Reviewed for Code Compliance
Inspections Division
Approved with Conditions
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History of 98 Washington Avenue

Bird's Eye View of the City of Portland, 1876

98 Washington Avenue looks much the same today as it did in 1876 and is a fine example of a 19th century brick building constructed to serve a mixed commercial/residential use. Along with several other early brick buildings nearby it is an architectural highlight of the Washington Avenue arterial, a major entry point into the city.

The earliest discussions of the property we have found are in the City Directory of the 1880's . The directory reveals both the uses and the occupants of the building. There are of course periods during which the building was unoccupied both long in the past as well as more recently, as would be expected in a building that has stood for over 130 years. But from at least 1883 when Michale J Mulhern operated a grocery on the first floor while also making the building his home, the property has been occupied as a residence. Louis Isseson followed in Mr. Mulhern's steps, operating a variety store and living above it, the residential section of the building then identified as 1 Madison Street. Many different families and individuals lived in the building throughout the 1900's. The 1924 Tax Record identifies the building as "dwellings and store" which housed 3 families. In the 1980's the property appears to have been exclusively residential with familiar Munjoy Hill name Joseph DiBiase living in the building until 1985. In the late 80's L Therioult and others lived there and for two years beginning in 1990 the property was inhabited by Dennis Sancomb. The building was converted to law offices in the early/mid 90's. Mr. Maselli was the next to live in the building after Mr. Sancomb left. His work brought him to Portland part time and he practiced law in his office during the day and moved to his 3rd floor/4th floor sleeping and living quarters at night. The building was not permitted for residential use during the time Mr. Maselli lived there.

Our plan is to renovate the 3rd and 4th floor two-story apartment occupied by Mr. Maselli, making changes to its design and layout to improve habitability and comply with fire safety and building codes. As described in our Level I Minor Residential Development Review Application we intend to develop two additional residential units: a small efficiency and a full-floor flat. The first floor will have a commercial tenant TBD, most likely retail or small non-cooking take-out.