

From: abigail lloyd <abigail.c.lloyd@gmail.com>
To: <hcd@portlandmaine.gov>
Date: 2/4/2016 10:51 AM
Subject: issues with the 65 Munjoy proposal

Dear Nell Donaldson,

Please include my comments for review of the proposal at 65 Munjoy St.

As a home-owner of 66 Munjoy Street, I was glad to hear that Portland is taking an opportunity to create more affordable below-market-rate housing on the Hill. I think it is incredibly important for cities to take initiative in developing an economically diverse urban community. However, when I saw the plans for the building, I was disappointed and concerned. The proposed design does not fulfil the requirements of the RFP. The building does not fit in with the dominant architecture of Munjoy Hill. There is nothing interesting or dynamic about the minimalism of the design: it has obviously been designed to keep costs down at the expense of everything else. Considering that this project is supposed to blend in with the neighborhood, it is clear this design is a failure. It is not only aesthetics at stake; by building affordable housing that sticks out like a sore thumb, we are "othering" the folks who will buy these homes. This is classist and problematic. It seems obvious after even a quick survey of the proposal images that a large rectangular block of a building does not match its neighboring homes.

I think it is vital to include families with varied economic situations in (ideally) every community; it is problematic to house people in buildings that stick out: buildings that underline economic disparity. Even a cursory glance at the politics surrounding the construction of public housing in other urban areas will show the impact of cutting costs and building poorly designed unattractive buildings. I love Munjoy Hill as a home-owner, I have friends who love Munjoy Hill as tenants. We have an opportunity to challenge developers to make attractive units that folks will be proud to own-- apartments that flow with Munjoy Hill's dynamic and pervasive aesthetic. I strongly recommend that we take this opportunity to maintain Munjoy Hill's charm and inclusive aesthetic. I dont want to live across the street from neighbors whose homes were constructed at cut-costs and without a sense of inclusivity. I want our new neighbors to move in and feel like they belong in this neighborhood.

Please understand there is nothing novel about my opinion: it is widely shared among neighbors on the Hill and people in virtually every urban area. Haven't you had the experience of walking down the street in a city and noticing a big basic rectangular building that obviously sticks out and looks cheap? When I see buildings like this I generally assume someone's greed has won out over people's needs and neighborhood cohesiveness. The people who are going to be moving to Munjoy Street deserve better than to have everyone who walks by wonder why the city would build something like that.

Thank you for your time and please contact me if you have further questions.

Best,

Abigail Lloyd
owner, 66 Munjoy street

please read:

article about affordable housing pitfalls and disparity
<<http://www.alternet.org/civil-liberties/poor-doors-are-only-tip-affordable-housing-iceberg>>