
revised submittals for 30 Merrill Street

Katy Harkleroad <katyharkleroad@yahoo.com>

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Reply-To: Katy Harkleroad <katyharkleroad@yahoo.com>

To: Helen Donaldson <hcd@portlandmaine.gov>

Cc: "donhead66@gmail.com" <donhead66@gmail.com>, "czand@meca.edu" <czand@meca.edu>, "elizabethspenceradams@gmail.com" <elizabethspenceradams@gmail.com>, "petersaylesadams@gmail.com" <petersaylesadams@gmail.com>, "sharonmcgauley@gmail.com" <sharonmcgauley@gmail.com>, "eastendpropertymgmt@gmail.com" <eastendpropertymgmt@gmail.com>, Bruce Davis <bruce.davis21@yahoo.com>

Hi Helen,

My name is Katy Harkleroad. I would also like to submit a letter to the planning board regarding the proposed project at 30 Merrill Street. Like my neighbor, Bruce Davis, I am also copying this email to those who included their email addresses on the community meeting sign-in. Please let me know if I should send my letter to someone/anyone else. I would appreciate being notified of any further public meetings.

Best,
Katy Harkleroad
47 Howard Street

Katy and Ryan Harkleroad
47 Howard Street, Portland, ME 04101

September 20, 2016

To whom it may concern,

My name is Katy Harkleroad. My husband, Ryan, and I own our home on 47 Howard Street. On August 15 we attended the public meeting held for the project at 30 Merrill Street. It was a rather disappointing meeting, where many of us who were concerned with the project's proposed exterior were cut short from voicing all of our concerns. Since that meeting I've been wanting to write and express to the Portland City Planning Board some of those concerns. I wasn't sure whom to write until I received the CC'ed email from Bruce Davis at 45 Quebec Street. As it turns out, Bruce succinctly and accurately summed up all of my husband's and my concerns. I do not want to completely repeat what Bruce said, but I DO want the planning board to know that there are more neighbors who are equally concerned about the 30 Merrill Street building project.

Our concerns are as follows:

1. We want the exterior of the condos at 30 Merrill fits in with the "charm" of the rest of the Munjoy Hill neighborhood. (And for the record, when I say "fit in," I mean *to blend in, to conform to, or to be in harmony with*. When pressed for his definition of "fit in," project developer, Michael Boissoneau, didn't use any of those words, but rather thought that "fitting in" meant to enhance a place. Enhancement is great but it's not a substitute for harmonizing.) My husband and I completely agree with Bruce Davis that for the 30 Merrill Street project to fit in, the exterior cladding of the condos needs to have traditional elements, be that color, material, and/or design.
2. We want current and future developers/builders be required to have building designs that stay within a traditional aesthetic context, in order to maintain the charm that attracts so many people to the neighborhood. At the public meeting, architect Evan Carroll argued that we always need to be moving forward with our thinking and design. While I don't disagree with him, I don't believe that to move forward means that we must forget the past. I also think that creating aesthetic harmony in a neighborhood *is* forward-thinking, even if it means the structures being built aren't the most modern designs possible.
3. We want the neighborhood residents' voices to be heard by the city planning board. It currently seems that, while residents are informed of impending building projects, there is not much they (we) can do accomplish any changes, should those projects have significant negative outcomes for the neighborhood. (And, in case we weren't clear, we believe that the current design for the condos at 30 Merrill St. will negatively impact the neighborhood by changing the block's aesthetic charm.)
4. We are worried that the 30 Merrill Street project as currently proposed will set a precedent of allowing development with no contextual relation to the neighborhood. The Cumberland Avenue, North Street, Quebec Street, and Howard Street blocks of Munjoy

Hill are poised for a significant amount of redevelopment in the near future. We know of several existing multi-unit rentals currently for sale in this area, as well as several that have been recently sold. Not having seen proposals for all of these properties, we can only guess that multi-unit condos will be the plan for nearly all of these properties. Never mind that this sort of development will be removing 10-20+ affordable rental units and replacing them with condos (that's the subject of another important conversation). The issue at hand is that the approval of projects such as 30 Merrill Street will set a precedent for how properties are developed on Munjoy Hill:

- Buildings with little to no contextualism;
- Development designs meant to maximum space for minimum costs and without regards to aesthetics;
- Lack of meaningful dialogue between developers and community members.

We are writing this letter because we care a great deal about the Munjoy Hill neighborhood. We want to see it progress, but without losing sight of its roots. The neighborhood appears to be rapidly approaching a tipping point as to the type of neighborhood it will become for the foreseeable future. In our opinion, it would be tragic for it to lose its classic charm for the sake of insensitive development.

Please continue to include us as part of the ongoing permitting process involving the 30 Merrill Street project.

Sincerely,
Katy and Ryan Harkleroad

[Quoted text hidden]