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HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE

PUBLIC HEARING
164 MIDDLE STREET

TO: Chair Benson and Members of the Historic Preservation Board

FROM: Rob Wiener, Preservation Compliance Coordinator

DATE: December 29, 2016

RE: January 4, 2017 **Public Hearing – Amendment to Approved Plans (Revised window configuration)**

Address: 164 Middle Street (corner of Middle & Market)

Applicant: NDA Middle LLC

Architect: Lita Semrau, Port City Architecture

Introduction

Board members will recall that last summer they reviewed substantial façade alterations on the Middle Street and Market street faces of 164 Middle Street. The exterior changes are in conjunction with renovations to prepare for a new retail tenant at the property. At the September 7, 2016 public hearing, following two workshops earlier in the summer, Board members unanimously approved the application with conditions. (6-0, with Mr. Turk recused.) Board members will recall that the subject structure is actually the remaining western portion of a much larger 1867 structure that was partially destroyed by fire. All that remains of the west side of the original structure is its ground floor commercial storefront facing Middle Street. Much of the building's current appearance is the product of a 1980's era renovation project which created an open arcade area along the Market Street frontage.

Renovations are under way at the property, with work proceeding on interior demolition, reconstruction of the two facades, and the construction of the new Market Street parapet. At this time the owners and architects are proposing an amendment to the Market Street elevations: the large, main floor windows, which on the approved plans were to be divided into four equal rectangles, are proposed to have the horizontal mullions lowered.

Enclosed are the architect's earlier (9/7/16) and revised Market Street elevations. Staff has added two pages of renderings that were provided at the 9/7/16 public hearing to provide views in which both front and side elevations can be seen at once.

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nendment

'or the amendment reads:

to stair location, the client would like to relocate the horizontal mullion from what was previously shown (see dwg.) Signage including the banner will be discussed at a later meeting."

The new proposed location for the horizontal mullion appears to be between one-quarter and one third of the total window height from the bottom of the window. (See supplied drawing.)

Staff Comments

Staff notes that the Market Street elevation is being almost completely reconfigured in the current renovations. The arcade created along that front in 1979 bore little relationship to the historic Middle Street façade and was not considered historically significant. As is visible in the September 7 renderings, last summer the window divisions on Market Street were proposed to mimic the Middle Street windows, lending a bit of coherence to the two faces that had not been present previously.

Relocating the horizontal mullions on Market Street alters this resemblance to the front façade; staff believes the most important question for the Board is whether having similar window divisions on the two faces has enough value to question this proposed amendment. Is the revised Market Street elevation, which staff believes feels more contemporary and more vertical in the orientation of its windows a differentiation with which the Board is comfortable?

Applicable Standards for Review

(1) Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for the property which requires minimal alteration to the character-defining features of the structure, object or site and its environment or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.

(4) Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a structure, object or site and its environment. Changes that have acquired significance in their own right, shall not be destroyed.

(6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced wherever feasible. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the feature being replaced in composition, design, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Repair or replacement of missing historic features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other structures or objects.

(10) Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures and objects shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.

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Consideration

of plans and specifications submitted by the applicant for the January 4, 2017
g and information included in the accompanying staff report, the Board finds that
amendment to the approved plans for the renovation of 164 Middle Street **meets (fails to meet)** the historic preservation ordinance review standards for review of new construction (subject to the following conditions.....)

Attachments:

1. Architect's approved Market Street elevations
2. Architect's proposed amended Market Street elevations
3. Architect's renderings presented at the September 7, 2016 public hearing