

# WAYNE VALZANIA

27 Merrill Street  
Portland, Maine 04101  
207.274.4918

Planning Board  
Planning and Urban Development Department  
City of Portland  
389 Congress St  
Portland, ME 04101

October 6, 2016

Re: 30 Merrill Street

Members of the Planning Board,

I am writing to express concern with the proposed development of 30 Merrill Street and the impact that it will have on our neighborhood. Further, I am concerned with the overall disregard of the East End of Portland, particularly Munjoy Hill, as an area worthy of some level of forethought and preservation.

The 30 Merrill project is just the latest in a series of buildings, proposed and built, with no sense of the local flavor that makes "The Hill" an important part of Portland, both historically and in the present. Thankfully, there is an atmosphere here that is the result of homeowners who care about the neighborhood, who interact with one another, and who enhance and maintain their properties for the betterment of everyone living nearby. In short, this is a vibrant community of neighbors. My wife and I are embarking on the restoration of a period home directly across the street from the proposed industrial looking complex at 30 Merrill. I am disturbed to imagine that what we will see as we walk down the steps from our front door (past what we envision as a lovingly landscaped front yard) is the back, storage room door of a gargantuan monolith (with a few horizontal and vertical slashes oddly justified as *design* features.)

To qualify my opinion, I am a master craftsman, a millwright, a restoration advocate and practitioner, and minimally, a resident with an aesthetic sense, aware of what proliferation of big-box residential development does to a neighborhood. As a builder, I also know that what is rendered on paper, is the best a proposed building will ever look, and that the reality, after ten years of aging, will be far less than the pristine drawing with well heeled people on the sidewalks, with trees that don't exist, next door to houses that have nothing in common with the proposed "high rise" developer's dream.

To be clear, I understand and agree with the need for higher density housing, and realize that the future will see a change in the neighborhood. But that change must be for the better not the worse.

This is an important time for Portland. The Hill, in particular, has been discovered and it is desirable. Because it isn't an area of distinguished architecture, mansions, and stately brick homes makes it no less worthy of memory and preservation with respect for the history and feel of the neighborhood.

I implore the Board to honor their responsibility to preserve the integrity of all of Portland's neighborhoods, whether its homes were built by wealthy merchants or humble fisher folk.

Growth requires forethought and direction. Please consider the future of the city as well as those of us who chose Munjoy Hill for a reason, and are working to make it a better place to live.

Thank you for considering my opinion,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Valzania". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

**Wayne Valzania** MS CPM  
Red Hook Design LLC  
Brooklyn, NY - Portland, ME  
860.248.5670 - 207.274.4918  
[RedHookDesignAlliance.com](http://RedHookDesignAlliance.com)