<u>DAGNY TAGGART, LLC</u> APPLICATION FOR VARIANCES

I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

The property subject to this application is located at 93 Pleasant Street in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and is depicted on the Portsmouth City Tax Maps as Map 107, Lot 74 (the "Lot"). The Lot is owned by the Applicant and is the home of the historic "Treadwell Mansion." The Lot is also comprised of a gravel parking lot with access provided via a single full-access/egress driveway on Court Street. Treadwell Mansion has been in the same location for over one-hundred years. The Lot appears to have been involuntarily merged by the city of Portsmouth, as it was formerly two separate lots, and is comprised of 17,498 S.F. or 0.4017 acres of land and is located in the Character District 4 (CD4) zoning district (See attached plans containing a standard boundary survey, a proposed site plan detailing the intended project itself, pictures of the property, as well as architectural rendering and floor plans showing the sloped elevations of the Lot). As a corner lot, the Lot is also located within the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) zoning district. The Lot has principal frontage along Pleasant Street and secondary frontage along Court Street.

The Lot itself is unique as the structure upon it is historic and the Lot is of significant size. In addition, the Lot is a corner lot and is bounded by mixed and commercial uses along Pleasant Street, but bounded by historic residential uses along Court Street. Also, and most significant the Lot is unique given its downtown urban location coupled with an unusually steep slope of the lot boundary and existing stone retaining wall from Pleasant Street along Court Street. The combination of this corner lot attribute, the location of residential uses along Court Street and the steep sloping boundary line creates unique characteristics of the Lot not shared by other similarly situated lots within the general vicinity.

II. THE APPLICANT

The Applicant, Dagny Taggart, LLC ("Dagny Taggart"), is a Portsmouth-based development company that is the current owner of the parcel. The principal of Dagny Taggart is Mark A. McNabb, a well-respected developer within Portsmouth, known for employing context sensitive designs within projects that foster a continued economic vitality of the City's downtown.

III. THE PROJECT

Dagny Taggart intends to convert the first and basement floors of the Treadwell Mansion to provide +/- 5,251 S.F. of office space. The third and fourth floors of the Treadwell Mansion will be converted to eight residential apartments. A second 2 story with a short 3rd story building will be constructed on the existing gravel parking area containing additional residential units, with basement level parking for 18 vehicles, 24 bicycles and 6 scooters. The additional building will share a common wall and will share a new elevator servicing both buildings, which will be constructed within the new structure. When completed, a total of 52 apartment units will be provided, consisting of a mix of forty-one (41) studio and eleven (11) one-bedroom units. Access to the parking garage will be provided via a new ramped driveway to Court Street at the easterly end of the Lot. The size of the units will provide for a more affordable living option within the downtown area.

The new construction will comply with Green Building Requirements and will require a conditional use permit for reduced parking spaces to 18 where 35 are required and the project will undergo full site plan approval before the Portsmouth Planning Board.

The Applicant has had preliminary discussion regarding the project with the Historical District Commission, and has received positive feedback as a result of that process. A portion of this feedback relates to the HDC requesting significant design changes which are amenable to the Applicant, which include a lowering of the height of the newly constructed building and a lowering of the parking level under the structure in order that the new structure is shorter than the historic Treadwell Mansion. In addition, the HDC requires that the 6-foot existing granite wall, except at the garage entrance, that exists along Court Street remain.

The HDC recommendations and the sloping boundary line along Court Street have produced a number of design constraints which have caused the need for certain variances as set forth herein.

IV. REQUEST OF THE APPLICANT FOR VARIANCES

For the purposes set forth herein, the Applicant is requesting the following variances:

1. Relief from Figure 10.5A41.10C and Section 10.642 (1), which prohibit residential use in the ground floor.

Rationale for Request: This parcel is located in the Downtown Overlay District. The project will contain commercial uses, but the severe slope and existing stone retaining wall will prevent commercial space along Court Street, as the grades of entrances for such commercial spaces will be inaccessible from Court Street as opposed to internally accessed residential uses. The residual uses are consistent with the HDC's requirement that the existing 6-foot granite wall remain running along Court Street. Commercial uses would be inconsistent with retaining this granite wall. As a matter of context, this proposed residential use is reasonable given that this portion of Court Street is predominately residential, whereas Pleasant Street is predominately commercial; and

2. Relief from Figure 10.5A41.10C which prohibits a finished floor surface of the ground floor that is 36" above the sidewalk grade, where a maximum of 60" is proposed.

Rationale for Request: The Applicant proposes a maximum of 60" given the slope of the property. The 36" is met (actually starting at 24" at the beginning of Court Street) at the proposed main entrance of the addition structure, however, Court Street slopes away going east, causing the finished floor to be more than 36" above the sidewalk grade. The floor grade is intended to coincide with the granite wall that the HDC requires to be maintained; and

3. Relief from Figure 10.5A41.10C which requires a minimum ground story height of 12', where 10' 8" is proposed.

<u>Rationale for Request:</u> The Applicant proposes 10' 8" given the slope and proposed residential use, as set forth with the first variance request, on the ground floor and the request from HDC to lower the building height; and

4. Relief from Figure 10.5A41.10C which requires an entrance spacing every 50'.

Rationale for Request: The Applicant proposes two entrances along the new structure along Court Street, which is approximately 157'. If staggered, the number of entrances would almost be satisfied with two entrances, however given the slope of the property at the beginning (westerly side) of the building and the parking infrastructure created at the end (easterly side) of the building, the two entrances are not staggered as required by the zoning ordinance and the desire to keep the historic granite wall as intact as possible; and

5. Relief from Figure 10.5A.44.35 which requires the above-ground portion of a parking structure or garage shall have a liner building at least the height of the ground floor along the entire width of any front yard except for driveways and pedestrian entrances.

Rational for Request: Planning Staff has identified that only parking space #18 is located in an area where the garage is not lower than 6 feet from the grade of the sidewalk (see attached diagram). As with the other variances, given the slope of the property, although the building will rise above the sidewalk, the lower grade will not in order to maintain a level inside grade, thus requiring the Applicant's need for the variance to retain only parking space #18.

V. VARIANCE CRITERIA

New Hampshire RSA 674:33, I (a)(2) and Section 10.233 of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance set forth five criteria upon which variances may be granted. The application of these criteria to the Applicant's proposal is discussed hereafter.

A. Granting the variances will not be contrary to the public interest.

To be contrary to the public interest or injurious to public rights, the variances must unduly and in a marked degree conflict with the basic zoning objectives of the ordinance. See *Chester Rod & Gun Club*, 152 N.H. at 581. Moreover, "mere conflict with the terms of the ordinance is insufficient." *Id.* In making the determination, the Board should determine whether the variance would "alter the essential character of the locality or threaten public health, safety or welfare."

Section 10.121 of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance states that, "[t]he purpose of this Ordinance is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of Portsmouth and its region in accordance with the City of Portsmouth Master Plan. The Ordinance is intended to implement the goals and objectives of the Master Plan.

This project is atypical as the Applicant has already appeared on a preliminary basis before the HDC and before the TAC workshop. As such, particularly with the HDC, and given the direction the HDC has provided to the Applicant, design criteria have changed resulting in the reduction in height of the proposed structure. This design addressed the Historic regulations specifically, which provide, "Consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, an addition to a historic building should be subordinate to the historic building and read as an addition." (See attached HDC design review regulation).

In this vein, and inherent is such a review, the HDC has provided favorable input to the project as to its design, implying that the project is consistent with the essential characteristics of the surrounding area. As one can see by the designs as presented, careful and context sensitive attention has been taken with regard to the proposed structure. The proposed lack of commercial uses along Court Street will not dimmish the residential surrounding areas, particularly as the site will remain a mixed-use site.

B. The spirit of the ordinance is observed.

When considering whether the granting of the variances will observe the spirit of the ordinance, the New Hampshire Supreme Court has indicated this review is substantially related, and similar to the review regarding public interest. See *Harborside Associates, L.P. v. Parade Resident Hotel, LLC*, 162 NH 508, 514 (2011). Thus, the Applicant submits that the rationale set forth above is equally applicable to the Board's review as to whether the spirit of the ordinance is observed with the grant of the variance. Further, the overriding spirit of the ordinance is largely driven, in this instance, by the historic district regulations. The Applicant respectfully submits that the historic district regulations are observed throughout the design.

C. The granting of the requested relief will do substantial justice.

In *Malachy Glen Associates v. Town of Chester*, 155 N.H. 102, 109 (2002), the New Hampshire Supreme Court held that, "the only guiding rule [in determining whether the requirement for substantial justice is satisfied] is that any loss to the individual that is not outweighed by a gain to the general public is an injustice." The Court also noted that it would look at whether a proposed development was consistent with the area's present use. In this instance, the grant of the variances would result in substantial justice as that would allow the addition of residential units that would directly benefit the Portsmouth general public, as they represent more affordable units given their size. The location of the additional structure fits within the residential nature of Court Street within this location and the use works given the slope of the property and the need to retain the granite wall, whereas a commercial use would not. There is no negative aspect that the public will suffer. Conversely, the public will be permitted to use the more accessible rental units. Thus, denial of the variances would result in a loss to the Applicant that is not outweighed by any gain to the general public. As such, granting of the requested relief would result in substantial justice.

D. Granting the variance will not result in the diminution on value of the surrounding properties.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the surrounding properties have a value associated with them which is premised upon the existence of the existing buildings and uses located upon the applicant's property. In this instance, it is believed, and therefore averred, that the aesthetic and historic additions and upgrades of the property and considering the existing uses of the property, will not result in a diminution of surrounding property values.

E. Literal enforcement of the provisions of the Ordinance would result in an unnecessary hardship.

An unnecessary hardship exists when, owing to special conditions of the property that distinguish it from other property, no fair and substantial relationship exists between the public purposes of the ordinance provisions and the specific application of those provisions to the property and the proposed use is a reasonable one. (Section 10.233.31 of Zoning Ordinance).

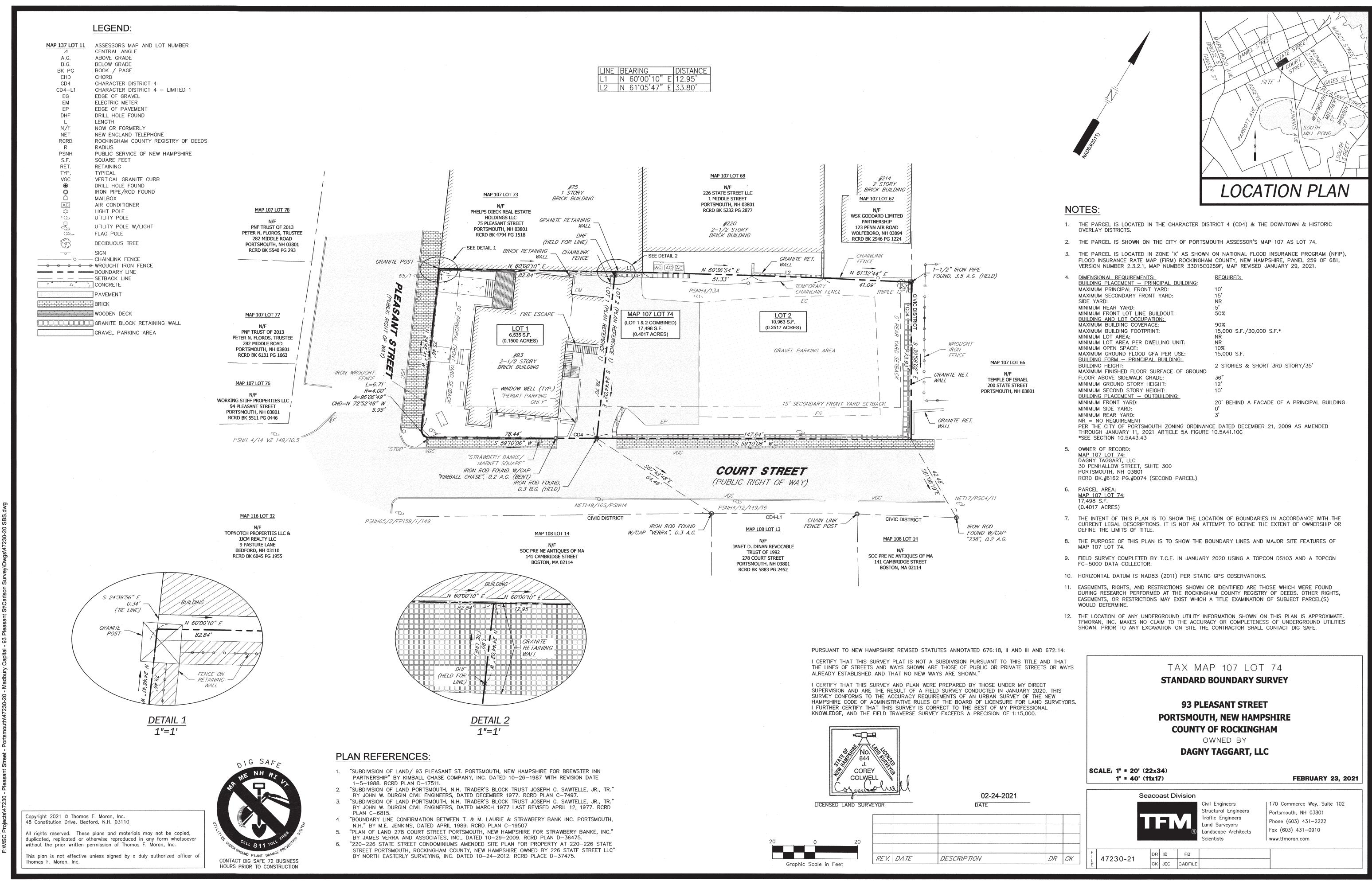
As set forth with the Introduction, the Lot is distinguished from other properties in the area given as the Lot itself is unique as the structure upon it is historic and the Lot is of significant size. In addition, the Lot is a corner lot and is bounded by mixed uses along Pleasant Street, but bounded by historic residential uses along Court Street. Also, and most significant the Lot is unique given its downtown urban location coupled with an unusually steep slope of the lot boundary and the need (and desire) to retain the existing and historic stone retaining wall from Pleasant Street along Court Street. The combination of this corner lot attribute, the location of residential uses along Court Street and the steep sloping boundary line creates unique characteristics of the Lot not shared by other similarly situated lots within the general vicinity.

The proposed structure will not pose a conflict with the public purpose of the ordinance as such additions will create a use that is consistent with and sensitive to the HDC regulations, as illustrated hereinabove, while providing much need housing which will be a more affordable option for those that require moderate space, and want to live within the heart of the downtown area, all the while maintaining commercial uses within the Lot resulting in a highly desirable mixed-use. The development proposed is also necessitated not only by the location with thin the Historic District, but also in light of the slope to the Lot, as illustrated, and the need to retain the granite stone wall. The designs reflect a reasonable and much needed use in a manner that respects the overall goals of the zoning ordinance. The lack of commercial uses along Court Street, in this interest is unnecessary in this specific instance. The Applicant respectfully submits, for all of the reasons set forth herein, the denial of the requested variances would frustrate the benefits the project stands to offer to the general public, and would result in an unnecessary hardship to the Applicant.

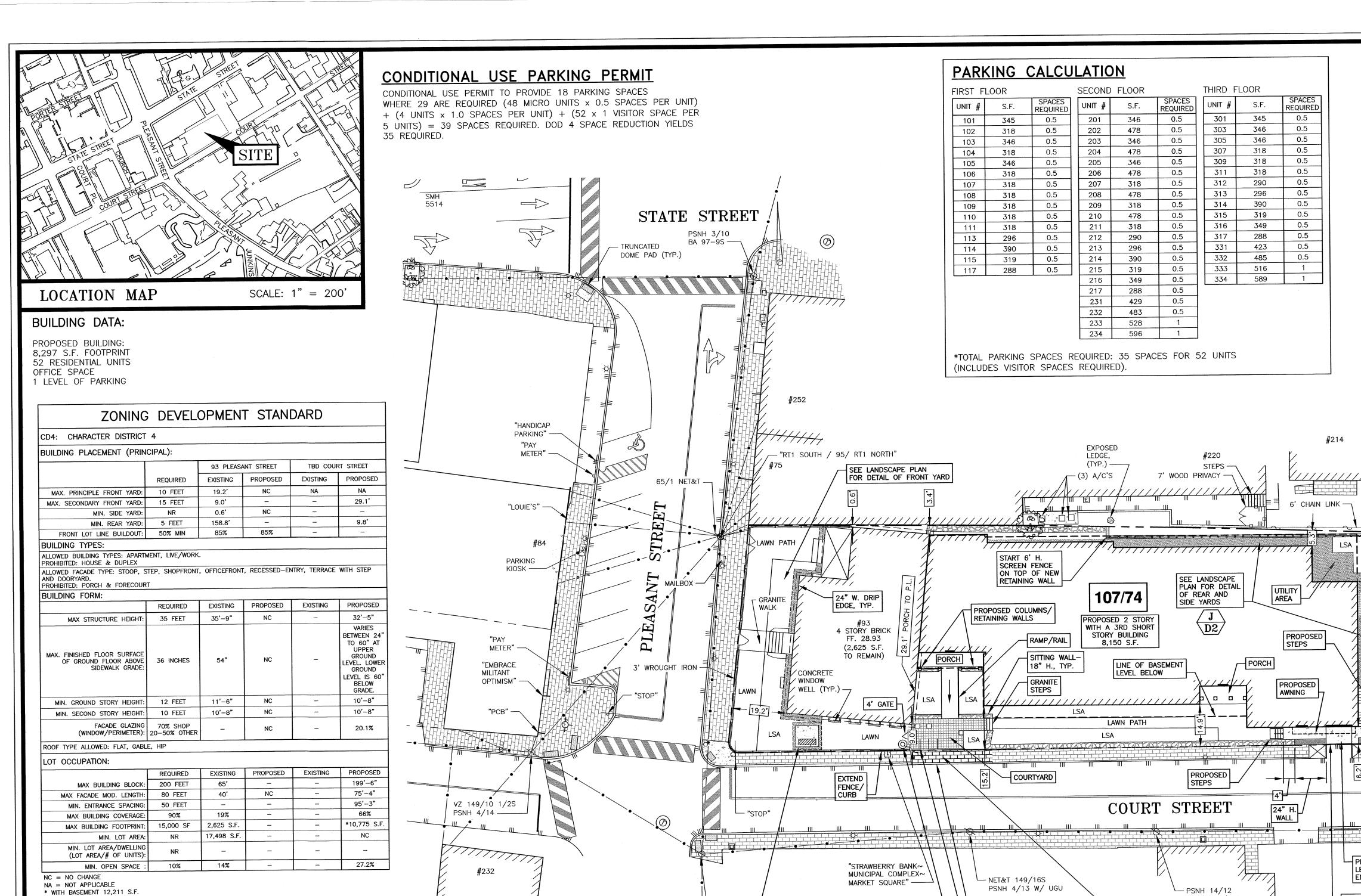
For the specific reasons set forth above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the uses proposed are reasonable.

VI. CONCLUSION

For all of the reasons set forth above Dagny Taggart, LLC respectfully requests that the relief request herein be granted.



Feb 24, 2021 - 3:37pm



PORTSMOUTH, N.H. 10/13/21 BUILDING SIZE PSNH 4/11 W/ UGU 9/28/21 ISSUED FOR ZBA 9/20/21 SUBMIT FOR TAC

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

93 PLEASANT STREET

AMBIT ENGINEERING, INC.

Civil Engineers & Land Surveyors

200 Griffin Road - Unit 3 Portsmouth, N.H. 03801-7114

1) PARCEL IS SHOWN ON THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

3 PLEASANT STREET SUITE 400

3) PARCEL IS NOT IN A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA AS

SHOWN ON FIRM PANEL 33015C0259F. EFFECTIVE JANUARY

5) PARCEL IS LOCATED IN CHARACTER DISTRICT 4 (CD4),

6) DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS: SEE PORTSMOUTH ZONING

THE DOWNTOWN OVERLAY DISTRICT AND THE HISTORIC

7) THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN IS TO SHOW THE

PROPOSED SITE DEVELOPMENT ON ASSESSOR'S MAP 107

8) VERTICAL DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL NAVD88. BASIS OF

VERTICAL DATUM IS REDUNDANT RTN GNSS OBSERVATIONS

9) SEE ARCHITECTURAL PLANS FOR TRASH ENCLOSURE

AREA. PICK UP SCHEDULE AS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN

Tel (603) 430-9282

ASSESSOR'S MAP 107 AS LOT 74.

DAGNY TAGGART LLC

PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801

2) OWNERS OF RECORD:

6162/74

D-17511

4) EXISTING LOT AREA:

OVERLAY DISTRICT.

ORDINANCE.

 $(\pm 0.2').$

CAPACITY.

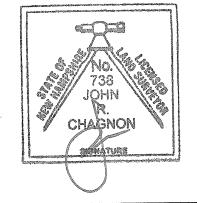
17,498 S.F.

0.4017 ACRES

LOT 74 IN THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH.

29, 2021.

9/7/21 REVISED BUILDING/EXTERIOR LAYOUT ISSUED FOR COMMENT 4/2/21 DESCRIPTION REVISIONS



SCALE: 1" = 20'

DECEMBER 2020

PLAN

SITE LAYOUT

FB 321 PG 72

CHAIRMAN

LEVEL GROSS AREA SUPPORT OFFICE RESIDENTIAL # STUDIO # 1BR # TOTAL UNITS UNITS

GRAPHIC SCALE

2,616

818

814

884

9,595

PORTSMOUTH APPROVAL CONDITIONS NOTE:

PORTSMOUTH SITE PLAN REVIEW REGULATIONS.

12,111 5,251

ALL CONDITIONS ON THIS PLAN SET SHALL REMAIN IN EFFECT IN

APPROVED BY THE PORTSMOUTH PLANNING BOARD

PERPETUITY PURSUANT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CITY OF

9,933

10,814

10,156

TOTAL 43,474

9,115

10,000

6,997

0

26,112

0

11

41

DATE

PROTECT TREES, TYP.

PROPOSED

RETAINING

FENCE

END 6' H.

SCREEN FENCE

PROPOSED TIP-DOWN, TYP. D2/

- NET&T 17

10,775

12746

17,498

72.8%

384

PROPOSED

- PROPOSED LOWER

ENTRANCE LOCATION

LEVEL GARAGE

PROPOSED G D2/

149/16 W/ UGU

LOT SIZE

EXTEND K K

CURB D2

 $\begin{array}{c} - \\ \hline (3) \text{ BIKE} \\ \text{RACKS} \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \hline F \\ \hline D2 \end{array}$

PROPOSED TRANSFORMER

- PSNH 65/2

FP 159/1 W/ UGU

PAD W/12" CRUSHED D3/

RELOCATED FLAG

POLE, BASE, AND

INFILL EXISTING BRICK SIDEWALK TO MATCH AT BUILDING AND AS REQUIRED. RE-BUILD EXISTING

SIDEWALK ALONG COURT STREET

IMPERVIOUS SURFACE AREAS

POST-CONSTRUCTION PRE-CONSTRUCTION STRUCTURE IMPERVIOUS (S.F.) IMPERVIOUS (S.F.) 3,110 MAIN BUILDING 165 STAIRS 292 WALKWAYS & RAMPS 3612 **PAVEMENT** 584 RETAINING WALL 5308 CONCRETE (FLAT/COURTYARD)

(TO PROPERTY LINE)

13277

17,498 75.9% % LOT COVERAGE

3059.01

DATE

View from the East



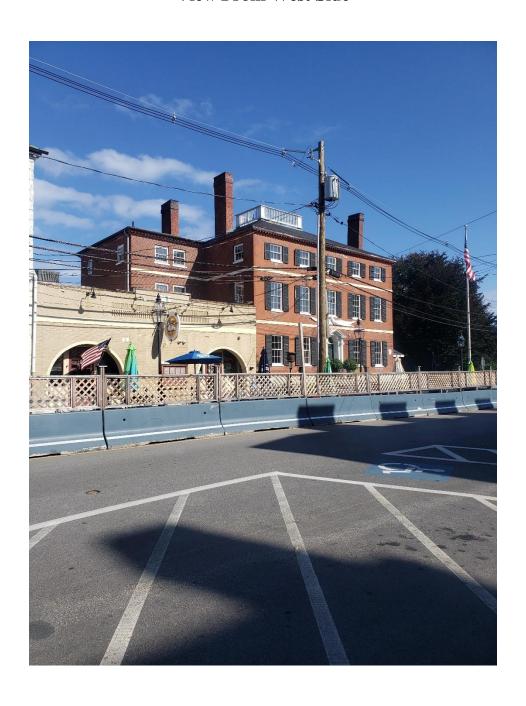
View From the South



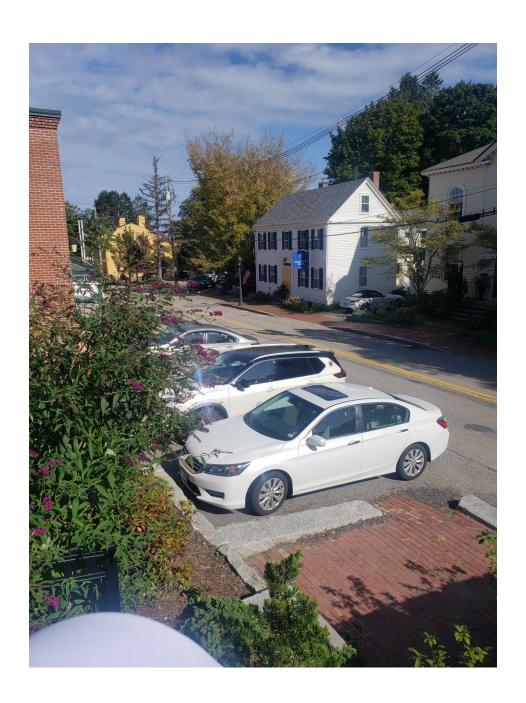
East View From Existing Parking Lot (East View)

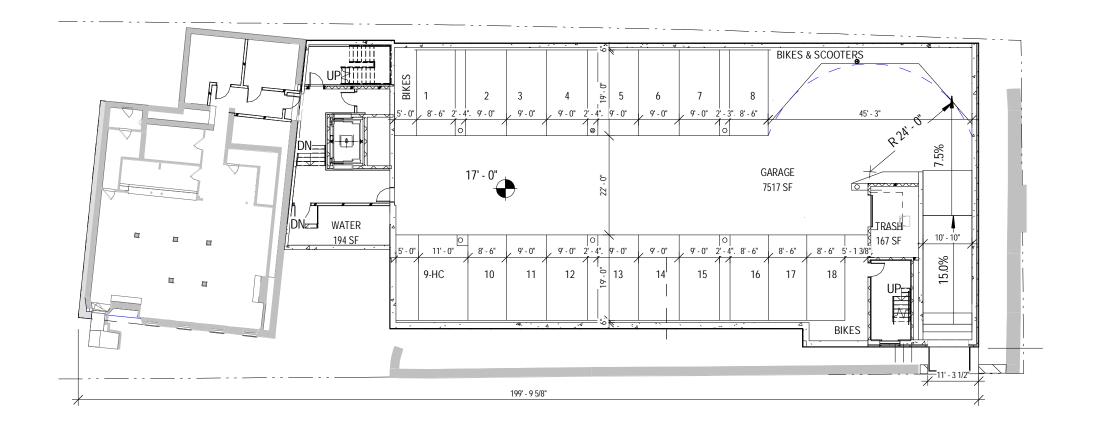


View From West Side



View of Residential Abutters on Court Street

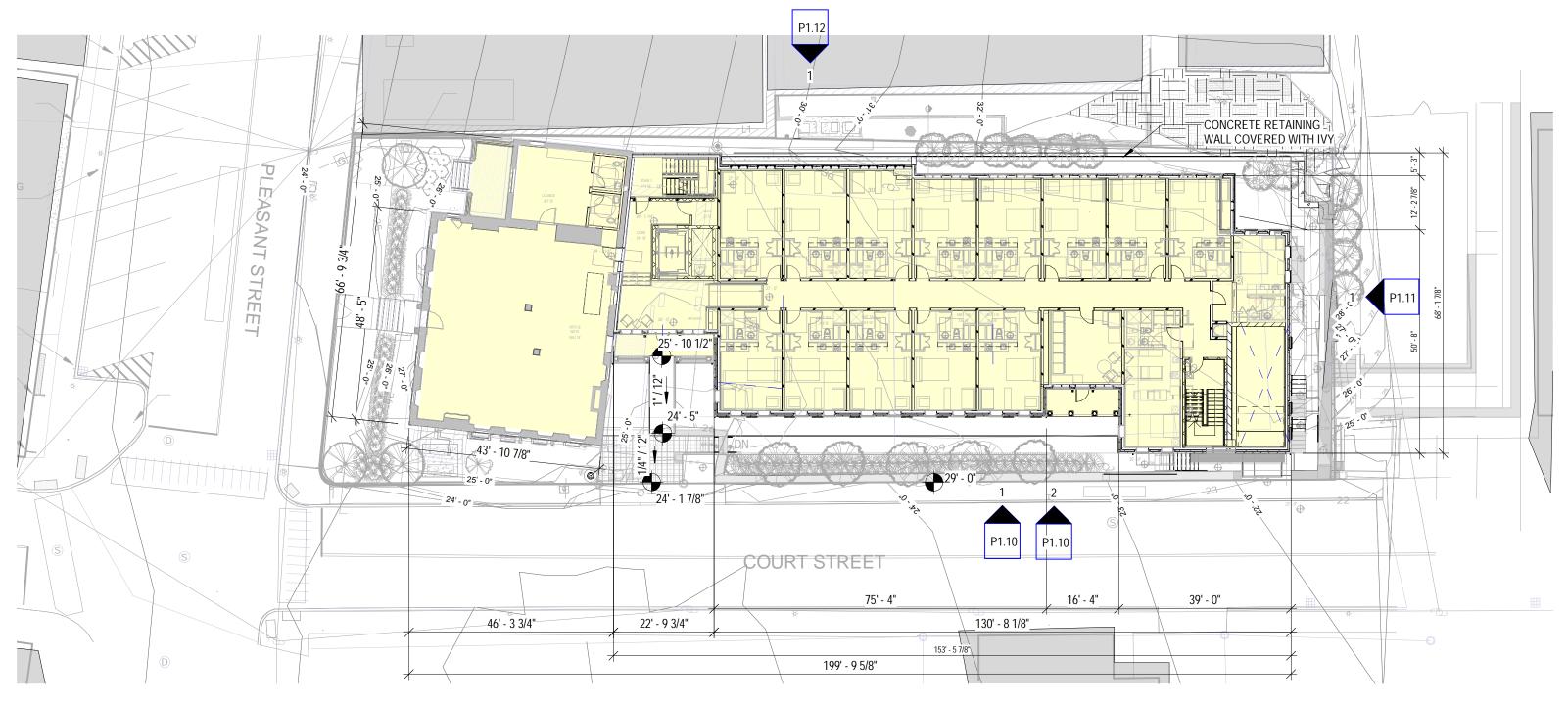




1 BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
3/64" = 1'-0"

P1.1



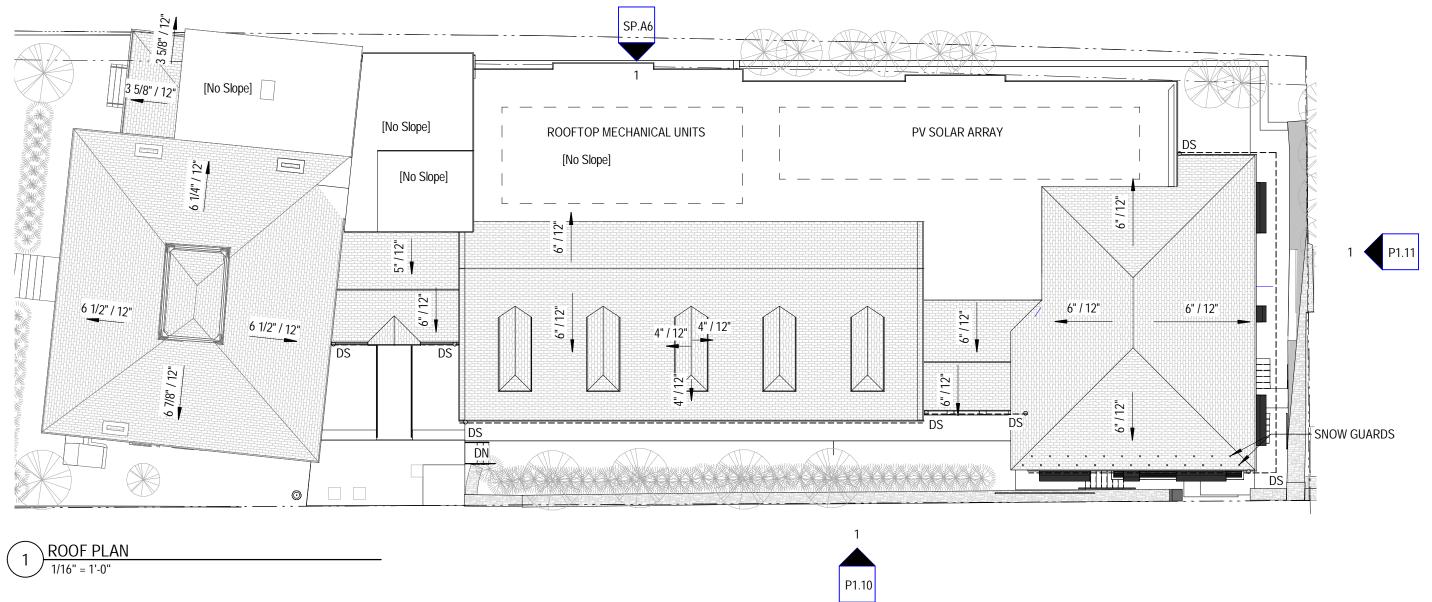


1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
3/64" = 1'-0"

93 PLEASANT STREET BOA October 12, 2021





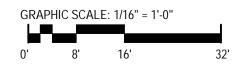


ROOF LEGEND

*DS DOWNSPOUT

---- GUTTER

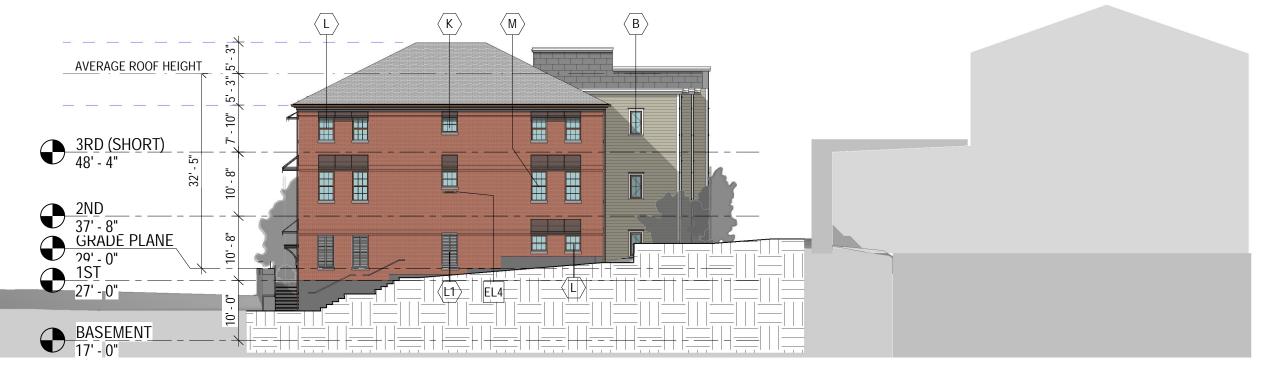




P1.3 ROOF PLAN
93 PLEASANT STREET
BOA October 12, 2021







HDC ELEVATION - SIDE 1/16" = 1'-0"

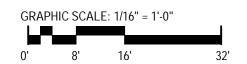
EXTERIOR LIGHTING LEGEND

EL1 EXTERIOR LIGHTING - WALL SCONCE

EL2 EXTERIOR LIGHTING - HANGING LIGHT

EL3 EXTERIOR LIGHTING - SOFFIT COVE LIGHT

EL4 EXTERIOR LIGHTING - EMERGENCY LIGHT



P1.11 ELEVATION - SIDE

93 PLEASANT STREET BOA October 12, 2021





1 HDC ELEVATION - REAR
1/16" = 1'-0"

EXTERIOR LIGHTING LEGEND EL1 EXTERIOR LIGHTING - WALL SCONCE EL2 EXTERIOR LIGHTING - HANGING LIGHT EL3 EXTERIOR LIGHTING - SOFFIT COVE LIGHT EL4 EXTERIOR LIGHTING - EMERGENCY LIGHT



93 PLEASANT STREET BOA October 12, 2021

P1.12







Portsmouth HDC Design Review Regulation

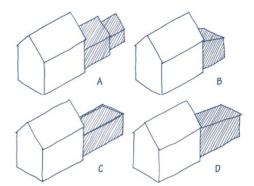
ADDITIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

Historically, the need for increased space was often addressed by constructing additions to existing buildings. Additions to existing historic buildings can provide increased space while maintaining the historic character of the original building and streetscape.

Consistent with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, an addition to a historic building should be subordinate to the historic building and read as an addition. The subordinate appearance of an addition can be achieved through its placement, form, size, massing, materials and details. Traditional or contemporary design and additions to existing properties should not obscure, damage or destroy significant architectural material, and should be compatible with the design of the property and the neighborhood. Whenever possible, additions should be constructed in a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic building would be unimpaired.

It is Generally Appropriate to:

- Locate additions at rear or side elevations that are subordinate to the historic building and consistent or compatible with the design of the property and surrounding neighborhood wherever possible
- Construct additions so that the historic building fabric is not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed
- Review Guidelines to better understand the historic context and appropriate design and materials



Example A: The two gable roof additions with decreasing roof heights and widths represent an appropriate composition with regard to form, mass and proportions to the original gable roof building. Additions with decreasing geometry similar to these are typical of historic construction.

Example B: The small shed roof addition is appropriate in some locations.

Examples C and D: The flat roofed addition and long shed roof addition are inappropriate for the original gable roof building. The length of the single mass competes visually with the original building.

Setback



The addition to the left has lower floor-to-floor heights and smaller and more closely spaced windows than the historic house. The addition at the center has a scale, proportion, overall form and window pattern similar to the existing building. The addition to the right is significantly larger than the existing building and is visually overwhelming and inappropriate.