

# Planning and Urban Development Department

## Planning Division

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**Subject:** B-1 Design Review – 155 Washington Avenue  
**Written by:** Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer  
**Date of Review:** Tuesday, March 6 2018

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The project at 155 Washington Avenue was reviewed according to the *City of Portland Design Manual* standards by Caitlin Cameron, Urban Designer, Shukria Wiar, Planner, and Nell Donaldson, Senior Planner, against the *B1 Commercial Business Zones Standards* (Section (d) of the Design Manual) and *Multiple-Family Standards*.

**Design Review Comments:** *(questions and unmet standards in red)*

**(d) B-1 Commercial Business Zones**

*Standard (1) a. Urban Street Wall* – Building placement is near the property line and maintains the desired street wall.

*Standard (1) b. Mixed Uses* – Building includes retail and office uses.

*Standard (1) c. Building Entrances* – Both building entrances (office and retail) face and are directly accessible from the street and include building overhangs as canopies.

*Standard (1) d. Windows* – Windows are provided along street frontage as required – high level of fenestration. **VT of .7 or greater is required.**

*Standard (1) e. Façade Character* – Building has two entrances facing the street as well as retail storefront adjacent to the street. Blade sign placement should be as near the retail entrance as feasible to differentiate the retail from the office entrances.

*Standard (1) f. Building Design* – Building design conveys its commercial/mixed use nature. Use of brick and storefront is consistent with commercial buildings on this street – though many existing commercial buildings on Washington Ave are converted from different uses. Emphasis to the vertical members at the ground floor is created by the recess of the panels below the windows. **Staff suggest this treatment either be applied to the full height of the building, or at the ground floor only to delineate the different uses. The current design suggests the first and second floor are apart from the upper floors – instead, a more typical approach to the transom of the ground floor retail would be a strong horizontal line created by a lintel or transom or similar element to tie the ground level together and separate from the floors above. The ground floor windows may need to be shortened to achieve this effect.**

*Standard (1) g. Building Materials* – Given the predominant context of simple material palette, staff found the building to include **too many materials** and that material **placement is not helping the overall proportion and massing of the building. The red brick is incongruous with the wood tone corners. Possible revision may be a grey brick with the natural tone, or that the natural tone be grey with the red brick.** Articulation details include the canopies, recessed

entries, and 3" reveal between materials creates a good transition details between materials and provides some shadow line.

*Standard (1) h. Building Scale* – Building is four stories – one to two stories taller than immediately abutting neighbors – predominantly residential buildings on this stretch of Washington Avenue. The existing scale of building on Washington Ave varies in height from one to four stories with the majority of buildings being too short compared with the street width. Therefore, staff support new development that is appropriately scaled for the street and for a mixed-use urban corridor and finds four stories meets the standard (as well as the zoning). In addition, this project has some massing variation at the third floor that varies the height of the building at the street.

*Standard (1) i. Landscaping and Buffers* – Parking is to the rear of the property and is screened from view by the building.



Shukria Wiar &lt;shukriaw@portlandmaine.gov&gt;

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## 147 Washington Avenue

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**Lauren Swett** <lswett@woodardcurran.com>

Fri, Mar 23, 2018 at 8:06 AM

To: "Wiar, Shukria" &lt;shukriaw@portlandmaine.gov&gt;

Cc: Keith Gray &lt;kgray@portlandmaine.gov&gt;, Tom Errico &lt;thomas.errico@tylin.com&gt;, Bruce Hyman &lt;bhyman@portlandmaine.gov&gt;

Hi,

They have addressed all of my minor stormwater comments.

I know there were some discussions about East Cove Street, and I'm not completely sure "what" that street is, but they are proposing to install concrete slipform curb and tipdown in East Cove Street up to the Washington Ave ROW. I wanted to make sure that was acceptable to the City in this area. I believe they have rights to this space (they are doing some landscaping too), but wanted to check if this needs to meet the City standard.

Finalization of the construction management plan will need to be a condition of approval. The contractor is still to be determined, and the plan notes that a "Maintenance of Traffic" plan will be submitted in the future, so there are no specific conditions identified. They include a statement "Adequate parking for construction workers shall be provided along Washington Avenue or arrangements for off-street parking at an off-site location shall be provided." I'm just guessing, but I don't think that the City wants contractor parking on Washington Avenue, so a specific comment should be made that off-site parking is provided.

Any questions, let me know. I'm out of the office most of the day, so please call my cell phone.

Thanks,

Lauren

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Lauren Swett, P.E.

Technical Manager

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Shukria Wiar <shukriaw@portlandmaine.gov>

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## 147 Washington Avenue

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Jeff Tarling <jst@portlandmaine.gov>

Fri, Mar 23, 2018 at 8:47 AM

To: Shukria Wiar <shukriaw@portlandmaine.gov>

Hi Shukria -

I checked the tree and landscape plan and wanted to offer the following comments as conditions of approval.

a) Street trees - none proposed, would like to replace the missing tree and perhaps add a second one. The spacing would be between the proposed on-street parking spaces.

Rectangular shaped tree pit, with no tree grate or raised granite planter.

Recommended tree type ornamental due to overhead utilities, Species type include: 'Accolade' or 'Pink Flair' Cherry, or 'Adirondack' Crabapple.

b) Red Maple, on the right side of the building should be an upright shaped cultivar like, 'Armstrong' or 'Bowhall' Red Maple.

c) Landscape elements - Juniper virginiana (7) on the right side of the building, and on [East Cove Street \(4\)](#) these plants should be of a larger size than proposed 5 gal. Recommend 5 - 6' Height, 4 - 5' minimum.

Landscape planting near Dumpsters - the proposed treatment is 50 Panicum (Switch grass). It would be recommended to use perhaps 22 grasses in the snow storage area and include woody tree(s) or shrubs near the back of the dumpster for more year around and taller screening. Overall this space seems to have just a LOT of grasses as an easy fix vs optimize the space with some creativity and interest.

Thanks,

Jeff  
Jeff Tarling  
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