

J.B. Brown & Sons
36 Danforth Street
Portland, ME 04101
207-774-5908

November 30, 2012

Historic Preservation Board
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101

Re: Mixed use development -321 Commercial Street (40-E-3)

Dear Board Members,

As a backdrop for our December 12th meeting, I thought it would be helpful for me to share the original concept (attached) we developed for the hotel as a way to understand how we ended up where we are today. After considering the original concept with its mid-block break and the condition of Foundry Lane, we decided to change direction to a full block development. The result was a much larger/more expensive project than initially envisioned (added 13 hotel rooms, 14 apartments, and 7,400sf of retail), but overall we felt it accomplished far more out of the gate than our first concept; primarily an improved Foundry Lane and a building with significant scale. Based on these considerations, we approached the Baxter Place to negotiate access to accomplish this more ambitious plan.

In addition, I have attached some historic pictures of buildings previously located on the property to give a sense of how the site was used in the past. As you can see, the building closest to the Baxter Building is fairly similar in scale to our original hotel concept in that it did not extend the entire block and there was an open parking area and vehicle access point mid-block. The Sealtest Building was a single story structure at the corner of Maple Street.

Since the November 7th workshop, we have attempted to address the primary concerns raised: the design of Foundry Lane, façade material/design, and massing along Maple Street. Below is a summary of our efforts:

- Foundry Lane: As stated previously, Foundry Lane is not owned by J.B. Brown & Sons. We have negotiated an easement with the Baxter Building owner to use the area for access to our porte-cochere provided we maintain at least 11 parking spaces for their use. They currently park between 16-17 cars in that area.

The primary design change increased the width of the pedestrian walk from 5' to 12.5', which creates a defined walk from York Street to Commercial Street. It resulted in the loss of 2 of the Baxter parking spaces, but we have agreed to let them use two spaces on our property as replacement parking. Additional refinements include changes to lighting, landscaping, cobble stone usage, ect, which all benefit the pedestrian experience and significantly improve the current condition and use of the area.

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- Building façade: The materials consist of scored granite, brick, storefront, and a metal cornice. Closest to the Baxter Building the granite extends two floors and then transitions to a typical single store granite base. This treatment creates a strong entrance at the hotel lobby and provides a nice transition from the Baxter Building. The use of granite sills, granite bands, and several reveal points add definition to the building. The storefront and windows will be slate grey. We believe the re-design captures a historical perspective, but with some contemporary elements.
- Maple Street: The massing and property line concerns expressed by the Board have been the most difficult to address. Because of grade issues, simply flipping the building so that the long end is along Maple Street is not possible as it would not allow porte-cochere access from Maple Street.

Although creating an angled wall at Maple Street is technically feasible, it carries a cost that is difficult to absorb a actual visual benefit which may be negligible. I believe the patio space created with the current design offers a more pleasant pedestrian experience. Given the historic building was single story at the corner; I think the current concept is not as great a deviation than originally perceived. I believe we can design a patio wall following the angle of Maple Street that will act to define the street as the single story structure might have in the past, but with an improved pedestrian and visual experience.

Although we have not been able to addressed 100% of the Board's concerns, I believe the changes made substantially address the comments and provides for a building that will be a great addition to the fabric of Portland.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to discussing the project in more detail at the December 12th workshop.

Respectfully,



Vincent P. Veroneau
President



Site Plan 1" = 40'

Courtyard by Marriott

PORTLAND, MAINE

June 01, 2012

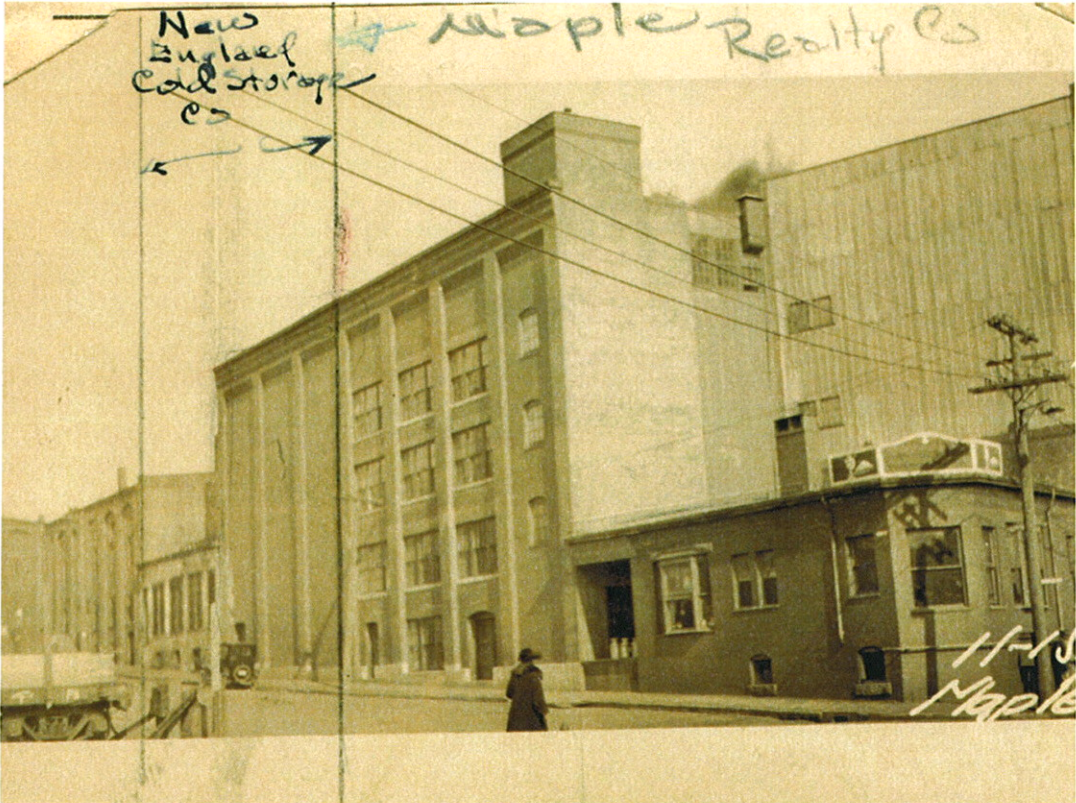


1924 Portland Tax Records: 311-321 Commercial Street, Portland, ME



Owner: J.B. Brown & Sons
Address: 311-321 Commercial Street, Waterfront, Portland, Maine
Use: Storage

1924 Portland Tax Records: 11-15 Maple Street, Portland, ME



Owner: New England Cold Storage Company
Address: 11-15 Maple Street, Waterfront, Portland, Maine
Use: Storage - Cold

