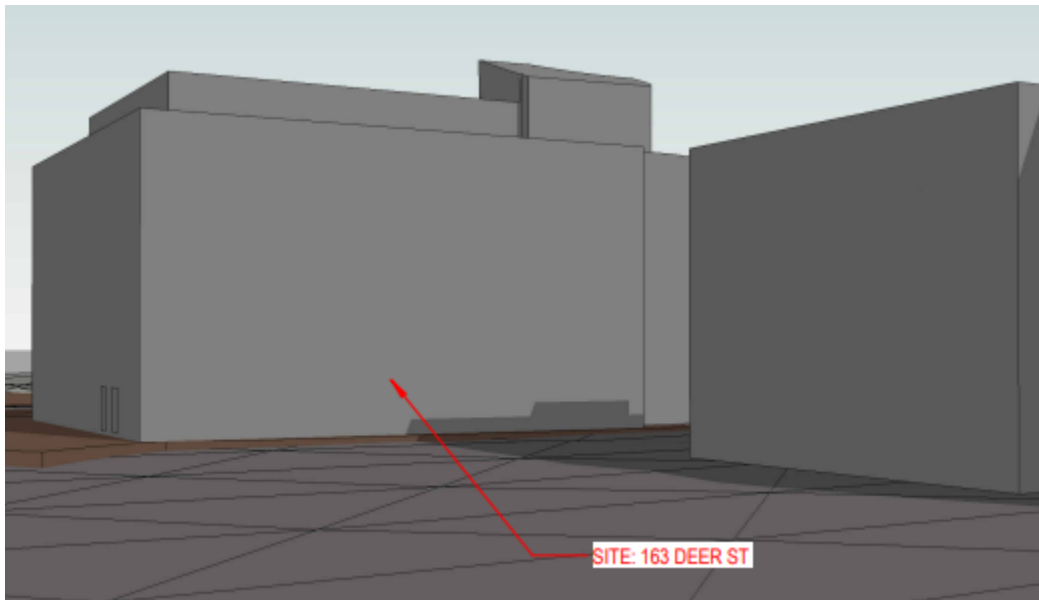
This Work Session has been presented **without any depictions** of the direction the structure is leaning toward. Looking at *other* initial Work Session submissions, most have some design plan and possible depiction of what the developer is hoping for. **There is no initial architectural character** presented other than the height plan set shown above and lots of massing plans labeled oddly.

The angled roof makes for an interesting penthouse but it does not create a consistent view from the south toward the North Mill Pond; causing the view to “feel” unbalanced. There seems to be NO reference to the fact that this was originally a RR Freight Depot in either the 2018 nor the 2026 submissions. This was a key part

of Portsmouth's Railroad history. It seems neither of the two submissions have very much character, as 30 Maplewood, 70 Maplewood and 165 Deer St do. Yes, this is a work session submission but still.

Plan Set HN2.01 seems to be numbered incorrectly. Starting at the Foundry Garage heading toward Maplewood down Deer St, the numbers are 165 Deer, 163 Deer and 70 Maplewood, across Maplewood Ave on the other side of Deer St is 75 Deer St according to MapGeo. Not sure where 161 Deer St is and 75 Deer is a good distance from 163 Deer St. It would make more sense to compare it to Bridge St since Bridge and Deer St meet around 163 Deer. The curious part is looking at the height representation (see above) there is an angled roof as the top of the penthouse. However, looking at the massing it seems to have an elevator shaft and a flat roof on the Deer St side of the building to create that angle. Isn't the maximum height for a penthouse 10', not the about 14' of the angled roof. EVERYTHING on that roof will be FULLY visible from Bridge St, since it is on a hill.; something to keep in mind as it is presented.

Plan Set HN3.01 163 Deer and across the street 238 Deer St.



Thankfully this is a Work Session and this submission can be adjusted for the next Work Session. Please keep in mind when Deer Street Associates started down this road a public park was supposed to be included on one of the 6 lots. This is the last of the 6 lots. There is no park or even usable green space? It appears the only green space will be at the public sidewalk, the rest will be various driveways to access the building. Again this is a corner lot and should be welcoming, architecturally relevant to the history (as 70 Maplewood) or even just more interesting.

Thank you for your time,

Elizabeth Bratter
159 McDonough St
Property owner