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- SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN
- ROADWAY DESIGN
- ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
- PERMITTING
- AIRPORT ENGINEERING
- CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION
- LANDSCAPE PLANNING

November 2, 2012

Ms. Shukria Wiar, Planner
Planning and Urban Development Department
City of Portland, Maine
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101-3509

**Subject: Hotel Conversion – Former Gannett Building
119 Exchange Street
Preliminary Site Plan Application
Applicant: 119 Development LLC**

Dear Shukria:

On behalf of 119 Development LLC, we are pleased to provide the following supplemental information related to the proposed hotel redevelopment of the former Gannett Building at 119 Exchange Street (former primary address was 390 Congress Street). Specifically, we have reviewed the Planning Board Memorandum dated October 25, 2012 and offer various responses to comments and information contained in the memorandum.

WAIVERS

The memo outlines several waiver requests for which we offer these clarifications. We concur that a waiver request is sought to not provide a bus shelter or pull-out bay. There are METRO stops along Congress Street including one immediately in front of the building which has the entire Congress Street façade canopy providing shelter from the weather. therefore, a shelter seems to already be in place, and is not warranted.

Regarding the bicycle parking requirements, the applicant is amenable to providing additional bicycle racks along the site's adjacent sidewalks. We propose to install the racks along Federal Street and Market Street in order to provide a total of ten bicycle spaces. We are interested in discussing options for the type of racks to be installed, as there may be alternative styles that may blend more pleasingly with the hotel motif, etc. A waiver request will not be required.

We suggest that two motorcycle/scooter spaces be provided within the reverse angle parking spaces on Market Street. These are identified on the accompanying color plan. Accordingly a waiver request is not required.

The applicant also concurs with the request of a waiver for landscaped islands in the parking lot being proposed for off-site parking at 385 Congress Street.

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EXISTING CONDITIONS

We would like to note that the existing tunnel that connects the former Press Herald Buildings on each side of Congress Street is not part of the Hotel proposal at this time. The applicant does not intend to own or maintain the tunnel, nor will any license or easement for its use be pursued. The applicant does retain the rights to enter into agreement on the use of the tunnel in the future; however, this is subject to possible changes in land use at the 385 Congress Street location.

With respect to the existing license agreements with the City of Portland, we have requested copies of this document from both the surveyor and the City's archivist. We will forward the license agreement to the Planning Department upon receipt.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The primary exterior site improvements proposed for the project include the sidewalk extension along Exchange Street. This sidewalk extension is required for the following reasons:

- 1) To accommodate ADA grade levels to meet the historic building existing granite entry threshold. The Exchange Street entrance is the primary Hotel entrance and requires ADA accessibility. Currently this entry is not ADA accessible. In order to provide an adequate approach surface to the entrance the sidewalk will need to be raised slightly, thus the extension into the street will allow for proper grading and cross slope to the sidewalk without significant impact to the curb and gutter line of the street (See Fig. 1);



Figure 1 – Existing Exchange Street Entrance

- 2) To enhance the sense of arrival since the very small existing canopy does little to identify the arrival point or entry to this sizable building. The applicant is proposing a change in surface treatment to provide a distinguishing visual effect. The expectation is that the surface will transition smoothly from the reconstructed brick (meeting City Standard) to the entrance. This entrance surface may consist of a stone or similar architectural brick treatment similar to others found in the City.

Subsequent to the preliminary plan submission, the Development Team has also considered the implementation of a sidewalk extension along the Federal Street frontage. Currently the sidewalk width is approximately 11 feet with three parallel parking spaces between Market Street and Exchange Street. The proposal is to expand the Federal Street sidewalk to 19 feet, while eliminating the three parallel spaces. The purpose of the sidewalk extension is to provide improved pedestrian safety, space for the bicycle rack(s) and the ability to provide street trees along the Federal Street frontage. We note that the existing Federal Street sidewalk overlies basement space associated with the building.

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The proposed extension allows for the tree installation outside of the basement area. Overall the extension seems to work well with allowing increased pedestrian space along with improving the visual appearance of this end of the building. Pedestrians approaching from the Old Port will see an improved appearance from the site's current condition. This sidewalk extension approach is not unique as similar sidewalk conditions exist further down Exchange Street (See Fig. 2).



Figure 2 – Existing Exchange Street Sidewalk

We acknowledge that the exterior changes proposed with the project require Historic Preservation Board Review and the applicant will be seeking that approval concurrently with the Site Plan review.

RIGHT, TITLE AND INTEREST

The memorandum inadvertently references that the Purchase and Sale Agreement was not submitted. We simply clarify that it was part of the submission materials.

ZONING ASSESSMENT

We are seeking to clarify the parking requirements for the project. According to Code Section 14-332.1(e), no off-street parking is required for changes of use in the B-3 Zone. Notwithstanding this provision, we have previously provided supporting information regarding the project's proposed parking supply which is fifty (50) spaces to be provided by lease agreement with the owner of the 385 Congress Street property. According to our calculations as presented in the October 2, 2012 memo to you, the parking requirements for the project are forty-two (42) spaces based on the Code provisions of Section 14-332 (subject to the provisions of 14-332.1(e) previously referenced). On this basis, the applicant's parking supply is based only on the 50 spaces to be available per the applicant's proposed parking lease agreement, an LOI of which has been previously supplied to the Planning Department. Although cited by reference in the Planning Board Memo, these 50 spaces will not be accessed via the tunnel, but by surface access on Congress Street and via the valet parking service to be offered by the Hotel. Similarly, the use of alternative parking locations is not currently part of the development proposal, thus no further agreements will be forthcoming at this time. While it is the applicant's belief that a substantial percent of the guest arriving via car will desire to utilize the hotel's provided valet parking service, it is understood that with the adjacent parking facilities located at the Temple Street garage and such locations as the Top of the Old Port parking areas, guest will have ample opportunities to self park should they wish to do so in nearby accessible public parking facilities.

LANDSCAPING

We note that the site currently contains three (3) street trees along Exchange Street as well as three (3) street trees along Market Street. The remaining sidewalk space around the buildings

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cannot support trees due to the basement space below the sidewalks as well as the canopy overhang along Congress Street. The applicant is seeking to retain the existing street trees, as is, while proposing to install four trees along Federal Street within the proposed sidewalk extension. No plantings are proposed within the Exchange Street sidewalk extension at the Hotel Entrance. The applicant is not proposing landscaping in the 385 Congress Street parking lot, which is not the applicant's lot, hence a waiver of these requirements is requested.

SIDEWALKS/LIGHTING

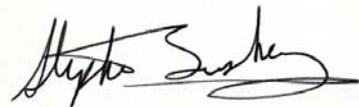
The portion of existing brick sidewalk that is over basement space will be reconstructed as part of a waterproofing effort on the concrete slab and walls. Much of the remaining brick sidewalk around the building is in reasonable condition, some areas of which have recently been reconstructed, and does not appear to warrant full reconstruction. The Applicant is amenable to review and possible reconstruction of the sidewalk ramps on Congress Street if necessary.

Currently there are two existing Colonial Style light fixtures along Exchange Street, nearer the Congress Street end of the site. Again, the basement space below has precluded the placement of lights along much of the sidewalk bordering the building. On Market Street there are larger overhead street fixtures on the opposite side of the street. The applicant will be working with a lighting consultant on the building lighting including entrance enhancements, etc. Additional information related to lighting, HVAC, signage and related building design will be forthcoming.

On behalf of the 119 Development LLC Team, we look forward to your continued assistance on the project and we look forward to the Monday workshop meeting with the Planning Board. If you have any questions regarding these materials please contact this office.

Sincerely,

DeLUCA-HOFFMAN ASSOCIATES, INC.



Stephen R. Bushey, P.E.
Senior Engineer

SRB/smk

Attachments

c: James Brady, 119 Development LLC
Kevin Bunker, Developers Collaborative
David Lloyd, Archetype