

RE: 1 Congress St
Meeting: July 6, 2022
Packet Pages: 191-215

Dear Members of the Historic District Commission,

July 3, 2022

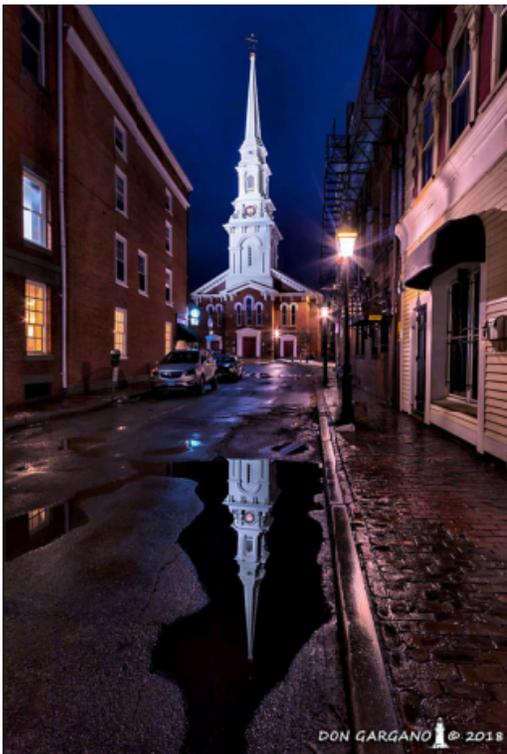
This restoration and modernization on the corner of Congress, High and Haven comes with some delicate features which create the need to be balanced within the HEART of the historic district of downtown. This combined structure sits in two key areas. The front faces the many historic structures for which Portsmouth is known for. The rear faces Ladd St with its historic buildings, Haven Ct with Newbury's and the parking garage which welcomes many guests to downtown, often seen standing overlooking the city, after parking, to decide which way to go. Haven Ct is the gateway to the core of the Historic Downtown.

This rear gateway likely sees more tourists than 203 Maplewood/1&31 Raynes Ave because many guests to the city come in through Market St to the downtown. Ironically 1&31 Raynes was encouraged to downplay all modern aspects and is currently shown as a VERY traditional brick structure found in Portsmouth in the 1800's.

The rear of 1 Congress St has moved from ultra modern to modern, with european windows not found in historic downtown, Peterak Cladding, possible Arcade Fenestration and Crown Lifting Bifold Doors which appear to reach from floor to ceiling in some plans and are raised slightly in others. It does seem that there are a few things which need some tweeking to maintain the Historic Feel in the heart of the historic district.

6 simple things which may need some consideration and clarification.

1. Page 206, H5-34- IF the proposed glass marquis on the opera house **is lit at all**, even back lit, it may forever create a more intrusive light effect than the existing street light when looking at the North Church from Haven and High St at night in that same location. A traditional lettered canopy or the glass marquis with no lights could protect **this view the development team accented so much in the beginning.** The proposed pergola covering over the hotel car drop off will also interfere and obstruct this view.



2. What is the proposed angle of the Northlight Skylights going to be? Page 209 H5-37 and page 201 H5-23 show two different angles. This could simply be because one is to show height and one is to show design. The difference in the angle changes whether they can be seen from the street or not. The angle presented on page 209, H5-37 makes them appear less imposing from the ground.
3. Page 206, H5-34 shows what looks like copper or brass gutters below the skylights, which could be helpful to prevent snow from sliding onto people below or is it just the bottom of the windows?
4. Page 208, H5-36, Page 209, H5-37 and page 212, H5-51 show the different variations for the crown lifting bifold garage doors. It would make sense to have some bottom to them as seen in H5-37 because it is VERY LIKELY some kind of fence or separation from the general public will likely be required by the Liquor Commission, thereby changing some of the dynamics of the building. These large windows also open quite uniquely, changing the final look of the structure.
5. The cladding seems to lack any characteristics similar to the surrounding buildings, not even color. It seems to be orange, shiny, flat and to have a smooth texture.
6. The proposed under the building entrance, drop off area, curb cuts, traffic report and driving around the corner onto a proposed pedestrian alley for a hotel does NOT seem to have been presented at a *Technical Advisory Committee Meeting*. This conceptual design perhaps could be proposed to TAC **before** moving forward with the HDC regarding the details of this part of the building. It seems this could impact the entire design of the ground floor from the entrance, spacing of the lobby, vehicle elevator and the proposed restaurant, which in turn will impact the placement and type of windows, entrances, etc for the outside.

Thank you for your consideration of these thoughts.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bratter
159 McDonough St
Property Owner

Below please find the changes to the corner of Haven Ct and High St. Clapboards, Clapboards, Cladding- 1912 hotel, 2022 restaurant and characteristically balanced storage, 2023 future Macy's?

