

Public Comment on TAC Agenda Item III.A 94 Langdon Street/98 Cornwall Street

From: David Rheume, P. E.
81 Langdon Street
To: Technical Advisory Committee

Request:

I am an abutter to the three-home development that is being proposed to be built on merged lots for 94 Langdon Street (Lot 139-8) and 98 Cornwall Street (Lot 139-1). I request that the Committee carefully consider requiring modifications to the proposed driveway access and building layout, specifically changing access for Dwelling Unit 2 and Dwelling Unit 3 to be from Cornwall Street, and requiring the Dwelling Unit 1 to be oriented in alignment with, while maintaining driveway access to, Langdon Street.

Background:

For full disclosure, I serve on the Zoning Board of Adjustment and my wife, City Counselor Beth Moreau, serves as the City Council Representative to the Planning Board.

An excerpt from the developer's application to TAC is shown on page 4. It depicts the planned layout for the three single-family dwelling units, as well as the proposed common driveway that exits onto Langdon Street. It also illustrates that proposed Dwelling Unit 1 is oriented at a right angle to Langdon Street. The common driveway near Dwelling Unit 2 and Dwelling Unit 3 features a curve and vehicle turnout that almost connect to Cornwall Street.

On March 9th, 2026, abutters of 94 Langdon Street who reside or own property at 81, 82, 91 and 101 Langdon Street met with Shawna Sammis of Chinburg and Alex Monastiero of The Gove Group, who explained the project and requested feedback. The project presentation essentially showed the layout that has been provided to TAC. While the abutters, including myself, are in overall support of the project, we did express concerns that all three dwelling units would be accessed via a common driveway exiting onto Langdon Street that would be almost directly across from the driveway at 91 Langdon Street. We also expressed concerns that the orientation of Dwelling Unit 1 would not face Langdon Street, driven in part by this shared driveway. We were informed by the developer's representatives that the single driveway was chosen because they believed access was not possible to Cornwall Street as the portion of the street north of McDonough Street was not an "accepted" city street.

On March 17th 2026, representatives for the developer appeared before the Zoning Board of Adjustment to obtain a variance in support of the project. That variance was granted. As an abutter, I recused from participating in the application, but, as allowed by the Zoning Board Rules and Regulations, I spoke “To” the application and reiterated concerns with the proposed driveway access being solely on Langdon Street.

Status of Cornwall Street North of McDonough Street:

Per my discussion with staff from the Planning Department and the Legal Department, the formal status of Cornwall Street that is situated north of McDonough Street is being reviewed.

I have performed research of several historical maps that would seem to strongly indicate that Cornwall Street has long been viewed as extending to at least to the boundary of Lot 139-1 (“98 Cornwall Street”), and likely farther. Maps from 1850, 1871, 1876, 1892 and 1920 are provided on pages 5 through 9. The 1876 map is particularly illustrative as it depicts property boundaries which include two lots with homes (“J. H. Thompson” and “Wiggin”) that could only be accessed if Cornwall Street existed north of McDonough Street. The 1920 Sanborn Map also depicts property boundaries and shows one lot with a structure and one without that similarly require access to Cornwall Street. This map also shows how older lots had likely been merged and reconfigured to support the Portsmouth Ice and Coal Co., Inc., forming the present lots that are under development.

Additionally, circa 2020, a Neighborhood Pilot Parking Program was proposed and ultimately implemented. In both the 2019 and 2021 proposals for action by the City Council, the maps used to depict the affected streets included Cornwall Street north of McDonough Street, as shown by the map on page 10.

Cornwall Street is similar to other streets in the neighborhood that end in a dead end north of McDonough Street, including Cabot Street and Rock Street. Brewster Street and Langdon Street were similarly configured prior to 2017 when, as part of the agreement to create lots and homes on the east side of Langdon Street, Chinburg turned a portion of the property over to the City to allow a connector road (informally called “Railroad Street”) to be created between the two dead end streets.

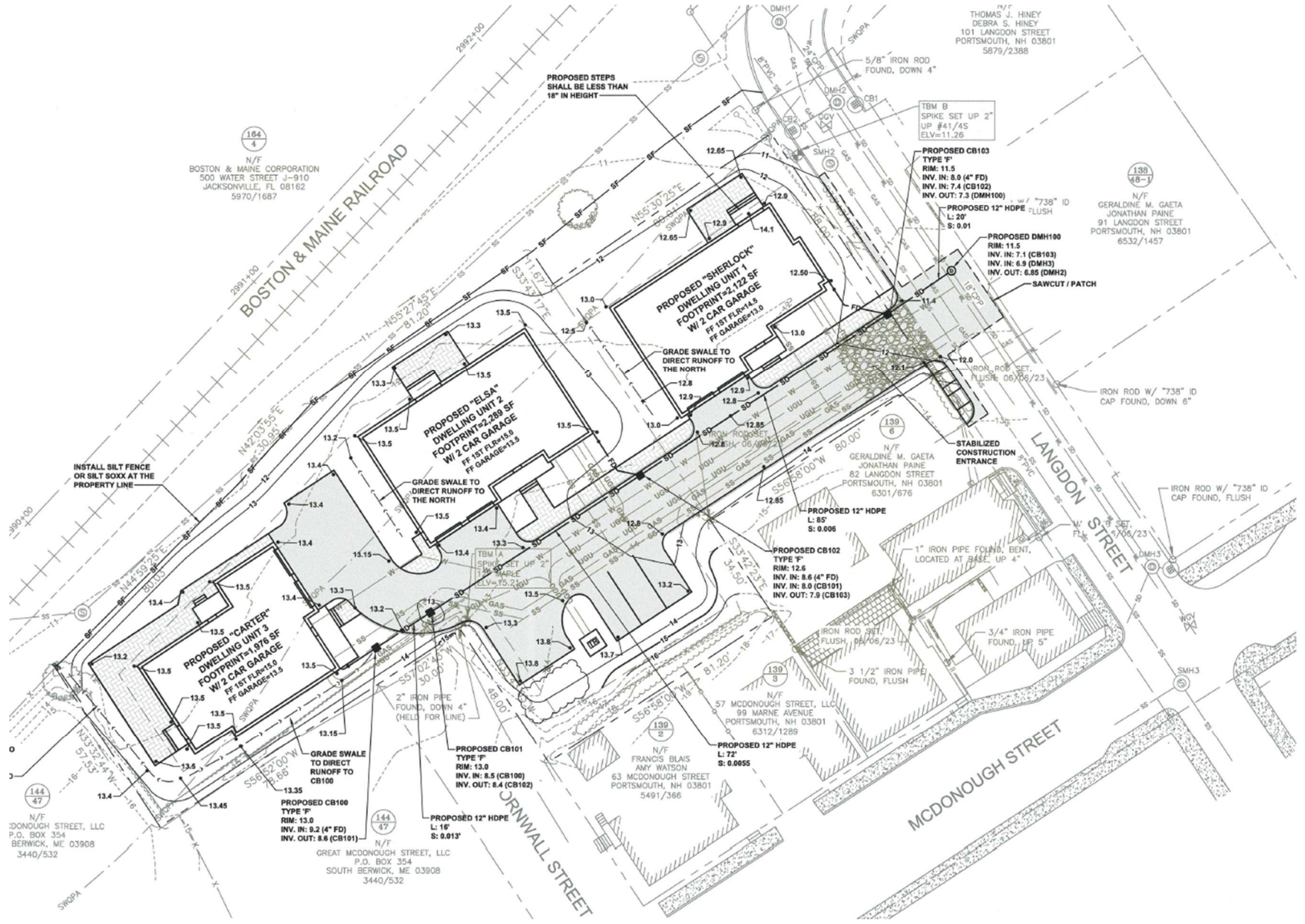
Alternative Driveway Configuration:

The apparent vehicle turnaround shown on the applicant’s site plan could be reconfigured to be an ingress from Cornwall Street along the 48 feet of frontage that Lot 139-1 has along the east side of the street. This would leave room at the end of Cornwall Street for snow accumulation due to street plowing in the winter.

Elimination of the common driveway leading to Langdon Street could allow for a home to be positioned parallel to the street with a driveway having two parking locations in front of a two-car garage, mirroring the current configuration of the homes at 81, 82, 91 and 101 Langdon Street. It should still be possible to include a walking path from Dwelling Unit 2 and Dwelling Unit 3 across Condominium-owned land adjacent to Dwelling Unit 1 to allow pedestrian access for those two units to Langdon Street, facilitating easy walking access to Rock Street Park.

Potential Benefits to the Recommended Reconfiguration:

- Improved emergency vehicle access to Dwelling Unit 2 and Dwelling Unit 3
- Increase in greenspace on the condominium lot
- Reorientation of Dwelling Unit 1 to be in conformance with the dominant streetscape of Langdon Street
- Reduction in vehicles exiting onto the narrow portion of Langdon Street immediately across from the existing driveway at 91 Langdon Street
- Allowing Dwelling Unit 2 and Dwelling Unit 3 to have Cornwall Street addresses more consistent with their location and aiding in 911/emergency vehicle response



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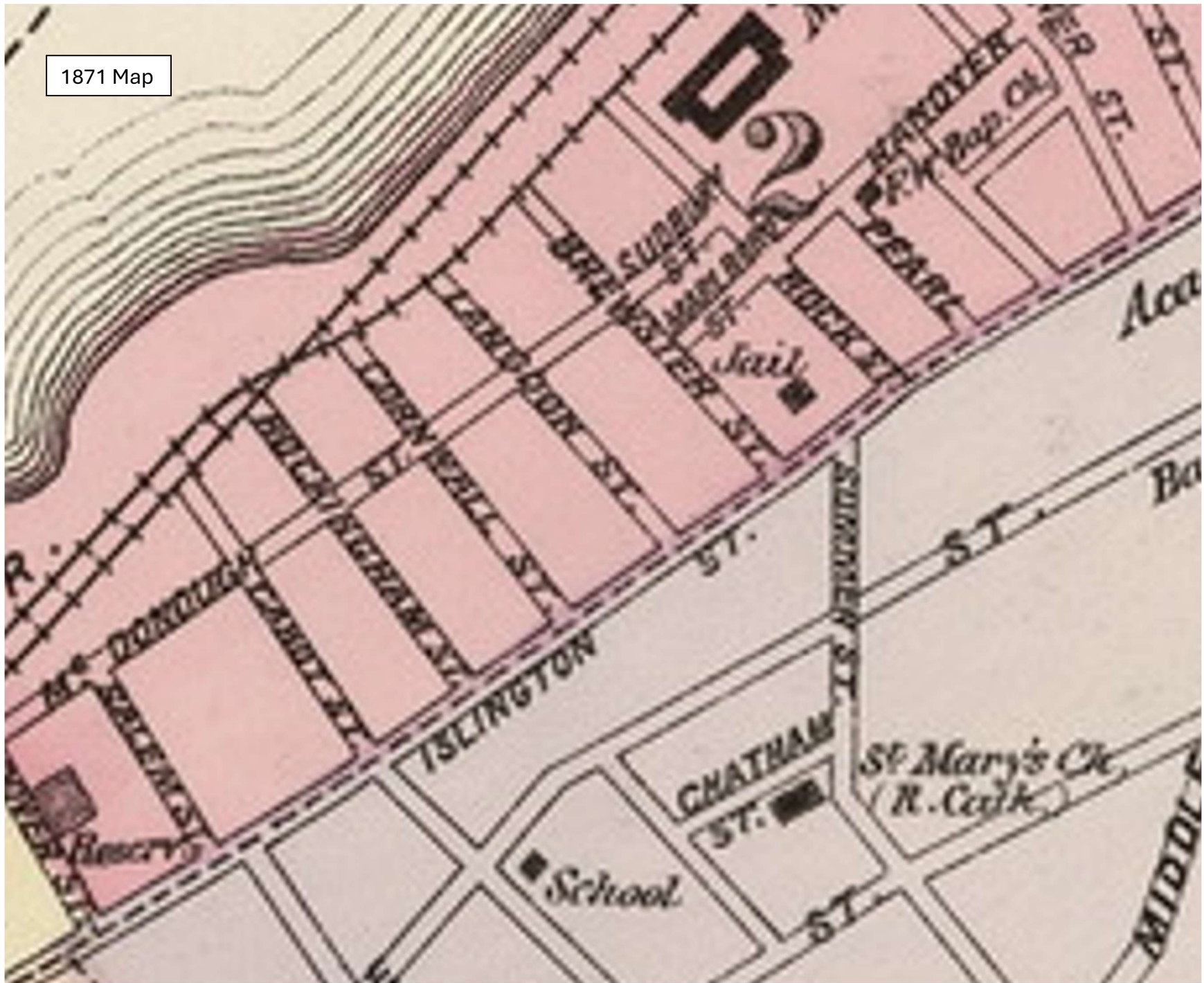
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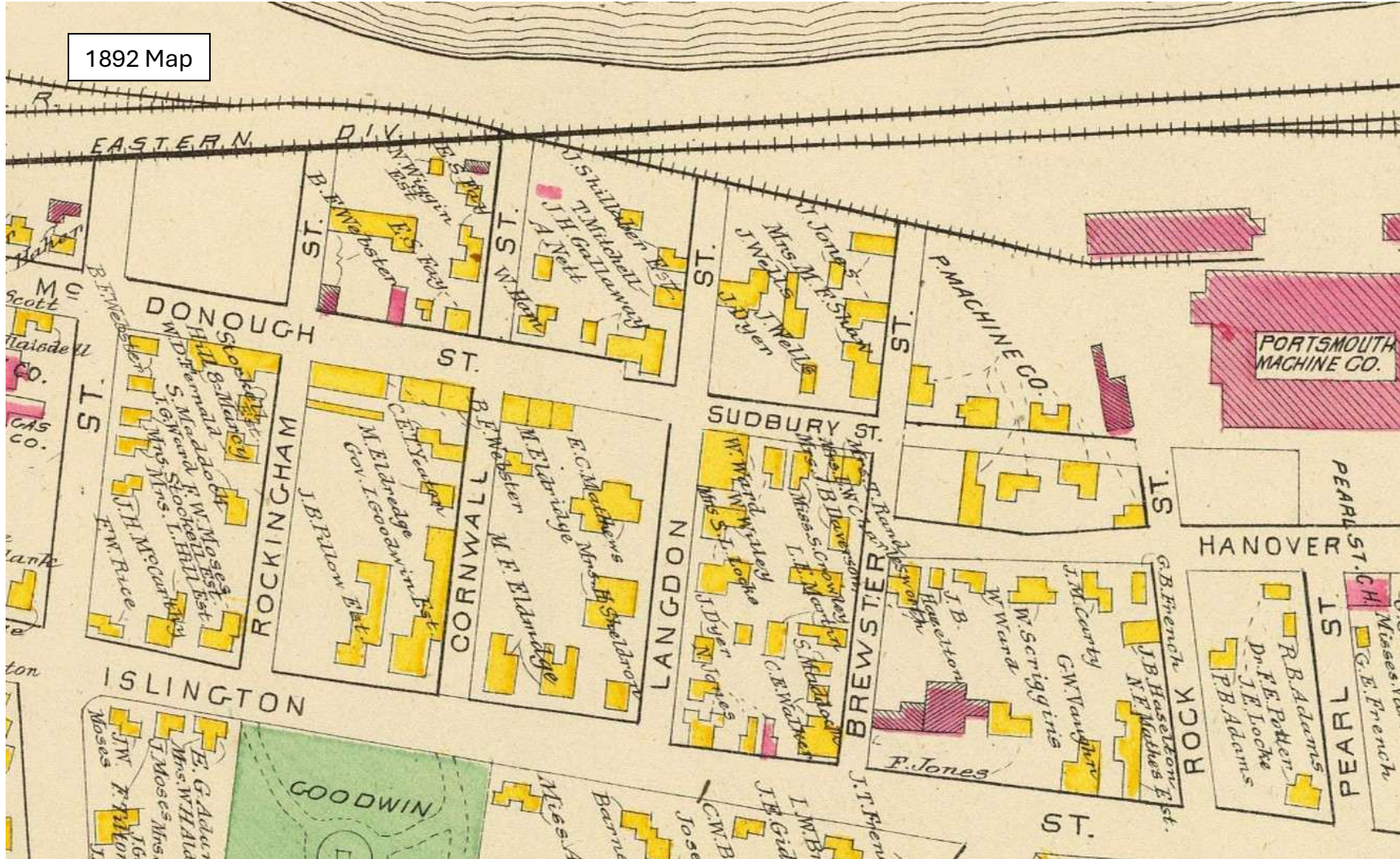
1850 Map



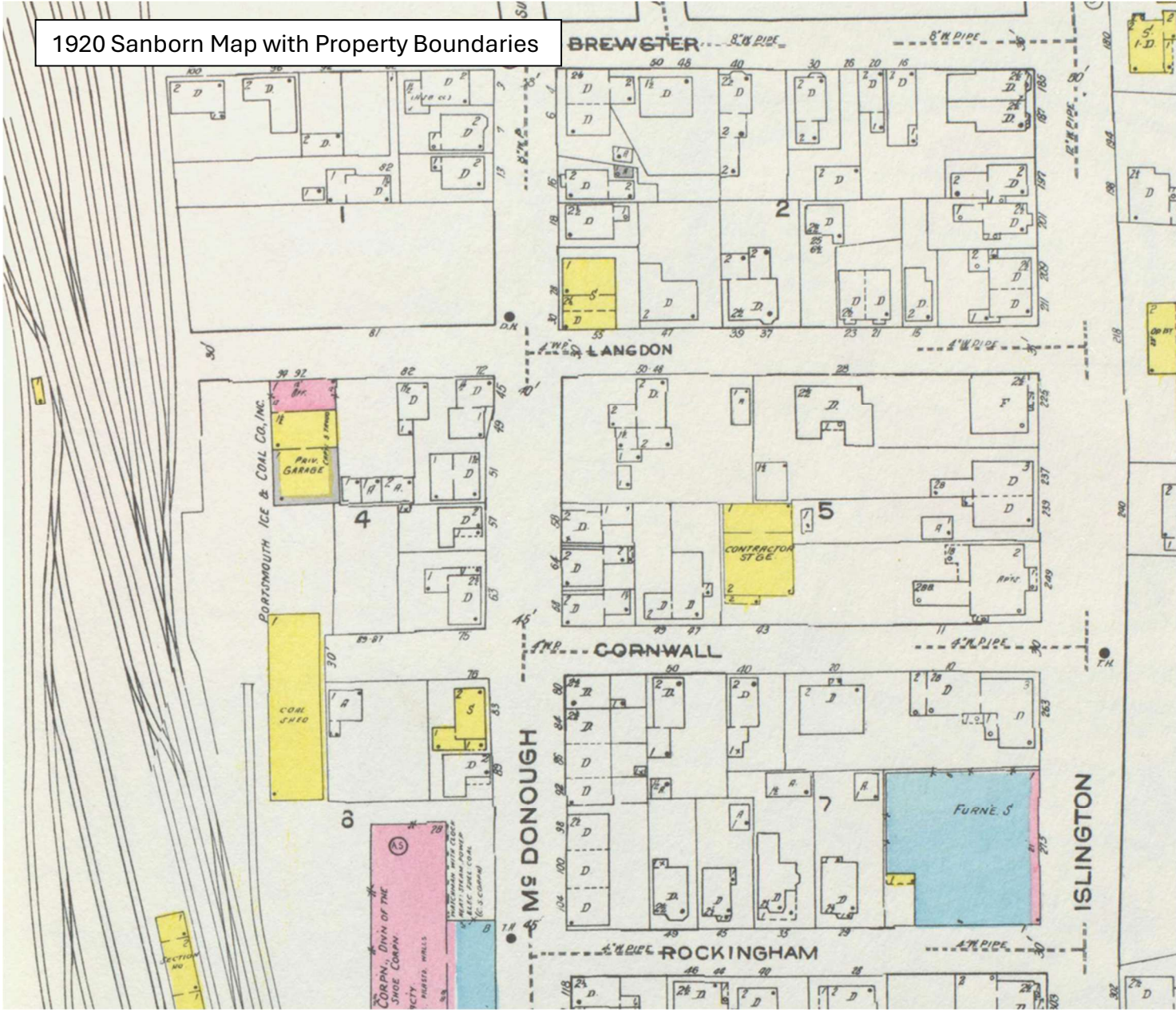
1871 Map



1892 Map

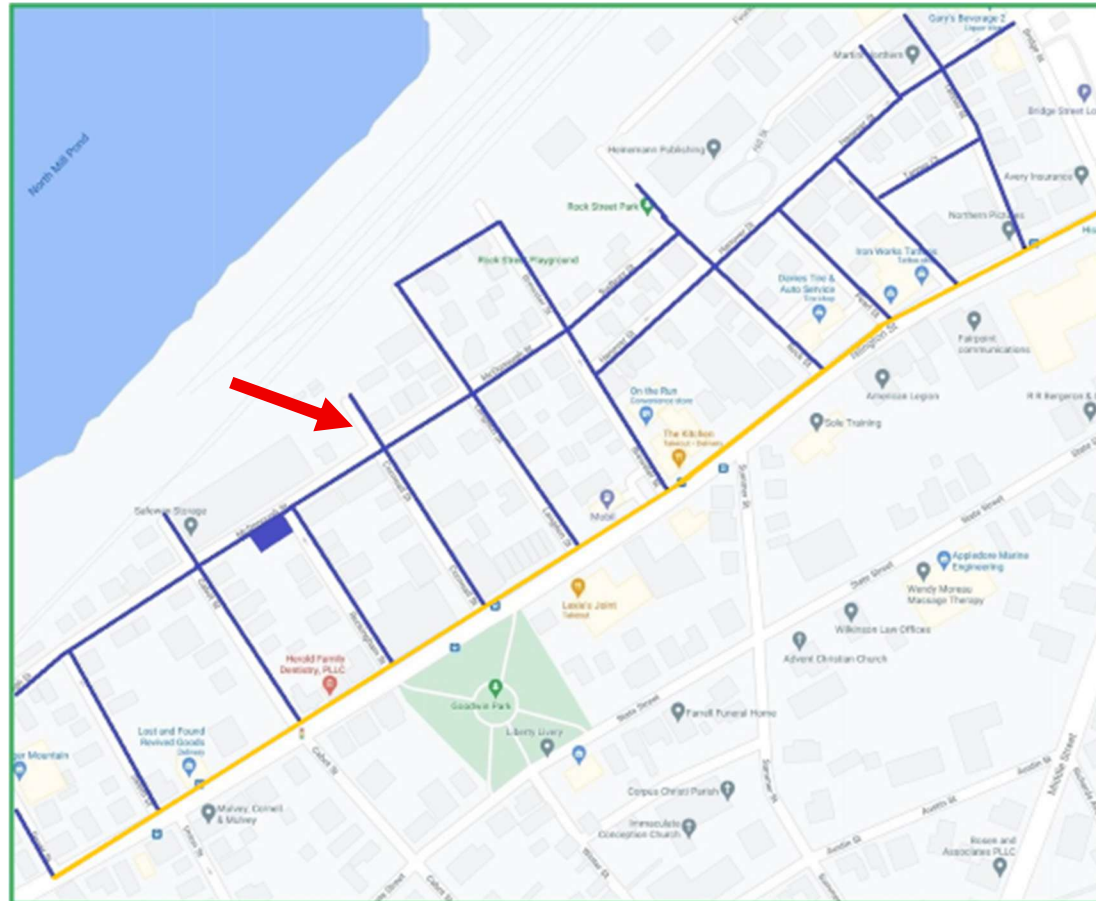


1920 Sanborn Map with Property Boundaries



Map of the 2021 Neighborhood Pilot Parking Program

(Red arrow identifies that portion of Cornwall Street north of McDonough Street was identified by City Staff as being part of the program.)



Meeting: April 7, 2026
Technical Advisory Committee
RE: 64 Bridge St (pages 307 to 338)
April 2, 2026

Dear Members of the Technical Advisory Committee,

64 Bridge St seems to show only one parking space at the rear of the building. Per the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) Other Non-residential uses need no parking. Residential Uses need the same as section 10.1112.3. Hotels and Motels require 0.75 per room, 1 per 100 sf of lounge or restaurant area and 1 per 25 sf of banquet facility.

This project is being called an Inn. However, they show a restaurant and bar as well as catering on the first floor (pg 318 of packet- Plan A1.1). On page 322 of the packet (Plan A1.5) a bar, a large sitting area usually called a lounge and two bathrooms are shown on the rooftop.

By definition this is not an Inn, it is a Hotel of less than 125 rooms. According to zoning regulations, parking for guest parking of 12.5 or more as well as a loading zone will be needed for this hotel.

Inn

A **building** offering lodging for transient boarders with up to 15 sleeping rooms. An **inn** may have a **caretaker residence** but does not have to be occupied by the owner, and shall not serve food to the public. (See also: **bed and breakfast, hotel, motel.**)

Hotel

A **building** in which the primary **use** is transient lodging accommodations offered to the public on a daily rate for compensation and where ingress and egress to the sleeping rooms is made primarily through an inside lobby or **office**, supervised by a **person** in charge at all hours. Such facilities may include, where allowed, such **accessory uses** as **restaurants, bars, taverns, nightclubs**, function rooms, places of public assembly or recreational facilities, but shall not include casino gambling, keno or other forms of gambling. (See also: **motel.**)

When looking at the page 323, Plan A3.1 its hard to say what buildings are being shown for Massing

This is 44 Bridge St to the left of 64 Bridge St..





These are the two houses across Hanover St to the right of 64 Bridge St

The question is: Does the building fit into all the zoning requirements? There doesn't seem to be a comparison of what is allowed vs what is being proposed.

This is a lot of activity 10' from a residential neighborhood with serious parking issues. A real Inn with first floor or underground parking might be a better fit for this location for which a variance would be needed to eliminate first floor commercial.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bratter
Property Owner
159 McDonough St

Dear Members of the Technical Advisory Committee,

I am writing as an abutter to the 304 Maplewood Avenue property to provide this supplementary letter in light of new information since my March letter.

For the record, I do not consent to any removal, alteration, or relocation of my fence.

To date, I have not received any direct communication from 304 Maplewood LLC regarding their site plan or surveyed boundary line. At the time of my previous letter, I was not aware that the proposed replacement of my fence was intended to satisfy the applicant's screening requirement. Screening and the maintenance of healthy landscaping are the responsibility of the applicant under Site Plan Regulations section 6.10.

I respectfully suggest that the applicant replace the dead evergreen trees along their side of the fence or install their own fence in place of those trees. Through restoration and continued maintenance the applicant can recreate screening where it previously existed. This will provide a safe buffer between residential and commercial properties while allowing the applicant to have the enhanced visual separation they are seeking.

Additionally, after the snow melted, I was able to inspect the sole boundary monument referenced for the eastern line. It appears to be a damaged plumbing-style pipe with brick fragments and other metal objects nearby. I have questions as to whether this is a legitimate boundary marker or remnant construction debris. This further reinforces my concerns noted in my previous letter regarding the difference in deed vs. surveyed measurements, the longstanding fence line and the boundary ambiguity referenced in the applicant's survey stating "title to lands beyond the fences is unclear".

Photos are included on the following page for reference.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Maria Abruzese
276 Maplewood Avenue



Google Maps 2019 screen capture shows evergreens on neighbor's side providing screening for residential abutters.



2024 photo shows evergreen trees on neighbor's side are no longer providing screening.



Photo shows of the 1" iron pipe is damaged and leaning. Labeled as 1" IP FOUND 0.2' Exposed on site plan survey. This is referenced as the sole marker for the eastern boundary.



Photo shows an alternative view of the degraded and damaged condition. No additional remarks regarding damage or leaning on shown site plan survey.