

# CITY OF PORTLAND, MAINE

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## PLANNING BOARD

Elizabeth Boepple, Chair  
Sean Dundon, Vice Chair  
Bill Hall  
Carol Morrissette  
Jack Soley  
Dave Eaton

March 9, 2016

101 York Street, LLC  
PO Box 207, 36 Danforth Street  
Portland, ME 04112

Opechee Construction Corporation  
11 Corporate Drive  
Belmont, NH 03220

Project Name: 101 York Street Mixed Use Development  
Project ID: 2015-139  
Address: 85-101 York Street CBLs: 40-C-3, 4, 5, 9, 18, 22, 25, 33  
Applicant: 101 York Street, LLC  
Planner: Nell Donaldson

Dear Mr. Veroneau:

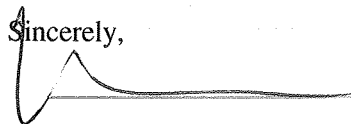
On March 8, 2016, the Planning Board reviewed final design drawings associated with your approved site plan and subdivision application for a mixed use development at 85-101 York Street. The Board voted (4-0, Morrissette and Dundon absent) as follows:

The Planning Board finds that the applicant has met the condition of approval from the approval letter dated December 15, 2015 requiring that the applicant provide wall sections and details showing storefronts, cornices, and entrances; specifications for windows and doors; and revised plans to differentiate the blank wall on the High Street façade for review and approval by the city's Planning Board.

Your December 15, 2015 approval letter is attached for reference.

If there are any questions, please contact Nell Donaldson at (207) 874-8723.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Boepple, Chair  
Portland Planning Board

Attachments:

1. 101 York Street, Original Approval Letter, 12/15/2015

CC: Jeff Levine, Director of Planning and Urban Development  
Stuart O'Brien, Planning Division Director  
Barbara Barhydt, Development Review Services Manager  
Philip DiPierro, Development Review Coordinator, Planning  
Ann Machado, Zoning Administrator, Inspections Division  
Tammy Munson, Inspection Division Director  
Katherine Earley, Engineering Services Manager, Public Services  
Bill Clark, Project Engineer, Public Services  
David Margolis-Pineo, Deputy City Engineer, Public Services  
Doug Roncarati, Stormwater Coordinator, Public Services

Greg Vining, Associate Engineer, Public Services  
Michelle Sweeney, Associate Engineer  
John Low, Associate Engineer, Public Services  
Matt Doughty, Field Inspection Coordinator, Public Services  
Mike Farmer, Project Engineer, Public Services  
Jane Ward, Administration, Public Services  
Jeff Tarling, City Arborist, Public Services  
Thomas Erriso, P.E., TY Lin Associates  
David Senus, P.E., Woodard and Curran  
Rick Blackburn, Assessor's Department  
Approval Letter File



# PLANNING BOARD REPORT PORTLAND, MAINE

101 York Street Mixed Use Development  
85-101 York Street  
Level III Site Plan and Subdivision Review – Condition of Approval, Design Review  
2015-139  
101 York Street, LLC

Submitted to: Portland Planning Board Date: March 4, 2016 Public Hearing Date: March 8, 2016	Prepared by: Nell Donaldson, Planner CBLs: 40-C-3, 4, 5, 9, 18, 22, 25, 33 and 40-C-21 Project #: 2015-139
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## I. INTRODUCTION

On December 8, 2015, the City of Portland Planning Board held a public hearing to review final plans for a five-story mixed use development at 85-101 York Street, at the corner of York and High Streets. The hearing followed a series of discussions between board members, city staff, and the applicant regarding the building's architecture. Notwithstanding these discussions, several design items remained unresolved at the hearing, and staff recommended a condition of approval that the applicant provide additional design drawings as a means of addressing these items. At the hearing, Board members raised their own design concerns, particularly questions about the execution of the building's corner at York and High Street. After some discussion, the Board approved the project on the condition that the applicant return to the Planning Board with additional drawings for final design review.

In the time since the Board hearing, the applicant has submitted two further iterations of the building design. Staff has reviewed both iterations with respect to both the B-3 design standards and guidelines and the Board's condition of approval and deemed the drawings suitable for final Board review.

**Applicant:** Vincent Veroneau, 101 York Street, LCC

**Consultants:** Barry Stowe, Opechee Construction Corporation; Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers

**Noticing:** 199 notices were sent to property owners within 500 feet of the site and a legal ad ran on February 29 and March 1, 2016.

## II. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

### A. Planning Board Hearing Design

The 101 York Street project lies within the B-3 zone and is thus subject to the B-3 design standards and guidelines established by the city's *Design Manual*. These standards and guidelines emphasize a building's relationship to the pedestrian environment, a building's relationship to existing surrounding development, shadow impacts, wind impacts, setbacks, execution of building tops, and effects on view corridors and gateways.

At the time of the Planning Board hearing on December 8, staff found that the design generally met the B-3 design standards and guidelines. However, there were some outstanding questions. Caitlin Cameron, the city's urban designer, wrote:

- 1. Relationship to the Pedestrian Environment: Storefronts and building facades: Materials and detailing - The design of storefronts and lower building facades should include the selection of high quality materials and detailing which relate to the rest of the building and to the surrounding context, and which convey a sense of permanence, durability, and richness in character....***

*Specific details on the design of elements meant to provide articulation, including wall sections and details of storefronts, cornices, and entrances and window and door specifications, have not been provided.*

2. ***Relationship to the Pedestrian Environment: Blank facades - ...It is important that the design of [blank]facades incorporate significant features of visual interest which will maintain the interest of the pedestrian...***

*The project employs low seasonal landscaping on the blank area of the High Street façade. Raised planters previously shown in this location, which helped to mitigate the effect of the unarticulated wall, have been eliminated.*

3. ***Pedestrian amenities***

*Seating walls on York and planter walls on High Street have been removed from the final plans. These were desirable elements that added amenity to the project.*

At the hearing, Board members raised additional design concerns, principally with respect to the execution of the building's corner at York and High Streets. Board members argued that this corner lies at a significant gateway and deserves particular design consideration, a notion which is supported by the city's design guidelines, which identify the York Street approach to the central business district as "an opportunity to get a sense of the residential and evolving commercial districts which surround and are so important to the Downtown." Board members suggested that the proportions of the building's corner element had not been sufficiently resolved, and suggested extending the height of the storefront element, modifying the scale of the cornice, adding detail to the building's "forehead," and reducing the color contrast between building elements in this area as a means of addressing outstanding concerns about the building composition. The related design guidelines read as follows:

*II. Relationship to Existing Development: Building façade proportion and composition*

...

*- Composition: ...It is important that [the] different overall components of a façade relate to one another on each building to ensure an integrated composition...In the design of larger buildings, it is particularly important to examine the opportunities to compose the building both horizontally and vertically, respecting the character of buildings nearby through a contextually sensitive design while creating an interesting and creative individual building.*

*VIII. View Corridors, Visual Landmarks, and Gateways*

...

*While each [gateway]to the Downtown is unique, collectively there are opportunities to enhance these entrances by preserving view corridors and panoramic skyline views along or from these corridors, reinforcing and enhancing the scale, character and placement of buildings along these entrance routes, and by encouraging development which reinforces the unique positive aspects and opportunities for each particular gateway.*

Ultimately, the Board's discussion, when coupled with the outstanding items from staff's design review, resulted in a condition of approval which required that the applicant provide "[w]all sections and details showing storefronts, cornices, and entrances; specifications for windows and doors; and revised plans to differentiate the blank wall on the High Street façade for review and approval by the city's Planning Board."

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Figures 1 and 2: High Street façade, elevation shown at Planning Board hearing (left) and revised elevation (right)



Figures 3 and 4: York Street façade, elevation shown at Planning Board hearing (top) and revised elevation (bottom)

### B. Revised Design

The applicant submitted a revised hardscape plan (Plan 1) and elevations shortly following the Board hearing in early January. Staff, including representatives of the city’s Historic Preservation office, commented on the design changes and requested additional information, and subsequently final elevations and building sections were provided (Plans 2-5). The building sections include details related to building doors, windows, storefronts, cornices, and entrances.

The majority of revisions in the final drawings pertain to the buff brick element of the building at the corner of York and High Streets:

- *Blank facade:* The applicant has modified the design of the 50’ span of blank façade on the High Street frontage to incorporate a stepped planter design (Figures 1 and 2). In the revised hardscape plan, this planter is depicted with a “decorative retaining wall” constructed of smooth face solid masonry units to match the storefront base to the south. Planting would continue to include Bosnian pine, black-eyed susan, sedum, switchgrass, viburnum, and Mountbatten juniper.

- *Storefront:* The applicant has modified the color of the storefront element to minimize contrast with the buff brick of the building's middle. In sections, the storefront is detailed with fiber cement cornice, sign band, and columns and a base of smooth face solid masonry units. Aluminum windows and doors are proposed.
- *Cornice:* Similarly, the applicant has changed the cornice color to match the storefront and reduce contrast with the buff brick veneer of the building's middle. In the final drawings, the applicant has also increased the height of the cornice piece and frieze trim to bring it more into proportion with the building's middle section.
- *Brick Courses:* The final drawings include an inset rowlock brick course and three accent bands of inset brickwork at 3/4" depth just below the building cornice. The applicant also proposes a soldier course at the sill level of the fifth story windows, with the intent of minimizing the proportion of the building's middle section.

Lastly, in the final drawings, the applicant has also chosen to eliminate the dark gray brick on the middle of the York Street façade in favor of additional red brick. The final plans also add a cornice and matching awning to better integrate this element with the red brick element to the east.

Staff has reviewed the final submittals and found that the revisions both meet the standards and guidelines of the B-3 zone and generally address the Board's comments. Ms. Cameron writes,

*The proposed design revisions address the comments raised by the Planning Board. In the public hearing, the Planning Board members voiced concern about the following aspects of the design:*

- 1) **The high contrast of material colors** – The material finish of the cornice and storefront was revised to be lighter in tone and therefore, less contrasting.
- 2) **Durability and detail of materials at ground floor** – The applicant proposes a fiber cement panels and trim at the ground floor storefront. Wall sections



**A** ELEVATION | SECTION  
 2016-03-08

*show the level of reveal and shadow line created which ranges from 1" to 2" at upper floor accent bands to 6" to 10" at the base and sills.*

- 3) **Proportion of corner façade composition at the top of the building** – *The revisions to address this concern include a more substantial cornice profile at the corner, horizontal bands of brick above the windows, and a soldier course at the top floor windows.*
- 4) **Overall, not enough emphasis on the corner of the building as a gateway** – *The revisions mentioned above are intended to add more emphasis and visual interest at the corner of the building.*
- 5) **Planter and seating walls on High Street and to meet the additional setback -**
  - a. *The planter wall was added back to the High Street façade as requested*
  - b. *The design of the additional setback on York Street removes the physical barrier and adds amenities such as the street tree, raised planter, and seating.*

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Planning Division received no public comment on the revised drawings.

### IV. PROPOSED MOTION

On the basis of the revised drawings, plans, and other information submitted by the applicant; findings contained in the Planning Board report for the public hearing on March 8, 2016 for application 2015-139 relevant to Portland's site plan ordinance, technical and design standards, and other regulations; and the testimony presented at the Planning Board hearing:

The Planning Board finds that the applicant **has/has not** met the condition of approval from the approval letter dated December 15, 2015 requiring that the applicant provide wall sections and details showing storefronts, cornices, and entrances; specifications for windows and doors; and revised plans to differentiate the blank wall on the High Street façade for review and approval by the city's Planning Board.

### V. ATTACHMENTS

#### PLANNING BOARD REPORT ATTACHMENTS

1. Approval Letter (from City of Portland, 12/15/15)
2. Design Review (memo from Caitlin Cameron, 3/1/16)

#### APPLICANT'S SUBMITTALS

- A. Email regarding storefront materials (from Opechee Construction Corporation, 2/22/16)
- B. Email regarding planter materials (from Opechee Construction Corporation, 3/1/16)

#### C. PLANS

- Plan 1 C 7.01 Hardscape Plan and Details
  - Plan 2 York and High Street Elevations
  - Plan 3 Elevations
  - Plan 4 Sections
  - Plan 5 Sections
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