6. Description of Project

Site:

The proposed project consists of the development of a six (6) story building that fronts Thames Street between the Gorham Savings Bank building (Grand Trunk Railroad office building) and the AC Hotel (under construction).

Proposed site improvements include a new brick sidewalk along Thames Street, brick pedestrian walkways (on three sides of the building), landscape beds, street trees, site lighting, and benches.

The project can be accessed from Fore or Thames Streets. From Fore Street, a 20' shared driveway (being built as part of the AC Hotel project) terminates at a one-way cul-de-sac. The outermost portion of the cul-de-sac provides short term valet/drop-off/pick-up zone, the middle portion is a one-way travel lane, and the inner most zone is a raised island and cobblestone buffer. This area has been designed for passenger and small delivery type vehicles. The driveway will provide access to the buildings parking area, residential entry/exit and lobby. The cul-de-sac area will be lit with light bollards to match the AC Hotel. From Thames Street, a new sidewalk or pedestrian walkway will provide access to the retail space(s) and residential access points.

It is proposed that both long-term retail and permanent residential parking will occur across Fore Street at the Ocean Gateway Parking Garage. The applicant has secured sufficient parking spaces subject to long term leases. There is ample parking for the project available in the garage.

Landscaping:

Thames Street will be planted with upright street trees located in granite sidewalk planters. The south side of the building will be punctuated with landscape beds that soften the abundance of hard edges and angles. A combination of plants have been selected to provide flowering from spring through late summer, provide great fall color, and provide winter interest from evergreen foliage and strong forms. The north side of the building will be a linear plaza with new benches that work in conjunction with the bike racks and trees that are part of the AC Hotel project.

Utilities:

The majority of the utility connections for the mixed use building will be made in Thames Street. With the residential use on the upper floors and retail use on the first level, it is estimated that water consumption could be on the order of 5,200 gallons per day. Water service connection will be made to the existing 8-inch fire line off of the 10-inch water main in Thames Street and separated at the property line for domestic and fire use. Water will enter the building at the mechanical room on the first floor. Sanitary discharge from the building will be into the 12-inch sanitary line in Thames Street. Natural gas is available in Thames Street as well and will enter the building on the side opposite electric and water to meet separation requirements.

Three phase electric power is not available in Thames Street but is available in India Street. This project proposes to make a primary connection to the electric available in India Street, run it below grade along the property line with the Portland Water District terminating at a pad-mounted transformer on the interior of the property. The secondary electric, will enter the building at the electrical room on the first floor. It is anticipated that the transformer will be sized for additional residential uses within the other planned buildings.

Stormwater:

The existing site has been vacant for some time, but exists as a gravel site with several concrete pads at or close to the surface. The site was most recently used as a staging area for construction projects in the area completed within the last ten years. The site is relatively flat with general grade sloping from south to north. Surface stormwater currently sheds off of the property and enters into the separated storm drain system within Hancock and Thames Street. This system discharges to the ocean adjacent to the Ocean Gateway terminal building. While Chapter 500 redevelopment standards would indicate that new development of the site would not specifically require treatment of stormwater, the developer has chosen to provide permeable pavers with a filter system within the driveway and drop-off area. Storage of the stormwater would be provided below the filter system (R-Tank system is currently proposed). The treatment and storage systems are being shared with the adjacent development. The stormwater management was considered for the entirety of the block and was included and approved with the application for the AC Hotel.

Architecture:

This mixed use building for residential and retail was designed with the Form Based code and Building Design Standards criteria in mind. The sidewalk along Thames Street abuts the building façade; which is an open and inviting store front with clear glazing windows. The space may be a single tenant or two with access directly from the sidewalk into the commercial space. The building is surrounded on all sides by walkways that lead to the residential entry lobby, other buildings within the block, and to India and Fore Streets, thus yielding a vibrant pedestrian active building relating to its site and urban surroundings.

The building fronts along Thames Street with the AC Hotel being constructed to it east and the historical Grand Trunk building to its west. Both neighboring buildings were considered in the façade design. The base of the building is a classical precast base which steps up as it moves to the east. This same stepping of the base is being used on the hotel. Inside of this precast is a natural anodized aluminum storefront with clear glass - no tinting. The brick veneer above the precast is an elongated 12 inch brick in brown. This will complement the Grand trunk and still be distinctive in its architecture with a slight departure from a standard old Port blend brick. The mortar joints will be tinted to match the brick color. The 6th floor is setback 15 feet in due difference to the grand Trunk and meeting the requirements of the IS-FBC. This upper floor will be clad with a metal panel system which is also incorporated on the south west and courtyard elevations. These elevations are broken down in massing with the incorporation of a light tan color brick and the use of the metal panel. The inner courtyard side will be the pedestrian entry for the residential units and also a covered valet parking area. The building design has been presented at a workshop and public hearing with the Historic Preservation board and received its approval with conditions that are presently being incorporated into the final design.

The building is designed to meet the full intent of the Urban Transitional sub-district. It is a 6 story building with the 6th floor being added as a bonus floor allowed due to the mid-block permeability that we have provided in the siting. The bonus floor is set back 15 feet from the Thames Street side. The overall building height is 77 feet which includes the 65 feet for the first 5 floors and the 12 feet allowed for the bonus floor.