

July 20, 2016

Jean Fraser
City Planner
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland ME 04101



Architect's Memo Architectural Narrative

RE: **Station 415**
415 Cumberland Avenue
Portland ME 04101

Dear Jean and members of the Planning Board,

This letter is in response to various comments and requests that were noted in an e-mail that was sent to our office 7-15-2016 and a second email received 7-20-2016 regarding the renovation to 415 Cumberland Ave. Portland, ME. I will briefly describe the materials to be added to the building and the method of their application as well as their potential visual impact. The following additional items were also brought to our attention and I will address each item individually.



Proposed Forest Avenue View

Exterior Cladding (Forest Ave. Elevation)

The existing brick façade will be repaired and cleaned as needed as noted in the drawings. The planning department has indicated a concern regarding the new cement panel system and its relation to the existing brick portion of the façade. The panels themselves will be applied in a rain-screen fashion to ½" furring strips to allow for the required drainage/weeping behind the panels. We

\\THINKSERVER\Projects\Commercial-Retail\16110-Station_415\PB Review Items\HP ADA Narrative .doc

ALPHAarchitects

17 Chestnut Street, Suite 102, Portland ME 04101 • 207.761-9500 • Fax 207.761.9595 • mark@ALPHAarchitects.com

intend to maintain the existing reveal that separates the brick from the wood horizontal siding that is created at the corner by making sure that the new panel siding sits back (4-5 inches) from the brick wall in a similar fashion to the current offset.

New Panel Cladding Color

The new cladding color is yet to be determined. The Planning Board has recommended a color that is subdued and perhaps picks-up some of the color from the front portion of the building. We have shown a yellow/beige color in the first rendering and after review by HP and Planning staff has since been revised to show a muted grey option.

Cornice line

HP recommended that the cornice on the existing portions of the building should remain. Our first proposal removed the cornice from the back portion of the (at the cement panel area) façade. We have now included a continuous cornice that will be made out of a “built-up” system using the Hardie panel that will wrap around the rear of the building and terminate at the downspout on the alley-side elevation. (see revised elevation rendering)

Awning Over Residential Entry

There was a concern over the size and material choice of the awning over the residential entry; that is as made of a fabric and was perhaps too large. We intend to specify the awning material to be made of metal or some other rigid material instead of fabric for increased durability, and to reduce the size of it to cover only the entry doors themselves.

New Windows

The windows are miss-aligned do to the fact that the floors do not line up across the various additions to the building. The building was constructed in three phases at three different points in time. The rear portion was the latest of these expansions, and its floor levels unfortunately are not the same height as the earlier portions of the structure, leading to a slight misalignment. This is purely a function of the current conditions and is not intentional and is functionally unavoidable.

Rooftop Fencing

The rooftop fencing is setback far enough from the edge that from the position of the rendering, it would be barely visible. Further up Forest Avenue it would be more prevalent. It is shown in its approximate location from the current perspective.

ADA

The commercial portion of the project is fully accessible with a new 5 stop elevator leading from a barrier free entry on Forest Avenue to the rooftop deck. The residential portion of this project is exempt from The ADA per my conversations with Kathy Gipps, Director of the New England ADA Center regarding this issue. Since the project will not receive any federal funds and is not applying for any historic preservation tax credits it is therefore exempt from any Federal ADA barrier removal for ADA apartment accommodations.

I have also spoken with Barbara Archer Hirsch, Maine Human Rights Council. Fair Housing and the ADA apply for new construction. MHRC defines new construction to be 75% or more of the replacement cost. The building is currently valued at \$2.1M replacement cost by the owner's insurance company. The total construction costs are not-to-exceed \$1.2M which is 57% and

therefore exempt.

Summary:

The building located at 415 Cumberland Ave is to be converted to a mixed use structure with both office use and residential components (3 apartment units). The masonry exterior shall be restored, and in the rear portion of the building, updated and re-clad with a more contemporary and durable material (Hardie cement panels). The area to be resurfaced currently has a horizontal wood siding finish that has little to do with the rest of the structure's masonry construction and is very worn and weathered. Our choice of Hardie panel will update the building's image while maintaining the Cumberland Ave. façade as the older historical segment of the building.

The exterior changes to the building are minimal, as previously mentioned (along Forest Ave). On the alley-side, we intend on adding a few windows that were removed during a prior renovation to allow more natural light into the workspaces.

The other noticeable exterior improvement will be the addition of some common outdoor deck areas on the roof and a required safety rail to protect the users. The building will also have a new elevator service to all floors plus the roof, but the only place where this will be visible from the exterior is the bulkhead at the top of the elevator shaft; this roof projection is required mechanical space for the hoist beam and other necessary elevator equipment and clearances.

Exterior signage will be located on or next to the front door (Cumberland Ave) and simple street numbering at the residential entry. Exterior lighting already exists on the Cumberland side, but a shaded exterior sconce should be included at the residential entry.

I hope this clarifies some of the concerns that you raised. We have attached a revised rendering of the building that has addressed the preliminary concerns that were brought to our attention. Please let us know if there are any other issues or concerns that you may have and we will directly respond to each one in kind.

Sincerely,
ALPHAarchitects



Mark Sengelmann NCARB
Maine Licensed Architect

Encl: Rendering dated 7-15-16, 7-19-16, Current Site Photos