# Hoefle, Phoenix, Gormley & Roberts, P.A.

#### ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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October 7, 2019

David Rheaume, Chair Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment 1 Junkins Avenue Portsmouth, NH 03801

Re: Foundry Place LLC, Owner/Applicant

Project Location: 181 Hill St.

Tax Map 138/Lot 62

Character District 5 (CD5); Downtown & North-End Incentive Overlay Districts

Dear Chairman Rheaume & Zoning Board Members:

Please accept this letter on behalf of Foundry Place, LLC in response to comments made at the September 19, 2019 hearing and subsequent submissions by members of the public. At the outset, we would like to remind the Board that the abutters' primary stated concern, the use of the building as a hotel, is permitted by right in the CD5 district. The specific relief requested is quite limited:

- 1. <u>PZO §10.5A43.31 and §10.5A46.10</u> To permit, in combination with the application of an incentive, a six-story 60-foot tall building where a five-story 60-foot tall building is permitted.
- 2. <u>Section 10.11.14.21</u> To allow 54 valet-only interior parking spaces utilizing a two-car lift system in each bay where ten spaces do not meet the parking space depth requirements.
- 3. <u>Section 10.1114.32(a)</u> To permit a valet-only lift system which requires passing over another parking space or moving another vehicle where both requirements are prohibited.

We believe this requested relief is quite reasonable and meets the variance criteria, as detailed in our prior submissions and discussed in further detail below.

While the new proposal results in an additional story, the overall height of the building is permitted with incentives and is in fact lower than the previously approved proposal. Moreover, the front of the building is located on Foundry Place, which is at a significantly lower elevation

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than Hill Street to the rear. As a result, anyone viewing the building from Hill Street and other nearby residences will see only five stories. Given this topography and the fact that the proposed addition to the number of stories is <u>internal only</u> with <u>an overall reduction to the building height</u>, there will be no impacts to the surrounding area as a result of the specific request for relief. Lowering the height of the building is not necessary, it meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance for height with permitted incentives and for all density requirements. Neither is it possible to lower the ground story, given the underlying soils and water tables as discussed in greater detail in the letter from Kim Rogers submitted with this letter.

With respect to the parking variances, again the requested relief relates only to parking depth and to pass over another space. Based on a plain reading of the Zoning Ordinance, relief for the number of spaces is not required nor has it been requested. Therefore, the existence of an easement for the neighboring Hill Street properties is not relevant to the Board's decision making. Additionally, the easement preserves off-street parking in the neighborhood. Were those spaces not permitted by easement, it would only serve to push more vehicles onto the street. The specific requested relief, to allow for a valet-only lift system is reasonable and has previously been granted for multiple locations in the City and surrounding area.

Concerns raised by the public with respect to vehicle noise and headlights are fully addressed by the proposal. Entry to the parking area is on the left side of the building from Foundry Place, at a lower elevation to and fully screened from the Hill Street and other nearby residences. The parking area is fully enclosed, further limiting any potential impacts from vehicle noise or headlights. Additionally, the building itself provides screening from the Hill Street residences from off-sight lighting from the parking garage and noise from the nearby railroad corridor.

Several Board members indicated concerns about the existence of a hotel on the lot as it is a "transitional area." CD5 is not a transitional zone. Its purpose is to allow for large scale <u>commercial</u> uses, including hotels, <u>which are permitted by right</u>. Residential use is not encouraged nor is such use permitted except as part of a larger mixed use project. Rather, the zoning district is intended to encourage commercial uses, and therefore, "transition" is not a proper factor in the consideration of the requested variances.

Conversely, the area located to the rear of the property across Hill Street, zoned CD4-L1, is a true transition area. The zone consists of "medium density areas" with a mix of ground floor commercial and upper story residential use. While members of the public may not prefer a hotel, Foundry Place, LLC should not, and may not, be denied its requested variances simply based a use that is consistent with the intent of the underlying CD5 district and permitted by right in that zone.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Zoning Ordinance Section 10.5A41.10A.

In light of the above, and for the reasons previously submitted to this Board, Foundry Place, LLC respectfully requests that the Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment grant the submitted variance requests.

Very truly yours,

R. Timothy Phoenix Kevin M. Baum

#### Enclosure

cc:

Foundry Place, LLC

April Maifield, Legat Architects Drew Gagnon, Gorrill Palmer John Chagnon, Ambit Engineering Manager of Foundry Place, LLC

9/20/2019

To: City of Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA)

Regarding: Points of clarification by Kim Rogers regarding Lot 6 (aka 181 Hill Street; now known as 89/99 Foundry Place).

Kim Rogers, President of Foundry Place, LLC the Applicant and his wife Ania, are full time residents of Portsmouth and endeavor to construct a community friendly building and to operate a hotel in a way that is respectful to the local community. The management company, GL Rogers and Company Inc, has offices in Portsmouth, not far from the proposed hotel site.

The hotel will be a quiet and peaceful addition to the neighborhood. The presented site plan and project plans are subject to future City TAC and City Planning Board reviews. As designed, a bar/restaurant would be located in the hotel, opposite the Municipal Foundry Place Parking Garage on Foundry Place street. This restaurant will be designed and managed to be attractive to local residents as convenient place to go for a drink or a bite to eat. Restaurant pedestrian and vehicular traffic would be limited to Foundry Place street, which does not have residential uses. The hotel check-in will be located along the side of the hotel, which is adjacent to the back side of the existing Ferguson Plumbing showroom and warehouse building; to the west of the proposed hotel. Subject to TAC and Planning Board review, hotel guest vehicular and pedestrian access and egress is designed to enter the building via Foundry Place.

The application currently before the ZBA seeks minimal relief relative to a large commercial building project with many site complexities. Foundry Place LLC (formerly Deer Street Associates "DSA") has previously received a variance approval from the ZBA for valet operated vehicle lifts in another project on Lot 3, and other unrelated projects have received variances for vehicle lifts. The variance requested for the small parking space dimensionality differences are inconsequential for a valet only parking facility and is consistent with prior granted approvals. The request for a 6<sup>th</sup> story that remains within the 60-foot height (60-foot height is allowed by the City Zoning Ordinance) is based on avoiding hardships for the developer, for the City of Portsmouth, for the region, for abutters, and for the citizens of Portsmouth. The timing of the application to the ZBA is within standard City land use procedures, where an applicant goes before the Planning Board and TAC after the ZBA hearing to present a design reflective of the ZBA decisions.

Lot 6 lies within CD 5 zoning and the Downtown Overlay District, and the subject property is adjacent to CD 4-L1 zoning along Hill Street. This CD 4-L1 zoning is the transitionary zoning area between CD 5 and residentially zoned areas. Hotels are a permitted use in CD 5, so are

## G L Rogers & Company, Inc. - Foundry Place, LLC

the overall dimensions of the proposed building. Much comparison has been made between the originally approved mixed-use building design and the current hotel design. We would like to remind the Board Members that building design is not under the purview of the ZBA. And we do not want to get mired in arguments about design in front of the ZBA. Building design, including scale and mass, will be addressed in detail as part of the site plan review process. Nevertheless, the proposed hotel design is narrower than the prior proposal. While it no longer has stepped stories, the elimination of those stories was largely driven by engineering and construction factors and not by the proposed change of use to a hotel.

Lot 6 was developed as part of a six-lot Master Development Plan in conjunction with the City of Portsmouth to build a much needed second municipal parking garage. This Master Plan includes property owned by the applicant and its affiliates since 1984. The Master Plan envisioned new buildings of substantial size on the subdivided parcels including Lots 3 and 6, which would be proportionate in scale to the Foundry Place Municipal Parking Garage and would act as liner buildings to help screen the neighborhood from the municipal garage traffic, lighting, and pedestrians. The Municipal Foundry Place Parking Garage has six levels of parking at a similar height, which includes two taller six-story elevator and/or stair towers. A 60-foot tall six-story hotel is in keeping with the adjacent municipal parking structure.

Parking is a very important consideration for this project. With ZBA variance approvals for dimensionality and for vehicle lifts, the proposed hotel project will meet or exceed the number of parking spaces required within the zoning ordinance. The quantity of parking spaces and their allocation to uses is dictated by the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance and is enforced by the City Planning Board. As configured, this project does not require a variance approval for the number of parking spaces provided.

This property is subject to a parking easement. It has been explained by the City Planning Department that parking required under an easement is not considered in the parking calculations required by the City Zoning Ordinance. If this proves to be a misunderstanding, then the parking calculations shall be adjusted accordingly for presentation to the City Planning Board.

The Foundry Place LLC proposal is to construct structured parking on the second floor of the hotel, rather than excavate a parking level below the first story. As designed, the parking level is an *enclosed* 12-foot tall second story starting approximately 14 feet above the first-floor slab, which is at the Foundry Place street grade level. Foundry Place street is about 12 feet above sea-level and the first-floor slab elevation of the hotel is also approximately 12 feet above sea-level.

The second-floor parking level is shown on the plans as a fully enclosed story with windowless walls. The second-floor walls will thus eliminate light from headlights escaping into the community and substantially restrict noise from vehicles and from car lifts. The other parking area proposed within the project is designed as nose-in parking under the building, along the Hill Street right-of-way, which goes from Hill Street to the Heinemann parking lot at Hanover Street. This deeded right of way is for the use of its abutters.

The proposed hotel is designed to accommodate significantly different grade elevations between Hill Street and Foundry Place street. The building, even with 6 stories, will not be taller than zoning allows with the bonus incentive, which is a proposed roof height of 60 feet

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above the average grade. The previously approved residential mixed-use building was taller, with a penthouse roof elevation of 62 feet. The building will meet the dark sky ordinance requirements and will help shield the Hill and Hanover Street structures from the Foundry Place Municipal Parking Garage lights and traffic. The proposed hotel signage shall be positioned along Foundry Place street, not in the proximity of Hill Street residences. We have proposed a walking path from Hill Street to Foundry Place to help tie together this growing neighborhood. The path will lead to the proposed public plaza on Lot 2, adjacent to the Foundry Place Garage.

The first-floor slab of the proposed hotel is roughly at the same elevation at the Foundry Place sidewalk, which is currently designed to be about 2.9 feet below the average site grade. The average site grade for the hotel is different because Hill Street is higher in elevation than Foundry Place.

If we were to move parking below grade, rather than have structured parking on the second level of the building (within the requested 6<sup>th</sup> story), the estimated depth of the garage would reach the zero sea-level elevation. Sea-level is defined as the mean sea-level, the height of the sea surface averaged over all stages of the tide over a long period of time. Thus, a zero-foot sea-level elevation is several feet below high tide. Seawater infiltration becomes a concern at zero elevation.

To excavate a parking level to a zero-foot elevation, Foundry Place LLC would encounter ledges/bedrock, water tables, possibly infiltrating tidal salt-waters, marine clay, and contaminated urban fill. Also, a basement at this depth would likely incur groundwater seepage that would require pumping. None of this is in the public's best interests, especially the City's best interests.

Removing hard ledge or bedrock materials would likely cause significant vibration in the bearing soils of neighboring properties. Based upon soils tests under the subject property, under Foundry Place street, and under other nearby properties, the bulk of the soils in this area are made up of filled (imported) soils over marine clay. These two types of soils do not have the stability of other native soils like glacial till, and the fill has been classified as Urban Fill by the State, with detectible levels of several controlled substances. Please see the attached City letter from Attorney Robert Sullivan expressing concern about vibrations from proposed site improvement work on Lot 3. Lot 3 is adjacent to Foundry Place street on the north side, and the City mainline sewer is located under the street. Lot 6 is adjacent to Foundry Place street on the south side. Vibration-caused liquification of the marine clay soils under the City sewer would likely have a devastating impact on the structural integrity of the City sewer.

It's not just the City sewer at risk. Imported soils that were used as fill and the native marine clays can shift and/or possibly liquify below the adjacent Ferguson Plumbing showroom and warehouse building. According to the Sullivan letter, this building has already shown signs of movement from City construction activity and vibration. Further, the concern of vibratory damage applies to other neighboring structures such as the brick building commonly known as the Last Chance Garage to the east, which rests upon an unreinforced rock foundation that is sited above marine clays.

## G L Rogers & Company, Inc. - Foundry Place, LLC

As noted in Attorney Sullivan's letter, the City sewer main was primarily installed over a stratum of marine clay. It is our understanding that disruption to the marine clay soils at Bridge Street during construction of the City sewer may have caused settlement and damage to the City sewer. The City has clearly expressed a concern to Foundry Place LLC (formerly DSA) in that written letter from Attorney Sullivan about the effect that vibrations from site work will have on the City sewer. Although his concern was in regard to the project on Lot 3, both Lot 3 and Lot 6 abut the City mainline sewer under Foundry Place street.

Much of the urban fill on this property may be left in place and capped, rather than disturbed and hauled to landfills. Exported urban fill and marine clays to regional landfills may displace space for garbage in those landfills. Landfills are a limited disposal resource for the region.

Water tables on Lot 6 are not far below the 12-foot first-floor slab elevation, and further impacts from high tides may also be a factor on water tables. Pumping ground water, which may include contaminants and may also include seawater at high tides, into an already fully utilized storm water system, especially during high tides, is not in the best interests of the City or its citizens. See attached emails to Kim Rogers from David Desfosses and David Allen. As Mr. Desfosses notes in his email, the nearby Deer Street and Brewster Street stormwater systems are at maximum capacity. These systems were designed for surface run-off only, with only basic sedimentation type treatment. Contaminants within the urban fill can be reduced or capped <u>but not fully eliminated</u>, as acknowledged in Mr. Allen's email. Groundwater moves and flows through the greater area and does not observe property boundaries.

The proposed hotel for Lot 6 meets current use and architectural zoning requirements. We seek only limited relief for the number of stories (with a reduction in overall height) and for valet-only lift parking. The neighboring zoning of CD 4-L1 provides a buffer to the residentially zoned areas and the proposed hotel would conform to the dimensions of the Municipal Foundry Place Parking Garage and act as a screen or buffer. Because of precedent ZBA approvals and also because of bedrock and high water tables, limited City stormwater capacity, unstable fill and marine clay soils, and environmental contaminants within the filled soils, justice will be served by approving Foundry Place's three requested variances. These variances will allow the applicant to mitigate extraordinary hardships, that are outside the control of the applicant. Additionally, by granting the variances, the ZBA will serve the public interest by minimizing long term and construction period impacts to the City and to the neighborhood - regardless of use.

Foundry Place, LLC has heard its neighbor's concerns and will address them in a forum outside of the ZBA by facilitating a neighborhood meeting where residents can voice their concerns and for us to address them as we move forward in the land use approval process.

Sincerely,

Kim Rogers <

President



# CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Robert P. Sullivan, City Attorney – 603-610-7204 (Direct Dial)
Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Attorney – 603-610-7240 (Direct Dial)
Kathleen M. Dwyer, Assistant City Attorney – 603-498-2126 (Direct Dial)
Jane M. Ferrini, Assistant City Attorney – 603-610-7256 (Direct Dial)

August 21, 2018

#### VIA E-MAIL

Denis O. Robinson, Esq. Pierce Atwood LLP One New Hampshire Ave. Suite 350 Portsmouth, NH 03801

RE: DSA-LOT 3

Dear Denis,

On Wednesday August 15, 2018 Dave Allen attended a meeting with DSA representatives, including Gregg Mikolaities and the construction team (PC Construction). At the meeting Dave learned that the current design plan for lot 3 includes construction of a rammed aggregate pier foundation system. The City has concerns with regard to this method of construction.

It is the City's experience that the marine clay soils in this area and other areas in Portsmouth are particularly sensitive to vibration, disturbance and loads. Vibration in particular tends to liquefy the clay. As you know, the City has critical infrastructure in the area, namely a 48-inch gravity sewer line. That sewer line is pile supported in places due to the marine clay, but not to bedrock. In addition, you should be aware that the Ferguson Building has exhibited signs of movement.

This letter is to put DSA on notice of the potential risk of using rammed aggregate piers. We are requesting that your geotechnical consultant carefully evaluate the risk to nearby infrastructure and buildings and provide a written report confirming it is safe to use rammed aggregate piers as the foundation method.

We have copied Chris Brennan of Walker Engineering who has headed up the City's design team for the parking garage. Walker has used Haley & Aldrich as the

Denis O. Robinson, Esq. August 21, 2018 Page 2

geotechnical consultant on the City's project and they have done extensive analysis of the soils. Chris can be point on any information needed by your geotechnical consultant.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Sullivan City Attorney

RPS/mas

cc: Peter Rice
Robert Marsilia
Dave Allen
Chris Brennan, Walker Engineering

#### Kim S Rogers

From: Dave Desfosses <djdesfosses@cityofportsmouth.com>

Sent: Tuesday, December 20, 2016 9:53 AM

To: Joseph H. Kieffner

Cc: Kim S Rogers; Ania Szulc Rogers; Steve Leonard; Dave S. Allen; Peter H. Rice; Terry L.

Desmarais; Juliet T.H. Walker; Rick Taintor

Subject: RE: Deer Street Ext Stormwater

Deer Street ExTENSION -> FOUNDRY PlacE

Joseph,

There is no available capacity left at the Brewster St outfall. A portion of the garage, the parking area, the end of the cul-de-sac and Peter Hapney's parcel are already allocated to that outfall in proportions consistent with the original outfall design.

You will need to design all of the independent parcels with stormwater treatment and detention in mind. Further additions of stormwater flow rate will not be allowed as the Deer St outfall is also currently maxed out during the design storms. This is evidenced by stormwater back-ups in the intersection of Bridge and Hill St during large storm. events. This intersection is too low in relation to its surroundings and high tide and thus does not have the sufficient head needed to push the water out leading to a large area of ponding during peak flow/high tide conditions.

See reply from Patrick Crimmins from T&B below:

Dave: Below is from our cover letter to TAC yesterday. There is no additional capacity in Brewster Street based on Stantec design. We have designed the system so DSA Lot 3 & 6 runoff ties into the new system in the proposed road to that is directed to Deer Street.

The existing site is characterized by two (2) watersheds that flow to two (2) separate municipal drainage systems, Brewster Street and Deer Street. These watersheds both ultimately discharge to the North Mill Pond. The project's stormwater design has been designed to mimic these watersheds in order to direct flow to both the Brewster Street and Deer Street systems. The Brewster Street municipal system was recently improved. The City provided a copy of the drainage analysis prepared in May 2014 for these improvements. This analysis shows that under existing conditions, the drainage system in Brewster Street system has just less than a 5-year, 24-hr peak flow design capacity under free flowing conditions and a 2-year, 24-hr peak flow design capacity under the highest observable tide conditions. Due to this limited capacity, the project's stormwater systems have been designed match the existing condition peak flow rates directed to the Brewster Street system. The remaining runoff will be directed to the Deer Street system. To achieve this, a proposed watershed consisting of runoff from the southern portion of the proposed road and roundabout, the Rock Street parking area and a portion of the garage will be directed towards the Brewster Street system. A second watershed consisting of the northern portion of the roadway and remaining portion of the garage will be directed to the Deer Street system. Runoff generated by both of these proposed watersheds will be collected in new stormwater management systems that will include off-line catch basins equipped deep sumps and oil separator hoods. In accordance with the New Hampshire Stormwater Manual, the stormwater management systems were sized to provide to pass a 10-year, 24-hour storm event without flooding. The future DSA developments were taken into account when sizing the new system that will connect to Deer Street.

From: Joseph H. Kieffner [mailto:jhkieffner@geoinc.com]

Sent: Monday, December 19, 2016 6:49 PM

To: Terry L. Desmarais

Cc: Kim S Rogers; Ania Szulc Rogers; Steve Leonard; Dave S. Allen; Peter H. Rice; Dave Desfosses Subject: Deer Street Ext Stormwater

#### Terry,

We are currently in the middle of sizing the stormwater BMP's for the Deer Street Development. It was recently mentioned that the recent Brewster street stormwater improvements may be able to provide detention and/or treatment for the Lots along Deer Street Extension and to send the data to you for a determination. Would you please let us know if this is a possibility? The stormwater flows are in the table below.

Lot	50-YR Storm Volume <sup>1</sup>		50-YR Storm Run-off <sup>1</sup>		Peak Flow (for Pipe sizing) <sup>2</sup>		
	Pre-Dev	Post-Dev	Pre-Dev	Post-Dev	10-YR <sup>3</sup>	25-YR	50-YR
2	4,845	5,113	1.5	1.4	0.83	1.08	1.39
3	4,371	13,784	1.39	3.98	2.35	3.08	3.77
6	7,404	10,427	2.29	2.96	1.77	2.32	2.84
Total Volume	16,620	29,324					

- 1 SCS TR-20 Method using NRCC Extreme Precipitation values for the 24-hour storm event
- 2 Peak flow occurs at Tc of 5 minutes and was calculated using Rational Method.
- 3 Stated Design Storm for storm sewers in Subdivision Regulations.

Please let me know if you have any comments or questions.

Kind Regards,

www.geoinsight.com

Joseph H. Kieffner, P.E.
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### Environmental Strategy & Engineering Practical in Nature

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#### Kim S Rogers

Dave S. Allen <dsallen@cityofportsmouth.com> From:

Thursday, October 26, 2017 1:03 PM Sent: Ania Szulc Rogers; Kim S Rogers To:

**Gregg Mikolaities** Cc:

RE: City mitigation of water run-off impacts Subject:

#### Ania.

Juliet will be preparing a written response as part of her Planning Board packet comments. I will be at the next meeting to speak to the board about the drainage system design associated with the parking garage and Foundry Place. Either Ray or David Desfosses will also be there as technical resources. Some of the points that will be made include:

- All runoff from the garage facility goes through either a stormceptor or gas/sand interceptor (details and location in plumbing section of plans) before discharge into the stormdrain system
- 80% of flow from the Parking Garage then goes through the new treatment unit on the Brewster Street outfall
- 74% of the pavement on the City parcel is discharged into the North Mill Pond through the Brewster Street stormwater treatment system
- All catchbasins in the Foundry Place are designed with deep sumps and snouts.

Other points that should be pointed out:

- AOT rules allow exception for peak rate and volume when discharging into a tidal water;
- Tidal discharge would does not apply to treatment
- Foundry Place and Garage site are currently contaminated and being cleaned up, reducing stormwater contamination into NMP

We can get coordinate before the PB mtg to further discuss the details of what will be presented Regards NMP = North Mill Pond

David

From: Ania Szulc Rogers [mailto:ania@glrogers.com]

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2017 2:20 PM

To: Dave S. Allen <dsallen@cityofportsmouth.com>; Kim S Rogers <krogers@glrogers.com>

Cc: Gregg Mikolaities < Gregg@augustpllc.com> Subject: City mitigation of water run-off impacts

Dave,

You mentioned yesterday in a meeting that you will be meeting with your team to address Corey Clark requests from Planning Board dated 10/16/17.

Can you share with us your responses and your strategy? Maybe you can email us the final document you are putting together?

PS: When is next Building Committee meeting for the garage?

Thanks,

~Ania

Ania Rogers | Quality Director | GL Rogers & Company | O 207-363-3540 | M 603-809-2138 | F 207-363-1904 | ania@glrogers.com | www.glrogers.com |

## Commercial Real Estate Investment, Management, and Development

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