

Judith Allen, resident and owner, 62 Hampshire St. and registered voter District 1  
**Written comments regarding proposed building project at 56 Hampshire St. to the  
 Portland Planning Board**

**Detrimental aspects of the proposed Verdante Luxury condominium project to  
 Hampshire St, the India Street Historic Zone, Lincoln Park and the Congress Street  
 Historic District:**

- Although the Verdante proposal for 6 stories (+ 7<sup>th</sup> roof story 129 ft.) is based on facing Franklin St, cars can only access the building from the Hampshire St. side of the buildings. Hampshire St is a narrow, three-block long street with mostly older three-story residential buildings that provide affordable housing for Portland. On the Congress St end of Hampshire St. (the site of the proposed Verdante complex), all the residential buildings are designated as Contributing Historic Buildings in the India Street Historic Preservation Zone (see attached image)
- The height and facade of the proposed Verdante building is completely out of character with the surround architecture and would drive a wedge between the East End, India St Historic Zone and Lincoln Park, and the historic building along Congress St. In this crucial corridor of historic buildings between Federal St. and Congress Street that runs from East End Cemetery to City Hall. The height of Verdante would also compete on the skyline of Portland with the spire of the beautiful Emulate Conception Cathedral. The proposed site of the Verdante project is not just any spot on the map of Portland, it is in the **most crucial center of the history and beauty of Portland**, and yet the design is completely insensitive to both.

**Radical change to Hampshire St.:**

- Together the Luminato and Verdant projects more than double the number of housing units on Hampshire St, radically changing this quite residential street by **adding a total of 55 units and 2 commercial spaces in the 2 projects** and greatly increasing traffic and demands on limited street parking (allowed only on one side of the street): specifically there are 24 units in the Luminato Condominiums added to the proposed Verdante building with 31 units and only 28 parking places, with no parking for 3 apartment and no parking for the 2 commercial spaces or for service vehicles except on the street. Add also the 15 parking spaces that the Verdante design provides for the residents of 312 Congress St. and you have **cars from 72 units all circulating on Hampshire St** substantially increasing traffic and demands on available street parking for the residences of Hampshire St.
- Until plans for restoring Franklin St. and reconnecting Federal St and Newberry St. are implemented, (now dead-end streets) large residential buildings like this one should be delayed or limited in size and height.

**Luxury condominiums verses affordable housing:**

Hampshire St is a residential street offering affordable housing. The Verdante Luxury Condominiums add no affordable housing to the neighborhood and in fact hurt the existing affordable housing by increased strain on the very limited street parking (the existing, older building depend on residential street parking), increasing noise and traffic on a formerly quiet residential St. The 2 commercial units in stead of residential units begins to move Hampshire St. away from the much needed affordable housing street to a commercial street.

### **Negative impact on the Value of our Building at 60/62 Hampshire St:**

**1. It will be completely in the Shadow of the Verdante high-rise** that will enclose our historic Victorian building completely on two sides, making this possibly the only historic building in Portland enclosed within the L shape of a looming 129ft building resulting in:

- Blocking all direct sunlight to the brick walls will have adverse effects on bricks, mortar and structure of the building with increased dampness to the structure that has had sunlight and air on its brick walls since it was built in 1867.
- Once sunny apartments with a view of Lincoln Park will become dark, damp and without view.
- Investment in 4 newly planted trees on our property is at risk with no direct sunlight.
- Plans to go green with photovoltaic will no longer an option for our building.
- Tenant gardens at the back of our building will not longer have any direct sun.

**2. Increased noise, traffic and demand for on street parking from the two proposed commercial units with entrances on Hampshire St** will have a very negative impact on the value of our building and our ability to rent apartments, especially if they are bars or restaurants or other businesses that are open later than 8pm. We know first hand the negative impact the infamous Sangillos Bar (now Thomas Bar) has had on lower Hampshire St. Almost all new commercial businesses in the immediate neighborhood are either bars, cafes or restaurants (all on much wider, two-way streets) so we have good reason to expect the same here. It would be **more appropriate for the two commercial spaces to face Franklin St, a street of commercial buildings** rather than on Hampshire St., a very narrow one-way (except for one block) residential street. **We need more affordable housing not more commercial units.** Don't make it even more difficult for those of us who do provide affordable housing and for tenants who need affordable housing.

**3. Degradation to our tree lined block** by removing the street tree in front of 56 Hampshire St. (appropriately small sizes tree for a city street, one of only 6 trees on the street). The city was petitioned by the residence of Hampshire to plant these 6 street trees when the road was repave about 10 years ago. Note: although the Verdante renderings of the proposed project show trees on Hampshire and Federal St. The details of the plans do not include replacing these trees. Note also that the similar Luminato building has virtually no landscaping on the Hampshire St. side of the building and no trees at all around the building. Instead Hampshire St gets a view of rows of air conditioners and electrical meters and an empty vacant lot where there use to be a residential building, torn down during the construction project instead of being rehabilitated to provide affordable housing.

### **Requests for a more positive development to improve Hampshire St. & neighborhood:**

- An appropriate building for this historic, residential neighborhood would be a **3 to 4-story brick-faced building** residential building to replace the small wooden storage building and parking at 56 Hampshire St. would be an improvement (such as the new 4-story, brick-faced construction on India St.)
- **13 trees** removed in proposed construction should be replaced on Hampshire/Franklin/Newberry St., not elsewhere in the city
- **No residential parking allowed for Verdante building** since they have parking provided where other older residential buildings on Hampshire and Federal depend on the very limited residential street parking for tenants.
- **Residential units on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Hampshire St.** instead of 2 commercial spaces. Any commercial spaces should be on the Franklin St. side of the project



*Corner of Hampshire St, and Congress ST., October 2017*

Public Comment

Priscilla Slack

62 Hampshire Street – tenant

(207) 874-7427

Please call to inform about Planning Board meetings

Over phone 2/24/18 - Expressed concern about height of new building – especially casting shadow, won't be able to use yard, proximity of building. Character is not in keeping with the historic buildings on Hampshire.

Deb Andrews  
Historic Preservation Board  
Program Manager  
City of Portland, Maine

March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

RE: Written Comments and Concerns regarding Verdante Proposed Condominium Project at 56 Hampshire Street

Dear Mrs. Andrews and Historic Preservation Board Members:

If the proposed plan for the Verdante building at 56 Hampshire Street is allowed to proceed we the owners of 60 and 62 Hampshire Street believe there will be serious negative consequences concerning the structure of our brick buildings, both of which are contributing historic buildings in the India Street Historic Preservation Zone.

The proposed Verdante building will enclose our historic Victorian building completely on the south and west sides, making this possibly the only historic building in Portland enclosed within the L-shape of a looming 129 foot building. Our building will be completely in the shadow of the Verdante building blocking all direct sunlight to the brick walls of our building. In the past, and due to moisture and mold build up on the bricks, a lack of sun has caused the bricks to crumble and dissipate. This structure has had sunlight and air on it since its walls were built in 1867. As you may be aware, and unlike modern brick, the greater than 100-year-old bricks are hard on the surface but soft in the interior. In the basement of our building we have seen the effects of dampness on these older bricks, with some non-structural bricks crumbling to powder. Additionally, the fewer the hours of direct sunlight on the roof the greater the accumulation of snow and the potential for ice damming.

The proposed dimensions of the L-shaped Verdante building are the direct result of a preliminary vote by the Planning Board on Aug 8, 2017 to extend the UT zone on Federal Street and away from Franklin Arterial. A vote that was passed under the premise that the Planning Board would have a chance to revisit the issue during a site review. The vote extended the UT zone on Federal Street much deeper than the UT zone on Congress Street. At that meeting the historic buildings on Federal Street were considered, but the effect on our building was not even mentioned. If the UT zone were the same as on the corner of Congress and Franklin Streets the Verdante building would rise to the 129 foot height much further back and south from Hampshire Street, leaving a narrow corridor of sunlight and circulating air to reach the walls of our building.

**We request that the Historic Preservation Board act to protect our building** and this important corridor of Portland history between Federal and Congress Streets. We are not against development, but development should not be at the expense of the historic buildings of Portland. Furthermore, we **request that the August 8, 2017 Planning Board decision concerning UT zone re-alignment be reviewed and amended** in light of the potential serious negative consequences to our historic building. **Please inform us as to what steps we should take to get a review of the August 8th decision.**

Sincerely,

Judy Allen, Eirene Efstathiou  
Tim Robinson, William Fox (Owners 60/62 Hampshire Street)