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**Date:** 1/21/2016 6:17 PM  
**Subject:** Quick Public Input - For Meeting - 65 Munjoy St

Hi all --

We submit these several comments in lieu of more detailed comments we would share if we were able to make tonight's meeting. We therefore may follow these up with more detailed comments concerning your proposed design in the coming week, or sooner, if you tell us that "sooner" is necessary in order for our additional comments to be reflected in the record, and to be helpful for public review and any possible public decision making.

Before turning to our comments, we ask that you please disregard a prior e-mail that appeared to include some comments from us, sent by accident, earlier this afternoon, as per my earlier note. It contained some notes I dictated into my phone the other day, but had not yet reviewed myself, or reviewed with my wife, or finalized in any way, so pls pay no attention to them, and please make sure they are not part of the public record. Thank you!

Our "quick" comments for tonight are as follows:

1. **\*Public Process Concerns.\*** We have many concerns about the "public" process re this project thus far, and esp. the lack of public process in the past nine or so months. The comments we have provided to (the city and) the developer over the last 9 months about the basic design direction of this project have not resulted in the opportunity for a robust dialogue about it, or about design alternatives to it that would be more in keeping with the recommendations of the Adams School Reuse Committee, and the RFP, good design guidelines for urban infill affordable housing, etc., so we hope that there is still an opportunity for real dialogue about your proposed design, & a real opportunity to consider alternative design directions, before you commit to a design. We are concerned, however, because it seems as though you have somehow over the last few months very much solidified your design direction and your detailed designs, without reaching back out to us to engage us as you said you would, and you are now about to go before the planning board to get your "green light" on your design, without any real back-and-forth with us or other members of the public about your design concept, so it's not clear the extent to which tonight's meeting represents an opportunity for real public input and a real consideration of options. In other words, we are hoping that this isn't just a formality to give your project the rubber stamp that it seems like you're looking for at this point, given that you have already submitted to the planning board.
2. **\*Our Maine Voices Op Ed.\*** I would like to ask that you incorporate our Maine Voices column that was in yesterday's **\*Portland Press Herald\*** into the meeting and public record, as we would have referenced the concerns in that column at the meeting tonight if we were there to speak for ourselves. The column was entitled: "Portland needs more affordable housing, but appearance matters, too: A project proposed on Munjoy Hill should be redesigned because it fails to blend in with the neighborhood." [www.pressherald.com/2016/01/20/maine-voices-portland-needs-more-affordable-housing-but-appearance-matters-too](http://www.pressherald.com/2016/01/20/maine-voices-portland-needs-more-affordable-housing-but-appearance-matters-too) <<http://www.pressherald.com/2016/01/20/maine-voices-portland-needs-more-affordable-housing-but-appearance-matters-too>>\*
3. **\*Maine Voices Photo.** \*The on-line version of our Maine Voices column also includes a photo with caption that should be part of the public record.
4. **\*Additional Photos of Projects that Provide Design Inspiration Consistent with Standards of Good Design for Urban Infill Affordable Housing.\*** We would like to submit two photos for the public record, of multi-family affordable housing developments that provide better design

direction for this project than your mock-up; we will send them in another e-mail.

5. \*Design Unresponsive to Prior Community Guidance. \*We do not believe your design is consistent with the recommendations of the years-long initiative and community input process of the City of Portland Adams School Reuse Committee, the City RFP for this project, and other guidance documents that would suggest that the design should be more traditionally inspired, better articulated, etc., consistent with the relatively traditional or traditionally-inspired neighborhood surrounding 65 Munjoy St.

6. \*Design Inconsistent with Good Design Standards for Urban Infill Affordable Housing. \*Your design is not responsive to or consistent with good practice in urban infill affordable housing design as we discussed in our Maine Voices column. Pls refer to the column for more specifics.

7. \*A Design "Fail:" Your Proposed Building Sits Too Low to Ground, Some First Floor Windows Too Small.\* You appear to have done your design to first and foremost accommodate cars in the house. The unfortunate result of letting the "tail" of cars and parking wag the "dog" of designing for occupants is that the building sits very low to the ground for an urban neighborhood, as can be seen by reference to other buildings in the neighborhood. In fact, it sits at sidewalk level, rather than above sidewalk level like other buildings in the neighborhood, which is apparently now creating concerns by your design team about privacy issues for 1st floor occupants. As a result, you seem to be shrinking window size for the first floor units, which will be cutting down on daylight for those folks, and making the fenestration seem very weird and stand out for those viewing the building from the outside, while passing by on Munjoy St., etc. We believe this building sits too low to the ground, and with windows being shrunk to create a sense of privacy, represents an architectural design "fail." There must be another way to design this building that works better for the occupants and the neighborhood.

We will try to forward those couple photos, for the record, in a few minutes, or certainly this evening.

That's it for this quick round of public input. We would like the opportunity to submit more detailed feedback in the coming several days, in part because Margaret may want to supplement these comments. \*\* Pls let us know the best mechanism for providing those comments, and when those comments should be submitted in order to be considered during any public decision making process. \*\*

I should add that we know of other stakeholders in this project who are unable to make tonight's meeting, and share our concerns, and urge you to give them an opportunity to submit comments for the public record as well.

By the way, you are free to share these comments, our Op Ed, and our photos with others at the meeting tonight.

Thanks so much.

Matt and Margaret

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Matt Thayer and Margaret Hazlett  
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