

November 25, 2014

Ms. Shukria Wiar, Planner
and Planning Board Members
Planning and Urban Development
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101

**RE: Level III Site Plan
The Park Danforth
777 Stevens Avenue**

Dear Shukria and Planning Board Members:

The following documentation has been prepared in response to staff review comments, dated, November 12, 2014 and comments received from Board Members during the October workshop meeting. Since the initial submission, the applicant has been further developing the plans and has determined, due to economics based on preliminary cost estimates, the need to increase the number of new units from 54 to 55. The revised plans include the request to increase the number of units to 55. The additional unit will be located as a fifth story unit on the north westerly corner of the building on the Arbor Street frontage.

Project Clarification:

- The existing building height (along Stevens Avenue) is 65 feet or seven stories.
- Garden spaces: There is one center Garden Court Yard enclosed by the existing building and proposed addition. A second existing green space, located at the Forest Avenue end of the three story building, is being expanded to extend along the existing service drive.



- The proposed parking garage has been reduced to 37 spaces, 1 was removed due to mechanical equipment storage requirements.

VII Zoning Assessment

A. Zoning Review:

- The average post development grade for the proposed addition is 127.32, refer to Exhibit A “Average Grade Calculations” attached.
- The finish floor of the proposed addition is 128.22’.
- The building height above average grade for the four (4) story portion along Arbor Street and Forest Avenue is 43.9 feet to roof beam.
- The five story corner of the building at the Stevens Avenue Arbor Street (added unit) side of the building is 55.9 feet.
- The fifth story (community room) at the Arbor Street, Forest Avenue corner is 58.9 feet.
- The five story elevation facing the interior garden court yard is 55.9 feet.

VIII Development Review

A. Site Plan Submission Requirements and Subdivision Plat and Recording Plat Requirements

a. *Application Completeness*

- Temporary Waiver of Lighting Photometrics, Signage Plan. Waste Management plan and manufactures Verification of Mechanical Systems, refer to attached revised waiver request.

B. Site Plan Standards

1. Transportation Standards:

a. *Impact on surrounding street system*

- The number of curb cuts proposed are necessary to address emergency vehicle access, existing service vehicle requirements, as well as the safety for residents entering and exiting the property (see revised waiver request).
- The existing main entry from Stevens Avenue, currently one way, in has been retained as requested by the Fire Department as an emergency access curb cut. We have provided two sided signage, one on each side of the curb cut denoting “Emergency Vehicle Access Only”. To further minimize access, additional plantings have been added to provide a low screening of the drive.
- The relocated entry on Stevens Avenue aligns with the new main entry drop off area. The geometry of this curb cut has been modified, refer to response to Tom Errico’s memo, prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, attached and revised site plan.
- The Arbor Street curb cut is proposed as two-way circulation. This new drive aligns with the new main entry to The Park Danforth. This access allows for safer access for the residents to gain safer access to Stevens Avenue or Forest Avenue. In addition, this curb cut provides accessibility for emergency vehicles to circulate around the building (see revised waiver request).
- The Forest Avenue curb cut is the existing service drive as well as providing access to resident parking and the new garage. The geometry of the curb cut has been revised in response to Tom Errico’s memo; please refer to response letter prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers and revised site plan.

b. Access and Circulation:

- Refer to comments above concerning curb cuts.
- On-site pedestrian circulation is provided to Forest Avenue via a new sidewalk along the service drive that residents access from the three story wing and from the new garden court yard. Connection to Forest Avenue from the resident entry at the corner of Arbor Street and Forest Avenue is not feasible due to grade change (retaining wall). Stairs are not an option due the safety concerns for the age of the residents. Access to Forest Avenue can be made from internal sidewalks leading to Arbor Street. Refer to Exhibit B Pedestrian Circulation Plan attached.

- We have met with Bruce Hyman to review all of the crosswalk locations within the public right-of-way and have revised the plans to meet the city standards with exception of the Poland Street-Forest Avenue curb ramp. The constraints associated with existing drainage structures do not permit installing the curb ramp per city standards. We have provided a curb ramp detail for this location to discuss further with staff. Pedestrian access easement areas have been shown where required to meet the minimum sidewalk width.
- New concrete sidewalk and granite curb were shown on the original submission. Since that submission we have had discussions with Bruce Hyman regarding ADA curb ramps and with David Margolis-Pineo regarding improvements along Arbor Street. The paved width of Arbor Street varies from Stevens Avenue to Forest Avenue exceeding 30 FT. To install new sidewalk, ADA curb ramps and avoid several existing utility poles we have adjusted the curb alignment slightly to provide a passable sidewalk. The width of Arbor Street is maintained at 30 FT wide. To maintain the minimum sidewalk width we have had to extend the sidewalk out around utility poles still within the right of way.

c. Public Transit Access

- No comment required at this time.

d. Parking

- There have been two modifications to the plan resulting in a decrease in parking from 151 spaces to 149. Due to a requirement for mechanical equipment room one (1) space in the garage has been eliminated. The applicant also requested to have two additional handicap spaces along the Arbor Street parking that resulted in the loss of one (1) regular space.
- The off-street parking requirements, note 11. Plan sheet L3.2 has been revised. The original submission did include the number of employees at peak period. Revisions include the requirement for the additional unit.
- Aisle width requirements, see attached Waiver Request.
- Bicycle parking: No comment required at this time.

Tom Errico's review comments:

- See attached letter prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers for responses. Additional responses follow.
- Refer to revised waiver request for Stevens Avenue and Arbor Street curb cuts and travel aisle widths.

In response to parking needs, we have prepared the following to provide an understanding of how The Park Danforth functions:

The following documentation provides additional detail regarding the operation of The Park Danforth and the associated parking demands. The average age of The Park Danforth residents is 86. While this population is in reasonably good health and are independent, they do require medical attention beyond what is provided by The Park Danforth staff. Outside providers, such as VNA, occupational and physical therapist and other providers make visits to see residents during the week and require parking. The average number of visits during a weekday is 15 between the hours of 8 AM and 5 PM with peak days exceeding 25 visits. Visit time also varies, depending on the nature of the service, that may be as short as 15 min and longer for treatment services, or if one provider is seeing multiple residents.

In addition to medical providers, there are service providers that are on-site at various times during the week that include facility equipment repair, appliance repair service for residents, cable TV and others. There are also regular scheduled vendor visits that vary throughout the year. The number and frequency varies, however on any given weekday, they usually see a minimum of two during the 8 AM to 5 PM time frame.

Another significant factor that coincides with the average age of current residents is that many of these folks have family/children that are retired and visit more frequently as well as stay longer. This can attribute to periods with a shortage of visitor parking. There are demands for short term parking for family members dropping off groceries, medications or picking up family members. Short term parking spaces have been located adjacent to the emergency vehicle access drive.

2. Environmental Quality Standards

a. Preservation of Significant Natural Features

- No comment required

b. Landscape and Landscape Preservation

- No response required at this time regarding the waiver request for number of street trees.
- Regarding comments from the City Arborist, we met with Jeff Tarling to review the revised planting in response to his concerns with meeting the Design Standards regarding landscaping for parking areas. Plans were revised and reviewed with Jeff Tarling.
- Regarding comments by staff concerning the center Garden Court Yard, we have provided several concept designs being considered by the applicant. As presented during the planning board workshop, the intent of this space is to provide a stimulating interactive environment, provide safe yet challenging walking environment, seasonal variation, outdoor seating opportunities, opportunities for gardening and outdoor rooms. The plan as revised provides a limited planting plan approach for now.
- The plan will be further developed and will depend upon budget. Improvements may be phased as budget allows. We request consideration of the final design to a condition of approval with staff review.

c. Water Quality, Storm Water, Storm Water Management and Erosion Control

- We have revised the storm water management plan as discussed with staff prior to the workshop. The plan follows the same principals for management as well as water quality. We have also connected a portion of the new drainage area to the existing storm drain system in Arbor Street as discussed with staff, with a portion of the site connecting to the storm drain in Forest Avenue as previously proposed.
- The storm drain system in the parking garage has been revised to include an oil and water separator and now connects to the sanitary sewer as requested.
- The storm water management plan conforms to the City Chapter 500 standards and a MDEP PBR will be submitted.

3. Public Infrastructure and Community Safety

a. Public Safety and Fire Prevention

- The existing main entry on Stevens Avenue has been revised to include two sided signage on both sides of the drive indicating Emergency Vehicle Access Only. In addition, we have added a substantial amount of landscaping on either side of the drive to diminish its visibility to the general public.
- All of the other curb cuts allow for emergency vehicle access to the building. The building can be accessed on four sides from interior circulation.

b. Availability and Adequate Capacity of Public Utilities

Water/Sanitary/Sewer

- We have revised the plan to reflect a change in pipe size for the sanitary sewer connection in Arbor Street from a 6 inch to an 8 inch pipe.
- We have also split the sewer service connection for the new building into two runs due to grade change, a portion of the new building will now connect to the existing sanitary manhole in the existing service drive.
- A Note regarding meeting the provisions of Section 2 and Section 9 of the Technical Manual has been added as note 15 on plan sheet L3 and note 19 on plan sheet L4.
- We are still waiting on a letter from Public Services regarding sanitary sewer capacity.

Electricity/Telephone/Cable TV

- As previously discussed, a new utility pole is proposed on-site near the Forest Avenue entry to allow for extension of underground utilities. There is not sufficient room on the existing utility pole on Forest Avenue to install the necessary riser conduit. Refer to attached waiver request.

Waste Management

- Final determination of waste management has not been made, updated documentation will be provided under separate cover. As of this submission, the plan reflects the use of a pulper/compactor unit.

4. Site Design Standards

a. Snow and Ice Loading

- As stated previously, there is limited snow storage available on-site with no designated storage area. Snow from small storms will be plowed to the edge of parking lots onto the grassed areas. Storm events exceeding 3 inches will require snow removal. The applicant currently contracts for snow removal, a copy of a contract will be provided under separate cover prior to the public hearing.

b. Exterior Lighting

- The lighting plan is in the process of having the photometric plans being prepared to address the city lighting requirements. These plans will be submitted under separate cover for staff review.

c. Noise and Vibration

- Final selection of the mechanical equipment has not been made at this time. All equipment shall meet the city noise standards. We are requesting at this time to have submission of the required documentation be considered as a condition of approval with review by staff.

d. Signage and Wayfinding

- Presently The Park Danforth is updating its branding that includes signage. We have shown several sign locations, however the final plan is subject to change. A sign plan indicating locations will be submitted under separate cover.

e. Zoning Related Design Standards

- Regarding landscaping and site circulation, see previous comments under transportation and landscaping.

C. Subdivision

- No comment required for items 1 through 5.

6. *Easements*

- An easement agreement with CMP will be provided as a condition of approval. The applicant is presently working with CMP on the design of the new service and will establish the required easement on the subdivision plat prior to signing by the planning board. In addition, pedestrian easements will be granted to the city where public sidewalk occurs on private property. The existing conditions plan is the boundary survey for the entire property. A certified stamped plan will be submitted under separate cover.

7. *Comprehensive Plan*

- No response required

8. *Financial Capability*

- No response required

IX. Housing Preservation and Replacement (Section 14-483)

- The applicant understands the requirements concerning the housing replacement and performance guarantee.

Enclosed for your review are the following:

- Revised Waiver Request
- Neighborhood Meeting Documentation
- Revised Storm water Report, prepared by BH2M Engineers
- Traffic Response Letter, prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers
- Exhibit A “Average Grade Calculations”
- Exhibit B “Pedestrian Circulation Plan”
- Exhibit C “Fire Truck Turning Templates”
- Revised Plan Set Sheets L1.0 – L6.3 and D1.0 – D3.0
- Architecture Plans and Elevations
- Concept Garden Court Yard Designs

Ms. Shukria Wiar and Planning Board Members

Page | **10**

Should you or staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Mitchell & Associates

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Metcalf", written in a cursive style.

Robert B. Metcalf, Principal
Maine Licensed Landscape Architect

cc: Denise Vachon
Ron Norton
Les Berry