

Planning and Urban Development Department

Planning Division



Subject: R-6 Small Infill Design Review – 31 Fore Street

Written by: Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer

Date of Review: Friday, March 11, 2016

A design review according to the *City of Portland Design Manual* Standards was performed for the proposed new construction of a multi-family dwelling at 31 Fore Street. The review was performed by Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer, Jean Fraser, Planner, and Shukria Wiar, Planner, all within the Planning Division of the Department of Planning & Urban Development. The project was reviewed against the *R-6 Small Infill Development Design Principles & Standards* (Appendix 7 of the Design Manual).

Design Review Criteria:

The project was reviewed with the Alternative Design Review which has the following criteria:

- A. Proposed design is consistent with all of the Principle Statements
- B. The majority of the Standards within each Principle are met
- C. The guiding principle for new construction under the alternative design review is to be compatible with the surrounding buildings in a two-block radius in terms of size, scale, materials, and siting, as well as the general character of the established neighborhood, thus Standards A-1 through A-3 shall be met.
- D. The design plan is prepared by an architect registered in the State of Maine.

Design Review Comments (*red text denotes principles or standards that are not met*):

Principle A Overall Context –Met – see below.

- *A-1 Scale and Form:* The scale the project is larger than most buildings on this small street, but the height is three stories and does not overshadow the neighboring 2.5 or 3 story residential buildings. The form is defined by rectilinear masses in keeping with typical multifamily buildings in the neighborhood, the roof line is flat with expressed cornice lines. On Waterville Street, the building length is mitigated by breaking it into two masses.
- *A-2 Composition of Principal Facades:* The building overall takes its cues from the surrounding forms, materials, and façade composition but combines them in a contemporary way. The composition of the Fore Street façade is generally well balanced and provides much visual interest. As noted above, the overall composition of the facades meets the standard in terms of rhythm, size, orientation, and proportion of window and door openings except for the garage level which is lacking articulation.
- *A-3 Relationship to the Street:* The building placement is consistent with the spacing of the residential fabric on Fore and Waterville Streets. The ground floor is raised

consistent with residential development patterns. The street wall is maintained except right at the corner where the building is slightly setback but this pattern is consistent with the previous residential building on-site.

Principle B Massing – Met – The roof lines and building forms are a contemporary version of the traditional building character of the neighborhood; all other aspects of the building reflect the principle and the majority of the Standards are met by the proposed design.

- *B-1 Massing:* The proposed mass is wider on the street than the typical building context but the composition of the façade, the front yard setback, and the L-shaped massing mitigate the scale at the corner. The building placement and massing is similar to the existing residential building on-site.
- *B-2 Roof Forms:* The proposed roof form is flat – most multi-family buildings in the context have a flat roof with an overhang.
- *B-3 Main Roofs and Subsidiary Roofs:* There is a clear main roof form.
- *B-4 Roof Pitch:* The roof is flat which is found in the context.
- *B-5 Façade Articulation:* The project employs a canopy at the entry (but not at the façade) and balconies.
- *B-6 Garages:* The garage door is on the side façade, standard does not apply.

Principle C Orientation to the Street – Met– The project appropriately reflects the private/public relationship of residential buildings in this neighborhood except for the position and visibility of the main entrance.

- **C-1 Entrances:** It is not clear which of the two entries is considered the main entry – indicate which entry will be the main entry and then make that entry comply with the standards. *Emphasize and orient the main entrance to the street. The main entrance of the structure shall either face the street . . . or be located on the side and be accessed by a covered porch that extends to the front of the building, at the primary street frontage.*
- *C-2 Visual Privacy:* Not applicable
- *C-3 Transition Spaces:* The project uses a side entry, canopy, and a vestibule for transition space.

Principle D Proportion and Scale – Met – The proportion and scale of the building overall are harmonious and human-scaled.

- *D-1 Windows:* The majority of windows are rectangular with a vertical proportion.
- *D-2 Fenestration:* The project appears to meet the 12% fenestration requirement and appropriately scaled to the massing of the building.
- **D-3 Porches:** The balconies appear to meet the standard (though dimensions are not provided in the drawing). *If the side entry is to be considered the main entry, then the porch must be designed to meet the standard C-1 above as well as the dimensional standards of D-3 (minimum area of 48 square feet, at least 6 feet deep).*

Principle E Balance – Met – The building façade composition creates a sense of balance with good use of overall and local symmetry and articulation of façade materials.

- *E-1 Window and Door Height:* The majority of window and door head heights align along a common horizontal datum.
- *E-2 Window and Door Alignment:* The majority of windows shall stack so that centerlines of windows are in vertical alignment.

- *E-3 Symmetricality:* Primary window compositions are arranged symmetrically around discernable vertical axes.

Principle F Articulation – Met – Based on the information given, the project employs visually interesting and well composed facades. Improvement could be made at the garage level.

- *F-1 Articulation:* The trim and window details and cornices create shadow lines. The shingle material and panel seams will also provide texture and visual interest. Balconies facing the streets also provide articulation with changes in plane and railing details. Windows were added to the garage level.
- *F-2 Window Types:* Two window types are used, are of the same “family,” and have consistent detailing.
- *F-3 Visual Cohesion:* The visual cohesion of the façade is good.
- *F-4 Delineation between Floors:* The windows, balconies, and material changes delineate the floors.
- ***F-5 Porches, etc.:*** There is no issue with obscuring architectural features – **if the side entry is the main entry then the entry needs to become more of an architectural feature, especially to make it visible from the street.**
- ***F-6 Main Entries:*** **The main entry is not adequately emphasized. A side entry requires indication at the street – improve the visibility of this main entrance with elements such as an extended canopy or porch toward the sidewalk. If the Waterville Street entry is to be considered the main entry, then additional emphasis should be created whether with a canopy, lighting, building signage or other method.**
- *F-7 Articulation Elements:* The rake of the roof meets the 6” requirement; trim is provided at the windows; the panels and corner trim boards add texture to the façade; balconies provide planer offsets; the cornice is pronounced.

Principle G Materials – Met – The material choices reference traditional building materials.

- *G-1 Materials:* The residential context is predominantly clapboards with occasional shingle or brick. The main mass uses shingle and composite trim in reference to this context. Masonry is used at the base of the building.
- *G-2 Material and Façade Design:* The materials for the upper residential floors are appropriately placed. The basement level uses a masonry material, appropriate for the base of the building.
- *G-3 Chimneys:* Not applicable.
- *G-4 Window Types:* Two window types are used.
- *G-5 Patios and Plazas:* Not applicable.