

Design Standards Assessment

Overall Context

The building size and scale is comparable to the neighboring multifamily buildings on Cumberland and Merrill. The building offers loft units in the traditional double-wide style found throughout Portland and Munjoy Hill. Like other buildings in the area this building faces the street with a front door located adjacent to the sidewalk. The door is highlighted with an awning to further enhance the feeling of an entry. Although the current rhythm of the block is slightly broken; the scale, form and relationship to the street of the proposed building helps strengthen the rhythm of the block to be more comparable to the area.

Massing

The proposed building has a massing much like the double-wide triple decker buildings that exist throughout the neighborhood. At the top of the third story a prominent cornice, used in combination with the railing elements, emphasizes the 3-story mass, while de-emphasizing the 4th floor addition. The flat roof of the building is common and contextual for this building type. As is traditional for this building type, there is no garage door facing the street, and the parking is found behind the building. The massing of the front façade is articulated by balconies and a covered porch. The balconies are stacked and articulated to pay homage to the traditional bay window.

Orientation to the Street

The front of the building opens to the street via a single door sheltered by an awning. The front of the building is further enhanced by the use of planters with intentional landscaping and a porch area. Not only does this help create the feeling of the front entry but it also helps create a transition space between the street and front door. The windows on the street façade are arranged in a symmetrical and rhythmic pattern. The first floor occupants will have visual privacy since the windows are greater than 48" from the adjoining sidewalk. Off-street parking is concealed behind the building.

Proportion and Scale

Windows and doors are sized, scaled and arranged to have a strong and intentional relationship to the overall building massing. Fenestration on the front façade is over 35%, providing the appropriate welcome to the public street. The canopy over the front door is of a width that has a solid presence on the front façade.

Balance

The building employs several techniques to achieve balance. The windows and doors head heights all align along a common horizontal datum line. All windows on every façade stack in vertical alignment. The window and doors are symmetrically arranged from one side of the building to the other.

Articulation

The articulation of details for the 30 Merrill Street seeks to utilize contemporary design within the contextual massing and proportion framework. A visual cohesion of materials is achieved by using concrete at the foundation of the building with the siding material on top. To pay homage to the bay windows found in the Munjoy Hill area, in a contemporary style, the front façade has a railing feature attached to the front of the building. Not only do the proportions and rhythm of this feature match bay windows, but it also functions as the railing for the “Juliet Balconies” found in each unit.

Materials

Like other buildings in the area our pallet of materials is limited to only a few. Concrete is being used where appropriate such as foundations and planters. This not only helps articulate the building but gives a sense of permanence. The siding of the building will be standing metal seam run horizontally. The horizontal feeling of the standing seam is a modern and durable way to honor the clapboard siding found in the area.

Additional Discussion of Front Door:

Due to grading of the site the front door of 30 Merrill Street opens into the lower level of the building in a similar manner as 15 Cumberland Avenue, 26 Lafayette Street and 30 Lafayette Street. While this entrance is to a space that is more utilitarian space than formal, it will function well as “breezeway” entrance to all of the residents. The residents will all have personal spaces for stowing bikes, kayaks, boots, umbrellas, strollers and other outdoor gear. This entrance is treated on the exterior as the formal entrance to be in keeping with the neighborhood.