

Rept. 46563-I

6/16/44/T

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C. L.
D. W.

May 31, 1944

Mrs. Mintel Cope
18 Weymouth Street
Portland 4, Maine

Subject: Building permit for partial strengthening
of front piazza at 18 Weymouth Street

Dear Madam:

Enclosed building permit covers the strengthening called for in the application of the front piazza,—namely, a line of posts in the center of the span of the outside beams which support floor and roof joists of the four story front piazza clear down to a concrete pier foundation at the bottom as called for in the application.

Permit does not include the alterations in the rear stairs as additional work is needed there not included in the permit.

With regard to the front piazza, while the proposed additional line of posts can do nothing but improve the situation, from appearances I must require that you have some competent man thoroughly examine the rest of the framing of this piazza to make sure that it is safe, then make good any parts which are defective. A number of parts look questionable from the street, notably the plank shoe under one of the round columns which is in the 2nd story on the southerly end of the piazza, this base appearing to have crushed. Several of the round wooden posts appear to be in defective condition from serious longitudinal seams in them. Apparently the corner posts are supported on wooden posts which may merely set in the ground. Investigation of this condition should be made and if the piazza posts are setting now on wooden posts, new concrete piers below front (four feet below the surface of the ground) should be provided while the new pier is being put in.

The rear piazza is in such questionable condition that I am unable to give the permit to cut in the new stairway from 1st to 2nd floor until some other matters are taken care of. It is necessary therefore that you make the stairway from the 1st floor of the piazza to the ground on the Congress Street side of the building undoubtedly safe temporarily so that the persons on the upper floors will have a way of reaching the ground in the rear, then have an able carpenter go all over the piazza and recommend strengthening and improvement of any parts which do not appear in good condition. I saw some of them myself. The corner post toward Congress Street is practically without any foundation, if it ever had any, most of it appears to be gone; the outside joist on the lower floor is spliced or butted over a post but the bottom of the post is gone and there is no foundation under it whatever; the 2x6 headers supporting the various floor joist spans and the stairs are not stout enough, and if the present piazza is found in sound enough condition to warrant building the new stairs proposed between 1st and 2nd floor, then the header for that stairwell will have to be at least twice as heavy as the present 2x6 headers and will have to be properly supported. The long 4x4 posts (this piazza is really five stories high) are quite badly twisted and placed out of plumb. Every possible step must be taken to hold them vertically in place and to make the entire piazza safe.

When that has been done, you may come and file an amendment to this permit to cover cutting in the new stairway from 1st to 2nd floor and the removal of the rickety stairway from 1st floor to ground. It is extremely important that you make this latter