

BOARD APPROVED

MEMORANDUM

MARCH 14, 2019

TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
D/B/A BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (BPDA)*
AND BRIAN P. GOLDEN, DIRECTOR

FROM: JONATHAN GREELEY, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW/GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
DAVID CARLSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR URBAN DESIGN
ALEXA PINARD, URBAN DESIGNER
MARIE MERCURIO, PLANNER
MICHAEL SINATRA, PROJECT MANAGER

SUBJECT: 1767-1769 WASHINGTON STREET- ALEXANDRA HOTEL- ROXBURY

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests that the Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA") d/b/a Boston Planning & Development Agency ("BPDA") authorize the Director to: (1) issue a Scoping Determination waiving the requirement of further review pursuant to Article 80, Large Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code (the "Code") for the 1767-1769 Washington Street- Alexandra Hotel project (the "Proposed Project"); (2) issue a Certification of Compliance under Section 80B-6 upon successful completion of the Article 80 review process; (3) execute and deliver a Cooperation Agreement, and any and all other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the Proposed Project.

* Effective October 20, 2016, the BRA commenced doing business as the BPDA

PROJECT SITE

The approximately 8,025 sf site, located on the southwestern corner of the Washington Street and Massachusetts Avenue intersection, is comprised of two parcels ("Project Site"). The first parcel, 1767-1769 Washington Street, is currently vacant land which formerly contained a brick row house known as the Ivory Bean house. The second parcel, 631 Massachusetts Avenue, contains a five-story, approximately 27,400 sf stone-clad structure known as the Hotel Alexandra. Completed in 1875, the Hotel Alexandra building is one of the few remaining historic structures along Washington Street in the blocks immediately west of Massachusetts Avenue. With the exception of a beauty supply store on the ground floor, the building has been vacant for many years and has suffered from a lack of maintenance and internal fire damage. The Project Site is bounded by Shawmut Avenue to the south, Harrison Avenue to the north, Massachusetts Avenue to the west and Northampton Street to the east.

The Project Site is located within a short walking distance of the Mass Ave T stop and several MBTA bus stops. It is also serviced by the Silver Line with a top directly in front of the site.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The development team includes:

Address/Location: 631 Massachusetts Avenue, 1767-1769 Washington Street

Proponent: Alexandra Partners, LLC
121 Charles Street South Boston, MA 02116
Jas Bhogal Thomas Calus Nick Colavito

Architect: CBT Architects
110 Canal Street Boston, MA 02114
(617) 262-4354
David Nagahiro
Vickie Alani
Andrew Wang
Stephen Walnut

Legal Counsel: Marc LaCasse Law, LLC
75 Arlington Street, Suite 500 Boston, MA 02116
(617) 605-2767
Marc LaCasse

Permitting
Consultants: Epsilon Associates, Inc.
3 Mill & Main Place, Suite 250 Maynard, MA 01754
(978) 897-7100
Cindy Schlessinger
Talya Moked

Transportation
Consultant
and Civil Engineer: Howard Stein Hudson
11 Beacon Street, Suite 1010 Boston, MA 02108
(617) 482-7080
Richard Latini
Brian Beisel
James Downing
Andrew Fabiszewski

Sustainability
Consultant: The Green Engineer
23 Bradford Street, 1st Floor Concord, MA 01742
(978) 369-8978
Sarah Michelman
Erica Downs

MEP Engineer: R. G. Vanderweil Engineers, LLP
274 Summer Street Boston, MA 02210
(617) 574-8132
Alex Vanderweil

DESCRIPTION AND PROGRAM

The proposed development will retain and restore the façade of the existing building and will recreate and/or refurbish the original historic design elements. Due to decades of neglect and extensive water infiltration, the existing structure is no longer viable and will accordingly be replaced. Behind the façade and on the adjacent vacant parcel, a new, approximately 150 room, twelve story boutique hotel will be constructed with approximately 66,000 sf ("The Proposed Project"). The basement may include a fitness room as an amenity for the hotel guests. On the twelfth floor, there will be a rooftop level bar/restaurant with access to a roof deck overlooking the City.

The Proposed Project will not include on-site parking due to site constraints and the proximity of the Project Site to public transportation. Valet service will be provided that will utilize a nearby parking garage or lot.

ARTICLE 80 REVIEW PROCESS

On September 11, 2018, the Proponent filed a Letter of Intent ("LOI") in accordance with the BPDA's policy regarding Provision of Mitigation by Development Projects in Boston. On September 11, 2018, letters soliciting nominations for the Impact Advisory Group ("IAG") were delivered to local and state elected officials. On October 25, 2018, the IAG was finalized with seven (7) members.

The Proponent filed a Project Notification Form ("PNF") for the Proposed Project on November 30, 2018, which initiated a thirty-day public comment period which was extended due to the holiday season, with a closing date of January 23, 2019. At the request of the proponent, the community and the IAG, the comment period was extended until February 13, 2019 to allow more time for public input. Notice of the receipt of the PNF by the BPDA was published in the Boston Herald on December 3, 2018. The notice and PNF were sent to the City's public agencies/departments and elected officials. Additionally, copies of the PNF were sent to all IAG members.

The BPDA subsequently sponsored and held four (4) IAG meetings on January 16, 2019, January 30, 2019, February 13, 2019 and February 27, 2019 and two (2) general public meetings on January 9, 2019 and February 7, 2019 to solicit feedback and review the Proposed Project. The public meetings were advertised in the *Bay State Banner* and *The South End News*.

Pursuant to Section 80B-5.3 of the Code, a Scoping Session was held on December 17, 2018 with the City's public agencies and elected officials to review and discuss the Proposed Project.

In addition to the above mentioned meetings, the Proponent also conducted community outreach and attended a series of meetings before and during the Article 80 review process with their abutters, local elected officials, and several neighborhood groups in the South End and Roxbury to discuss the Proposed Project and solicit feedback.

The Proponent also received a vote of approval from the Boston Civic Design Commission on March 5, 2019.

ZONING

The Project Site is located within the South End Landmarks District and is also located on the eastern edge of the Roxbury Neighborhood District.

MITIGATION & COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The Proponent has agreed to work with Madison Park Technical High School to coordinate a co-op program with students for construction co-ops, hotel workers and restaurant staff.

The Proponent has also agreed to promote local businesses like valet companies (Prive Parking), hotel supply companies, etc. They also plan to promote and hire local vendors.

The hotel amenities will be open to the public, which will be an additional 7,500 sf of public space, which in turn will create economic activity and provide job creation.

The Proponent has agreed to install indoor bike racks for employees and will also subsidize Charlie Cards for employees, while providing complimentary Charlie Cards to guests.

The Proponent will also be spending approximately \$15,000 to provide transit and transportation information inside the hotel and also plans to collaborate with neighboring businesses for shuttle access/sharing.

1. Recipient: **Boston Transportation Department ("BTD")**

Address: Boston City Hall, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Use: The contribution will be used to fund bike racks in compliance with City of Boston guidelines, which will be included in the Transportation Access Plan Agreement ("TAPA"), as well as providing a Mobility Micro Hub via a transit screen and funding of BTD local infrastructure projects

Amount: **\$100,000**

Timeline: The payment shall be made payable to the BRA upon issuance of the building permit by the City of Boston Inspectional Services Department ("ISD") and the BRA will distribute as outlined above.

2. Recipient: **Boston Parks & Recreation Department**

c/o City's Fund for Parks
Address: 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02118

Use: The contribution will be used to plant street trees as well as funding for improvements to Ramsay Park and Chester Square Park.

Amount: **\$35,000**

Timeline: The payment shall be made payable to the BRA upon issuance of the building permit by the City of Boston Inspectional Services Department ("ISD") and the BRA will distribute as outlined above.

3. Recipient: **Washington Gateway Main Street, Inc.**

Address: 46 Waltham Street
Boston, MA 02118

Use: The contribution will be used to fund sidewalk cleaning

Amount: **\$10,000**

Timeline: The payment shall be made payable to the BRA upon issuance of the building permit by the City of Boston Inspectional Services Department (“ISD”) and the BRA will distribute as outlined above.

4. Recipient: **BPDA**

Use: The contribution will be used to create a community benefit fund, based on neighborhood priorities, which will be managed by the BPDA and will be made available through the standard community benefits application process.

Amount: **\$100,000**

Timeline: The payment shall be made payable to the BRA upon issuance of the building permit by the City of Boston Inspectional Services Department (“ISD”) and the BRA will distribute as outlined above.

The total community benefits contribution be \$245,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approvals have been requested of the BPDA pursuant to Article 80, Section 80B of the Code for the issuance of a Scoping Determination waiving the requirement of further review pursuant to Article 80, Section 80B-5.3(d) of the Code, and for the issuance of a Certification of Compliance under Section 80B-6 upon successful completion of the Article 80 review process. In accordance with Section 80B-5.3(d) of the Code, the BPDA may issue a Scoping Determination Waiving Further Review if the PNF, together with any additional material and comments received by the BPDA prior to the issuance of the Scoping Determination, are found to adequately describe the impacts of the Proposed Project and offer appropriate mitigation of such impacts.

BPDA staff believes that the PNF, meets the criteria for the issuance of a Scoping Determination Waiving Further Review. It is therefore recommended that the BPDA approve the Proposed Project and authorize the Director to: (1) issue a Scoping Determination waiving the requirement of further review pursuant to Article 80, Section 80B-5.3(d) of the Code; (2) issue a Certification of Compliance under Section 80B-6 upon successful completion of the Article 80 review process; and (3) execute and deliver a Cooperation Agreement, and any and all other agreements and documents upon terms and conditions deemed to be in the best interest of the BPDA.

Appropriate votes follow:

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Scoping Determination under Section 80B-5.3(d) of the Boston Zoning Code (the "Code"), which (i) finds that the Project Notification Form ("PNF") adequately describes the potential impacts arising from the proposed 1767-1769 Washington Street- Hotel Alexandra project (the "Proposed Project"), and provides sufficient mitigation measures to minimize these impacts, and (ii) waives further review of the Proposed Project under subsections 4 and 5 of Section 80B-5 of the Code, subject to continuing design review by the Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA"); and

FURTHER

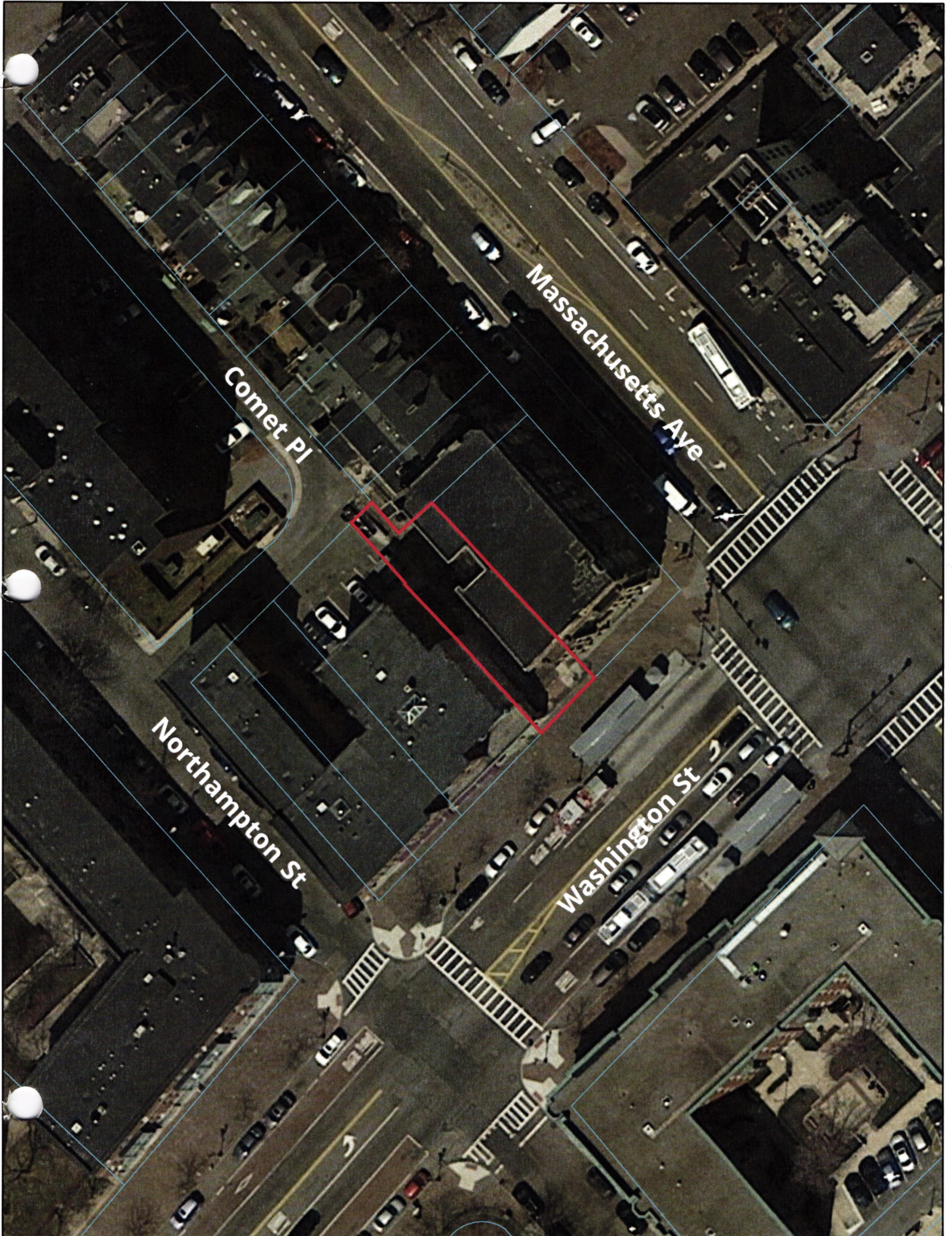
VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Certification of Compliance for the Proposed Project upon the successful completion of all Article 80 processes; and

FURTHER

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to execute a Cooperation Agreement, and any and all other agreements and documents which the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the Proposed Project, all upon terms and conditions determined to be in the best interests of the BRA.

1769 Washinton Street (Alexandria Hotel)

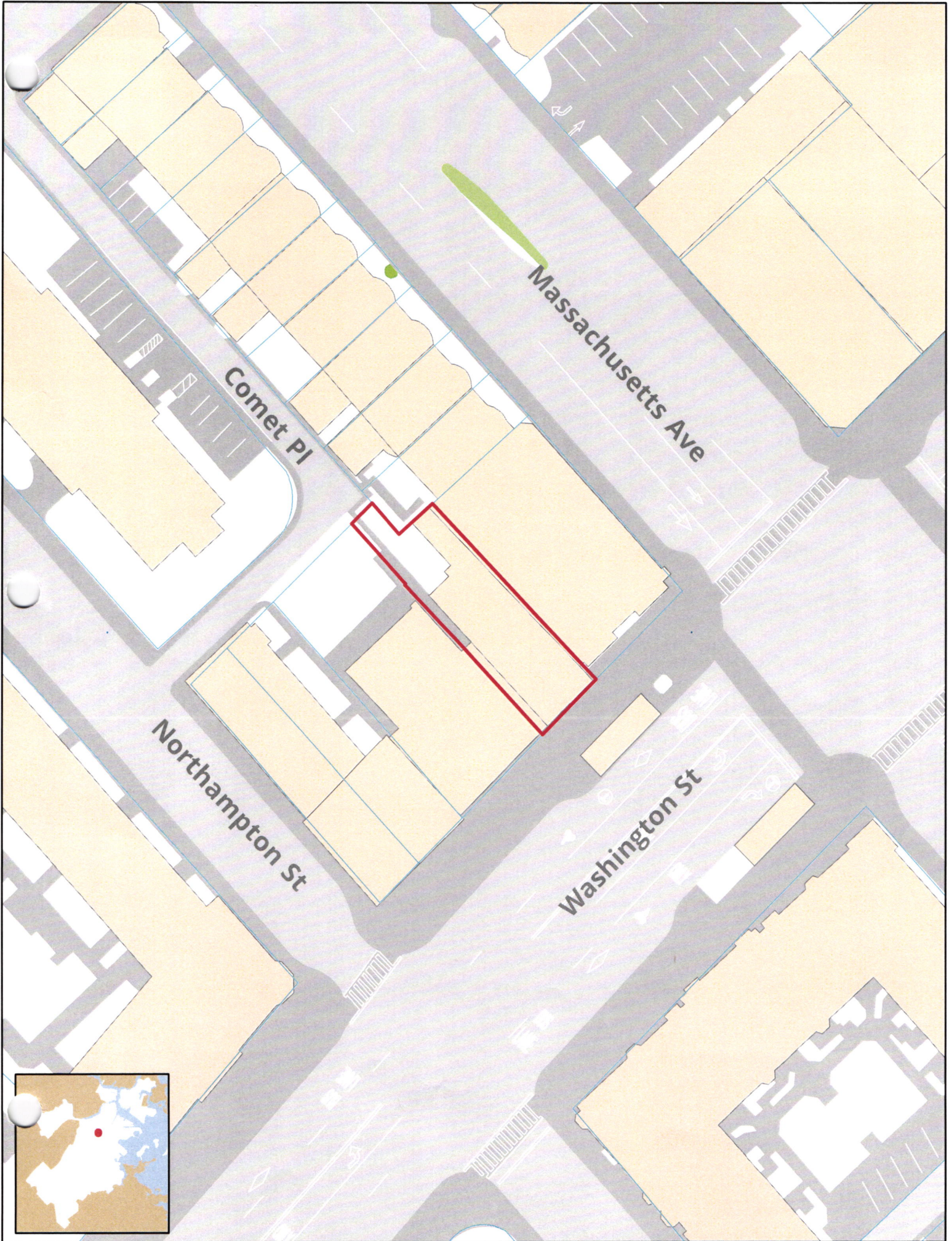
2017 aerial imagery
0 10 20 30 40 50 Feet



1769 Washinton Street (Alexandria Hotel)



1 inch = 50 feet
0 10 20 30 40 50 Feet





Teresa Polhemus <teresa.polhemus@boston.gov>

Alexandra Hotel project, item #26 on Agenda

1 message

Roxbury Voices <roxburyvoices@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 14, 2019 at 1:25 PM

To: Timothy.Burke@boston.gov, Carol.Downs@boston.gov, Priscilla.Rojas@boston.gov, BPDABoard@boston.gov

Cc: Tammy.Donovan.bra@cityofboston.org, Roxbury Voices <roxburyvoices@gmail.com>

To BPDA Board:

I am a resident who lives a block from the Hotel site and I write as one of many Roxbury residents, attendees at local churches and mosques, and citizens interested in preserving the unique architecture of the Victorian gem that is the Alexandra Hotel.

Our "Roxbury Voices Statement" (attached) gives a comprehensive over-view of our concerns and complaints. However, I wish to stress at this time the failure of the review process to include the Roxbury residents and neighboring businesses. The City's exclusion of Roxbury in favor of South End neighborhood organizations is an insult, not only to Roxbury but to the City's many promises to be inclusive of all its residents. The project should not proceed further without full and timely review by the Roxbury organizations listed in the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. South End voices should not prevail on the development of a site that is located in Roxbury.

I urge the BPDA to keep its faith with the Roxbury community and take these concerns into consideration.

For Roxbury Voices:

Carol Streiff

[578 Mass. Ave., Boston](#)**Roxbury Voices Statement.docx**

18K

Roxbury Voices speak. . .

What we want for the corner of Washington St. and Mass. Ave., site of the Alexandra Hotel, Beauty Supply and former home to Skippy Whites:

- *Develop the existing building to give the neighborhood a facility that benefits local residents and businesses as well as a Victorian Roxbury landmark.*
- *A design that limits the height to Landmarks specification of 70' and compliments surrounding Victorian structures.*
- *Require review and critiques from abutters and neighborhood organizations (in compliance with Articles 50 and 80), and invite review by historic preservation experts, and other individuals and organizations with relevant expertise.*
- *Use local construction and building trades for all rehabilitation work.*
- *Employ local residents for job openings following rehabilitation.*
- *Mitigation and Community Benefits commensurate with potential income of development.*

What we do not want for this corner:

- *A glass tower with 14 floors that looms over buildings and sidewalks and casts shadow on many neighboring residences and businesses.*
- *A hotel with 166 rooms and two restaurants, with resulting noise, disruptions from taxi, Uber and Lyft drop-offs and pick-ups, and trash removal.*
- *Parking problems because most streets allow night-time and week-end parking.*
- *Displacement of local businesses and residents as property values increase, landlords increase rents, and people are priced out of the neighborhood.*
- *Disruption of Silver Line and #1 bus travel caused by excessive traffic.*

Facts for consideration:

- *Over 400 hotel rooms exist within 1/2 mile: Hampton Inn at Crosstown – 175 rooms; Best Western Plus -- 92; Residence Inn by Marriott – 135.*
- *The building has not been condemned nor is there evidence of ISD finding that building is unsafe which is why the shop on the 1st floor continues to operate.*
- *Roxbury streets in vicinity require South End parking sticker, already depriving Roxbury residents of valuable parking spaces.*
- *The City's review process focused on South End participation and ignored the two Roxbury associations specified by the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan.*

Roxbury Voices, roxburyvoices@gmail.com



Teresa Polhemus <teresa.polhemus@boston.gov>

ALEXANDRA:LACK OF ROXBURY COMMUNITY INPUT

1 message

thompsonlauren83 <thompsonlauren83@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 14, 2019 at 12:44 PM

To: Bpda1 <Timothy.Burke@boston.gov>, Bpda <BPDABoard@boston.gov>, Bpda2 <Carol.Downs@boston.gov>, Bpda3 <Priscilla.Rojas@boston.gov>

Cc: Bpdasecy <Tammy.Donovan.bra@cityofboston.gov>, thompsonlauren83@gmail.com

March 14, 2019

Dear BPDA Board Members,

The Alexandra Hotel project location was designated as South End property on the BPDA website for 8 months, from inception of the project. Due to this error, Roxbury residents were not notified through the normal BPDA process. In fact, several abutters were not even notified, including the several abutting ground floor businesses. Edna Smallwood, President of Grant Manor Housing, located directly across the street from The Alexandra, was also never notified.

I submit that this project has not followed an extensive community vetting process due to the lack of proper and adequate notification to the impacted residents. The IAG which due to the error in location designation is not only disproportionate (more assigned from the South End than Roxbury) but they did not reach out to the entire impacted community for input.

As a life long Roxbury resident, it is disheartening to see such a travesty as this take place. The disrespect to residents and lack of accountability by the City of Boston does not meet the definition of community engagement. How can South End residents speak for Roxbury residents? Voices of the residents residing at Grant Manor, Lenox Street, Reed Street, and residing on many other surrounding streets in the "impacted area" have not been heard due to the designation error of the BPDA and its failure to take responsibility for this error.

I am not opposed to development of this site but I am opposed to disenfranchising those who have a right to be informed and a right to provide input into development in their own backyard.

Roxbury is not just land, people live here.

Kind Regards,

Lauren Thompson

3/14/2019

City of Boston Mail - ALEXANDRA:LACK OF ROXBURY COMMUNITY INPUT

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

#26

Good Afternoon BPDA Board Members,

My name is Connie Forbes and I am writing today regarding the proposed Alexandra Hotel project which is located at the corner of Mass Ave and Washington Street in Roxbury MA. I say Roxbury MA because for the first 15 meetings of the project the BPDA and Developer identified the project as being in the South End. By defining as the South End there was no notification provided to the Roxbury Neighborhood Council (RNC) or the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee (RSMPOC), the bodies which act in our community's best interest. We work together and yes our meetings are lively.

The letter of intent listed Roxbury as the community in which the project was located and was then later changed to the South End. When notified of the error the BPDA did, after a few weeks, correct the error.

We were then asked to weigh in on a project in our community, 1) after the selection of an IAG, 2) design conversations were done, and 3) benefits and mitigation decisions have already been made. This is similar to being asked to join a hundred mile journey during the last 10 miles and comment on the entire trip.

While the misclassification was acknowledged no attempt was made for outreach to residents in the immediate area or our community representatives. As a small group of concerned residents we wanted to ensure area residents were informed of the project. We did outreach and spoke with churches, businesses and residents – none of whom were aware of the project despite close proximity. A comprehensive community response is impossible if the community in which the project is located and the Roxbury Neighborhood Council which is an important community speaker in the Article 50 process has been entirely excluded from the process as of today.

Roxbury as a whole is wary of self-selected people speaking on behalf of the community, hence the need to have project notification and decisions reside with a central body.

At this time there is concern that BPDA's violation of the agreements (Roxbury Strategic Master Plan and Article 50) with the community may not have been unintentional. Trust has been broken and there seems to be no concern as the Alexandra Hotel locomotive speeds ahead sans Roxbury.

Thank you for your time and understanding.

With utmost respect,



Connie Forbes

Longtime Roxbury Resident and Observer

Date	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Opinion	Comments
12/4/2018	Tim	Long	1950 Washington Street LLC	Support	Great New! This eye sore has been in existence my entire life. Boutique Hotel is just right, bringing street vitality across Mass Ave, continuing the beautification of Washington Street all the way to Dudley Square. This blighted building has degraded not only Washington Street but also Mass Avenue.
12/4/2018	Serafin	Sanchez	GSIR	Support	Come on people, how much longer are we going to drag our feet about this eyesore in our neighborhood? I know JB, they will get the job done. Act now!
12/4/2018	Alex	Payne		Support	I am so happy that this building will be restored! I live a block away and have submitted many 311 requests to clean up used needles here. The current state of disrepair is dangerous and a blight on the community. Adding a hotel and restaurant will be great for bringing more people to the neighborhood and adding good jobs.
12/4/2018	Michael	Mirabile		Support	I welcome this development! May 2019 will mark 14 years of my residency just a few blocks up from this site at Washington Street. This will provide a remarkable improvement to the neighborhood at long last!
12/4/2018	Michael	Mirabile		Support	I welcome this development! May 2019 will mark 14 years of my residency just a few blocks up from this site at Washington Street. This will provide a remarkable improvement to the neighborhood at long last!
12/5/2018	ROB	DOTSON		Support	I think this will be a great addition to the neighborhood. While I'm not entirely thrilled about the design, the amenities the hotel will offer will draw people into the area who wouldn't normally think to visit. The current alexandria/wig shop has been a dilapidated eyesore for years, and almost anything would be preferable to the current decaying structure. Bring it.
12/7/2018	Joseph	DiGangi		Support	Transformative design. love the project.
12/11/2018	Josef	Alves	N/A	Support	This project is a "must have" for the neighborhood. The existing building is slowly decomposing, and we've already lost the adjacent brownstone due to the negligence of the Scientologists. We have the opportunity to turn neighborhood blight into a beautiful building that will create jobs and bring people to the surrounding small business restaurants. Filling that hole on Washington Street, which is typically a windswept wasteland characterized by Methadone Mile, will create a massive amount of value for homeowners surrounding it and make neighbors like me proud to live in the neighborhood. A few more points: - The height fits perfectly with the neighborhood (frankly, I would support even taller given the width of Washington and Mass Ave). - I support the idea of a hotel, and reverting to its original purpose, which will create local Roxbury jobs and provide another option for folks travelling to Mass General and other area hospitals. More hotels needed, less Air BnB, to combat housing crisis. - Traffic is absolutely a non-issue in the area, especially for a hotel. The roads are so wide (too wide, in fact), that it is never an issue anywhere near that area. - Can't wait to see this beautiful building saved! (And to have a night cap at the rooftop bar!) Everyone that I talk to is supportive of this. This has been on our radar for a long time and it's about time this gets done. I am worried that a few loud NIMBYs try to kill this project for one reason or another, but they are not representative of the people of the neighborhood (by definition of a random sample)!

12/11/2018	Monique	Guimond		Support	As a resident of nearby Dudley Square, I strongly support this project. The proposal brings much needed commerce and activity to the western side of Mass Ave, currently empty, particularly at night. The Washington corridor between the South End and Dudley Square is in great need of activation and this project will go a long way towards aiding that, more so than simply filling the corner with condos or apartments. I am also in favor of the design and aesthetics chosen with both the historical mitigation and contemporary tower behind. The tower adds a modern touch needed in the neighborhood while also likely allowing for the financing of the historical component to begin with. Lastly, I'm happy that the developer is proposing a boutique hotel with public amenities over a large chain such as a Marriott or Hilton, which the area already has plenty of on Melnea Cass and which do not in my opinion contribute to the culture of a neighborhood.
12/12/2018	Michael	Murphy		Support	Very supportive of this density and restoration. Too long an empty structure and need to have an active corner on Washington and mass ave. Developers have been thoughtful with design.
12/12/2018	Jared	Alves		Support	The BPDA should approve this project. The proposal balances preserving the ornate façade of the historic hotel building, with providing a new landmark at this broad intersection. . While beautiful, the existing building does not contribute to a sense of enclosure given the 90-ft. width of Massachusetts Avenue and the over 120-ft. width of Washington Street. Erecting a 144-ft. building will not alone correct this issue, but it will hopefully set a precedent that encourages similar efforts. . Although some commenters may oppose this project over light and air concerns, we should dispense with the miasma theory of disease and embrace the science and urgency of responding to climate change. Transportation is the number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts. To reduce these emissions, Boston must get taller. Extra wide Washington Street is a key transit corridor that can accommodate growth without generating as many vehicle miles traveled as areas that are less well served by sustainable transportation. . Aside from the Silver Line, the building is about a half-mile walk to the Orange Line, has frequent #1 bus service and bike lanes on Mass Ave, and a nearby BLUEbikes station at Washington and Lenox streets. Walk Score gives the immediate neighborhood a 94?walker?s paradise. In line with these conditions and the vision of Go Boston 2030, the proposal rightfully does not include any on-site parking. . Although I would prefer a residential building, the new 150-room hotel would help to relieve Airbnb/short-term rental pressures on existing housing stock. The two restaurants will be destinations for residents and guests alike, and the proposed sidewalk seating will enliven that street corner. . If a setback on the Washington Street side must exist, then it should start after reaching the height of the adjacent 1783 Washington Street. Setting back the building after only one story creates an odd gap and emphasizes the blank wall of the neighboring building. The new construction should instead be flush with the historic façade. Far from degrading the older architecture, the juxtaposition would heighten the contrast and visual interest. . I have family living in the neighborhood and I do not own a car, so I regular ride the Silver and Orange Lines and walk its streets. During my many visits, I have witnessed the slow decay of this building. With this project, I look forward to seeing the decline halt, the façade restored, and this asset to the neighborhood reborn.

12/21/2018	Jonathan	Alves		Support	<p>The BPDA should approve this project, immediately! I have been a south-end resident for 5 years and and a member of the Blackstone Square neighborhood association. For far too long has that building been neglected. It's almost criminal that it was allowed to deteriorate for so long. Thankfully we finally have a capable development team willing to invest and salvage the beautiful facade to restore it to it's original purpose, a (badly needed) hotel in the South End. This new hotel will greatly improve a "problem" corner by activating the area which today is a complete dead-zone thanks to the decades of urban renewal and poor car centric infrastructure decisions. The out door seating is a must to ensure active life on that very very wide sidewalk. This project has my full support and I encourage the BDPA to expedite the project approval so that work can begin and the residents of the South End can begin enjoying the amenities that are set to come. Thank you, Jonathan Alves</p>
12/21/2018	Matthew	Hoover		Support	<p>Having recently purchased and moved into a condo in the Sepia building, I deeply appreciate the value these development initiatives have on transforming Boston's South End. The Alexandra Hotel seems like a great way to further develop the area while preserving it's history and character.</p>

1/1/2019	Katherine	Faulkner	Ms.	Neutral	<p>Picking up a Christmas cactus at the Olympia Flower Store last week I noticed a dog-eared flyer next to the register describing the planned resuscitation of the derelict Hotel Alexandra. ? What do you think of the design proposal?? I asked an older couple standing with me at the counter. They passed it between them and without emotion said in unison ?that?s a damn ugly building.? Looking at the colored rendering of an historic façade in front of a twelve-story tower, I thought ?unremarkable? to be a better description. And who among us will be bothered by another unremarkable building on the Boston skyline? Furthermore, the permit application is a tremendous relief, as the Alexandra at 631 Massachusetts Avenue has been vacant for 30 years. Erected in 1875, the stone and cast-iron exterior is a rare and stunning example of Boston?s high-Victorian gothic architecture. One could be forgiven for overlooking the large contemporary addition as an inconsequential price to pay, so that the deal ?pencils out? for the developers. It was no accident that the proposal was left at the flower shop counter. Alexandra is across the street from Olympia at the corner of Mass Ave and Washington. The developer?s Project Notification Form (PNF) launched a 30-day public comment period, and abutters should take note. Go online (http://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/alexandra-hotel) and see the team?s presentation to the Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC).Featured prominently is the much-needed repair of the stone façade, but little information is given about the new building, always shown on the oblique with no sign of civic engagement at either the base or behind its tremendous forehead. If it clears design review, the agency can recommend direct board approval, dramatically reducing the permitting process and essentially green-lighting the project. Boston?s approvals process has been relatively unchanged in decades, and although Mayor Walsh famously signaled in 2014 that Boston ?should aim for world-class design,? few would argue that there has been noticeable uptick in the design quality of the newest buildings on our skyline. Two key elements are necessary for design excellence: architects who recognize their ethical responsibility for good design, and motivated clients. Both were present in the process of completing Dudley Square?s Bolling Building, less than an mile down the street from the Alexandra. The Dutch firm Mecanoo worked closely with their clients at the City (and neighborhood groups) to develop a building that engaged all corners of its triangular site, stitching itself through the neighborhood?s past and future. Decades ago, another iconic result came out of the dramatic approvals process for the Hancock Tower. In her article Dilemmas of Design (Architecture Boston 2018), Victoria Beach reminds us that an architect has a moral obligation to aesthetic excellence, recalling the Hancock Corporation?s flouting zoning regulations and neighborhood opposition by insisting on a skyscraper for their eponymous building lest they take their business elsewhere. After I.M. Pei walked away from the tussle, his Boston-bred partner Harry Cobb stepped in with a proposal that satisfied both client and community pride, with a smooth reflective geometry that deferred to Trinity Church?s dominance of Copley Square. It is not clear who will demand excellence for the Alexandra project. The building site belongs to neither the Lower Roxbury Neighborhood Association nor the South End?s Washington Gateway Main Street group. With recent gentrification of surrounding streets, newer residents have tried to form their own neighborhood groups, although I fear this is more about controlling drug-related disturbances than protecting urban character, and I am unaware of anyone lobbying to protect the character of this prominent Washington Street corner. The hotel program brings much needed economic diversity and great potential for civic investment, with possibility for public engagement at both the base and roof. The building will be the tallest among the surrounding blocks and thus has the responsibility to provide an alluring skyline identity. Given the recent changes in the BCDC membership, there is hope that the Alexandra will be held to a higher standard. The historic hotel façade, the vacant adjacent lot, and the prominent corner site present opportunities for the designers to create something extraordinary. It is up to the City to ensure these opportunities are taken.</p>
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1/3/2019	Tom	Ponti		Support	I moved to this neighborhood 32 years ago, first living at 512 Massachusetts Ave, then to Columbus Avenue and now at 8 Newcomb Street. Having lived 20 of those years 2 blocks from this proposed project, I not only support this development but urge city officials to expeditiously approve what this important corner of our city so deservingly needs.
1/5/2019	Paul	Lyons	1958	Support	I'm excited that this gem is possibly getting redone!!! When I moved to Boston 35 years ago I was astounded to find that beauty in the condition it was. Then years later I was shocked and disappointed to find out that the "Church" of Scientology bought it for less than ideal repurposing. Amen to this latest news. Two questions please: -Will the neighboring public be allowed to use the two restaurants and cafe? -What is going to happen to the vacant lot next to the hotel? I've lived a 3 minute walk away for 15 years. My only concern is the height of the proposed hotel. Thank you
1/9/2019	Stacey	Cannon	Ms.	Neutral	Hello, I am in support of the actual idea of revamping this building, but have not yet heard what types of neighborhood support there will be in exchange for getting this through. There are many mixed income people in the area, and like the Melnea Cass Blvd issue with people in housing transition on Mass Ave, addictions services, and begging, what is being done to address the needs of the community and neighbors to support initiatives that make this an attractive place for people to come to, without it feeling like (or needing to be) a fortress in an area that is a good mix of different income housing? Stacey Cannon
1/10/2019	John	Bradfield		Support	I fully support the development of this building. It's exactly what Mass Ave needs to help improve the neighborhood. I will say based on the online rendering, I am concerned that it will look like yet another bland building going up in the area. I hope that the city allows the builder/architect to be a bit more creative with the addition of the exterior of the building.... Boston needs to start investing in innovative architecture rather than the "safe", while respecting the existing historical buildings. One does not need to reflect the form of the old architecture in order to respect it. Look at the Hancock tower....simple in form and contemporary without trying to bend/match the surrounding historical architecture. Instead it speaks for itself making a new statement in Boston....yet the reflective glass choice "reflects" the surrounding historical architecture...a modern way of respecting the traditional surroundings.
1/13/2019	Michael	Fior		Neutral	I've been in the neighborhood for nearly 20 years; I always thought that any development would be better than the Hotel Alexandra slowly falling apart. But, seeing the proposal, I might be wrong. The proposed building has no design relationship to the existing building or to anything else around it. Color, materials, proportion, detail. The building could be dropped down anywhere. The previous proposal for the Church of Scientology as created by Gensler had the advantage of working as respectful background; this just seems cynical and not at all appropriate to the South End. I know the architects could do better than this.
1/14/2019	Anna	Young		Oppose	Very disappointing. Yet another thoughtless, unimaginative, insensitive, uninteresting glass box. Can't someone come up with design that would complement the old architecture? The NY examples are a bit better, but I guess they know they can get away with this in Boston.
1/18/2019	John	Burke		Support	As a neighbor, I support the proposed plan to restore the facade of the former Alexandra Hotel and construct an addition to house approximately 150 hotel rooms.
1/18/2019	Patricia	Burke		Support	As a neighbor, I support the proposed plan to restore the facade of the former Alexandra Hotel and construct an addition to house approximately 150 hotel rooms.
1/25/2019	Bob	Minnocci	Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association	Support	I totally support this project, but I would -- as I have brought up at several meetings -- want to make sure that the developer has a strong rodent control plan in place to prevent the community from being overridden with rodents. I would also urge the developer not to keep a construction dumpster on site, but remove debris every day. A large dumpster will serve as a feeding ground for rodents and some residents will use it as a garbage dump.

Alexandria Hotel Public Comments via website form 2019-02-19

1/26/2019	Laura	Melle	City of Boston	Support	Given that folks are often more motivated to submit comments when they're opposed to a project, I wanted to note that I'm very excited about the opportunity to revitalize this beautiful but blighted building. I would love to see more housing in the neighborhood, but understand that a hotel apparently makes the most sense for this location. We need to take a YIMBY (yes in my backyard) approach to increased density, especially when it preserves the unique character of buildings like this. I would love to see a commitment from the developer to hire locally, especially from the Mandela homes, and if possible to partner with local, minority entrepreneurs for the restaurant/bar/retail space.
2/2/2019	Jason	Archambault		Support	This will be a wonderful improvement to the neighborhood. I fully support this plan.
2/8/2019	Walter	Ferme		Support	As a resident, a developer, a designer for 38 years in the South End of Boston... I BEG you to approve this beautiful renovation, new construction of the Alexandria Hotel. I have seen 5 owners fail at this for many reasons, one of them being the fragility and small scale of the building. Please consider the enormous beauty and economic engine this renovated Grand Dame will contribute to that now ugly and tasteless and unsafe corner of Massachusetts and Washington. Thank you Walter Ferme
2/8/2019	Christopher	Borger		Neutral	I'm happy to see investment in this historic building, but the developers need to invest in the public space to make all aspects of this intersection more transportation-friendly (for drop-off, cycling, and pedestrians)
2/8/2019	Kevin	Fallon	Neighbor	Support	I am a 35 year resident at my present address and I want this project to happen. While I am not thrilled with the appearance of the adjoining tower, I can live with it. This property as been a blight on the neighborhood for decades. The economics of this site are very challenging. The city needs to give the developer the flexibility too get this done. Let's not hold it up in endless reviews and processes that causes the project to die, which happens all too often in Boston neighborhoods.
2/8/2019	Eileen	McCarthy		Support	Please require a substantial investment in public space as part of this project for the benefit of the entire community. It can only enhance the ultimate popularity of the planned hotel and will do so much good for the inhabitants of the entire community.
2/9/2019	Grace	Cam-Phung		Support	Please allow the Hotel Alexandria project to be approved as the developers have imagined. Our family, along with our young daughter recently moved to the neighborhood (on Mass Ave) because we believe that the area has so much potential for growth, and has the opportunity to be a diverse and balanced neighborhood, full of creativity and a sense of inclusion. Hotel Alexandria would be a wonderful addition and would be a beautiful gateway to link Roxbury and the South End. We wholeheartedly approve the project and hope it begins earlier rather than later, as the current building is an eyesore and attracts not so friendly and less than welcoming people (graffiti artists) to the neighborhood. We would love to support this development. Best, Grace and Michael Cam-Phung
2/9/2019	Sarah	Christensen	SS Concord LLC	Support	I support the renovation and revitalization of the Hotel Alexandria. I'd like to see the new tower be shorter and more in line with the historic beauty of the original building. I would also like to see additional public transportation options added for existing residence in that area. This hotel won't benefit them and the developer or city should do something to help existing residents - improve the nearby park and fields is another option.

2/9/2019	Alyssa	Faria		Neutral	As a resident of Chester Square, I am concerned about vehicle congestion in the neighborhood and certainly at this corner. This area is rich in public transportation options and I would like to see the developers and management of the new Alexandra Hotel do everything possible to encourage use of the many buses and trains that run near the Washington/Mass block (including SL4/5, 1, CT1, 8, 43, 39 Orange and Green lines), and discourage use of ride shares or privately owned vehicles when visiting Boston. Guests should know that Silver Line service from the airport is free, and providing complimentary Charlie Cards to employees and guests serves will serve as a nice welcome to them while promoting the use of our excellent public transportation system.
2/9/2019	Lauren	Thompson	GTNA	Support	The property is located in Roxbury but is advertised as South End property. Due to this error, the Roxbury Neighborhood Council and Roxbury residents have not been notified. This is in direct violation of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. I request that the location of the project be corrected and adequate outreach to Roxbury residents be conducted immediately. The IAG consists of only 1 Roxbury resident with the other 2 Roxbury IAG members as EDs of organizations located in Roxbury. The remaining IAG members are from the South End. This is a seriously disproportionate representation. As a lifelong resident of Roxbury, I do support development, especially of a building that has been an eyesore for decades but the process in place must be followed to ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to weigh in.
2/11/2019	Walter	Hope		Support	This development should be allowed to happen. While it is tall, the main structure will be preserved. The neighborhood groups have prevented this building from being used by anything for decades. Every day that passes provides another day of decay, and gods forbid fire and total destruction of the building and facade.
2/12/2019	Luis A.	Muniz	Tenants Development Corporation	Oppose	Dear, Mr. Sinatra: As a Resident Services Coordinator with Tenants' Development Corporation in the South End, I am concerned about the impact of the proposed Hotel Alexandra (approximately 150 room, thirteen story boutique hotel with ground floor restaurant and café space, and a rooftop level bar/restaurant) will have on properties, including TDC's property, a direct abutter, local small businesses and the community. What will be done to mitigate any impact to TDC's residents and properties at 627 & 623 Massachusetts Avenue that share a parting wall, other abutters, local businesses and the community, other concerns, increased traffic, noise and increased # of people on an already busy intersection--- Massachusetts Avenue and Washington Street? Thank you for your consideration. Luis A. Muniz Silva
2/13/2019	Jeannetta	Williams		Oppose	The Hotel Alexandra is beautiful structure rich in history. I think that what is being planned and designed to add on to this structure takes away so much of what the hotel could look like if just restored to its original state or having the add on look like the original hotel structure. The thirteen story boutique hotel does not fit in with the neighborhood and does not complement it either it looks out of place . It is too high and too box like. It looks like it was designed with out any thought to were it would be or how it would look/fit in or the impact it would have on the community. Just because that beautiful structure has sat there empty and abandoned for such a long time doesn't mean that someone can come and just put up anything and the community/neighborhood would be happy just to have something anything. No that is not the case tell me what has happened to the imagination of designers/architects mostly everything being built looks so boxy. It will also definitely have an impact on the brownstones Tenants' Development Corporation owns and manages because we are connected to each other and the alley behind us. Rethink your design.

Alexandra Hotel Public Comments via website form 2019-02-19

2/13/2019	Anita	Huggins	Tenants' Development Corp.	Oppose	I'm voicing my opposition to this project based on the impact on the TDC residents who reside in the two buildings that abut the Hotel Alexandra; 623 and 627 Mass Ave. The concerns are quality of life issues such as air quality, noise, light, impact of adverse weather conditions given the proposed height of the new construction section of the project. As well as impact during the construction phase. The developer had one meeting with our organization last summer to discuss their interest in developing this property. There's been no further contact from the developer to involve TDC in their planning process. The developer cannot disregard the impact and affect their proposed development will have on the residents who resident in affordable housing. These residents have limited options and resources if their lives are negatively impacted by this project either during construction and long term.
2/13/2019	Arnesse	Brown	Tenants' Development Corporation	Neutral	Dear, Mr. Sinatra: As a long-term organization of the South End neighborhood, We are concerned about the impact of the proposed Hotel Alexandra (approximately 150 room, thirteen story boutique hotel with ground floor restaurant and café space, and a rooftop level bar/restaurant) will have on properties, including TDC's property, a direct abutter, local small businesses and the community. What will be done to mitigate any impact to TDC's properties at 627 & 623 Massachusetts Avenue that share a parting wall, other abutters, local businesses and the community (a building that compliments the brownstones/row houses), other concerns, increased traffic, noise and increased # of people on an already busy intersection--- Massachusetts Avenue and Washington Street.
2/13/2019	Mimi	Ramos	New England United 4 Justice	Support	My name is Mimi Ramos. I am the Executive Director of New England United for Justice (NEU4J). NEU4J is a member-based organization in Boston that believes in the voices of low- to moderate- income communities of color. We provide leadership development, coalition building, organizational coordination, and direct action. Through this, we empower our members to help themselves make the change they envision in their communities. Because of our work, we know first-hand that strong communities require investments in jobs, education, and quality public services. Therefore, we urge that the Alexandra Hotel development project provides quality jobs and career pathways to Boston residents. Particularly, we urge that the Proponent of this development project use the Boston Education, Skills and Training (BEST) program to hire their hospitality workers. BEST is a non-profit, workforce development program that focuses on the hospitality industry and provides worker training designed to meet the needs of their hotel partners. They have a proven track record of not only delivering better business outcomes for hotels but also better jobs and wages for frontline workers. The Alexandra Hotel will become a part of our community and we need to ensure that it becomes a good neighbor. Far too often, new development fails to generate high quality jobs and career paths for residents - particularly for of the poorest parts of the city. Research shows that targeted hiring programs are not only an effective way to provide good jobs but also an important step toward greater employment equity. Hiring local through programs like BEST can bring concrete benefits to the table, making development projects better and contribute the public good. We hope that the Alexandra Hotel development project become the good neighbor that we deserve. Thank you for your time

563 Mass. Ave.
Boston, MA

February 25, 2019

Michael Sinatra, project manager
Boston planning and development agency
1 City Hall Square,
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Alexandra Hotel

Dear Mr. Sinatra,

As a 10 year resident of Massachusetts Avenue, living in Roxbury, I have some acquaintance with the neighborhood surrounding the Alexandra Hotel. One of the concerns of this neighborhood is the issue of drug use, and homelessness, often found in the same individuals.

The development of a upscale hotel will not only not address this issue, except to make the economic injustices more so. The city can not develop this area and expect those burdened with health problems to simply move.

Encouraging the building of a 12-14 story glass and concrete tower at the corner of Washington Street and Massachusetts Avenue will only serve as a provocation to individuals who need help that such a development will not provide.

I understand the South End Landmark District has a 70' height limit, yet this development exceeds twice that height, and no facing material, whether brick, glass, or concrete, can make the tower consonant with the existing stone structure. Preserving the historic nature of the original building while permitting such an addition will read as a kind of Potemkin Village.

I urge the BPDA to reject this development.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Aug



Cc. South End Landmarks District Commission
K. Janey, city councilor

Randi and Bob Lathrop

5 Haven Street, Boston MA 02118 617-784-3629



Monday February 25, 2019

Mr. Michael Sinatra
Project Manager
Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall Plaza, 9th floor
Boston City Hall, Boston MA 02201

Dear Mr. Sinatra:

My husband and I have lived in the South End of Boston for over 30 years. We brought up our family in this neighborhood and truly have dedicated many years on making it a wonderful place to enjoy, live, work and play.

The Washington Street area of Boston has had so much positive development and revitalization over the last 25 years. Over 1750 housing units have been renovated or built on the Washington Street corridor from the Turnpike to Melnea Cass Blvd. 900 of these units are subsidized or affordable which is great for the area. Over \$ 2.5 M has been invested by private / public partnerships. Since 1997, ninety new businesses have opened on Washington Street, since it became one of the 20 Main Streets districts called Washington Gateway Main Street. I served as the founder and board president for 10 years and most recently served as VP for 7 years. Our community and professional careers has been one of focused areas of Boston.

Washington Gateway Main Street is a community-based organization, which closely works with residents, businesses, property owners, and non-profits and City & State government. Over the last few years, the WGMS board has focused on the 4 corners of Washington Street at Massachusetts. The 3 other corners have been recent renovated: Bank of America's new storefront with an expanded virtual Bank inside, a new French restaurant: Bar Lyon, and 7/11 with office space above. It is important to seize the moment and get this project approved. Having a hotel at that intersection and the renovating and activating the corner will add much needed 24/7 activity. New jobs at the new Hotel will be great for the area and having an active ground floor use is just what the area needs.

I commend the Developer and their team for agreeing to move the bus shelter closer to the residential buildings and finally restoring the Alexandra Hotel. There is a need to add additional height to this building. Historic restoration and building costs warrants this additional height. It is time to get the job done and develop the Alexandra Hotel before the site can no longer be renovated and be in disrepair.

Sincerely,

Randi and Bob Lathrop

cc: Mayor Martin Walsh, Mayor of Boston

Faisha Sharif, Mayor's Office



Director Brian Golden

BPDA board members

Director John Barros

Director of Development Review, Jonathan Greeley

Chief of Staff, Heather Campisano

Chief Planner, Sara Myerson

John Amado, South End Landmark District Commission, chair

Councilor Kim Janey, Councilor Michelle Wu, Councilor Edward Flynn, Councilor Michael Flaherty, Councilor Annissa Essaibi George

Representative Jon Santiago

The Boston Guardian

The South End News

The Boston Sun

Washington Gateway Main Street

Worcester Sq. Neighborhood Assoc.

Blackstone Franklin Sq. Neighborhood Assoc.

Chester Sq. Neighborhood Assoc.

Steve Fox, South End Forum



Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Alexandra Hotel - Mural on Side of Building

Bob Minnocci

Thu, Feb 28, 2019 at 8:10 AM

To: Desmond Murphy

Cc: "NICHOLAS.ARMATA@boston.gov" <NICHOLAS.ARMATA@boston.gov>, michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov, Faisa Sharif <faisa.sharif@boston.gov>

Dear Nicholas and Michael,

I second Desi's suggestions.

I attended last night's meeting and, while I think the concerns of the residents can be addressed, I feel strongly that the project can go forward with the BPDA process as scheduled, the purchase can be made and talks with the Roxbury neighborhood can continue after that. I think some basic commitments to Councilor Janey's concerns, which mostly involved hiring local people, can enable you to move forward.

I have been a resident at [662 Massachusetts Avenue](#) for 21 years. I live five or six doors from the Alexandra. Prior to that, I lived about a half block away on West Springfield Street for four years. So I have known the Alexandra for 25 years. During that time, we've had only one proposal for restoring and developing the building and it was not credible. Ultimately it collapsed.

The current developers are the most professional and responsible group we've ever had. They've gone out of their way to be transparent at every step and to design a building that not only works for the community but is financially practical. Last night's meeting unearthed concerns that weren't so much about the building's design but were about hiring local people in the construction and operational process. I was also heartened to hear the two gentlemen from the neighborhood say clearly that they don't want the project to be thwarted by their concerns. They simply want their concerns addressed.

I do look forward to the restoration of the Alexandra and the establishment of a beautiful hotel and I thank all those involved for bringing the project forward.

Sincerely,

Bob Minnocci
[662 Massachusetts Avenue, #6](#)
Boston, MA 02118

[Quoted text hidden]



Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Alexandra Hotel - Mural on Side of Building

Desmond Murphy

Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 9:59 PM

To: NICHOLAS.ARMATA@boston.gov, michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov

Cc:

Dear Nicholas and Michael,

Tonight I attended the last scheduled IAG meeting for the Alexandra Hotel. The proponents of the building have made tremendous strides in improving the design of their building. I am thrilled at their willingness to collaborate with local architects who are on the city advisory committee whose name is now escaping me. The specific reason I am emailing is about the mural concept. I was provided your name as the SE Landmarks contact.

During the presentation, the designer showed an image that had a giant mural on the side of the building. While the SE Landmarks Commission has played an important role in making the South End maintain its beautiful design, I do want to share my view (and the view of community members who attended the meeting tonight at Mandela Homes) that the mural idea is actually great - even if it conflicts with current SE Landmarks guidelines (with the caveat that we do have historic murals in other parts of the neighborhood). I do hope that the SE Landmarks commission will consider making an exemption for the mural. It would make this building unique in Boston and create an opportunity to showcase a local artist.

Also, I **strongly believe** that more windows on the Mass ave side of the building are needed - I recognize that this would be another exemption but more windows would further activate the corner, which is good for neighbors and good for the hotel. I'm also excited about the potential for outdoor seating on the ground floor and the outdoor roof deck. The outdoor areas are more things that will make this property unique to the South End and turn this area into a destination!

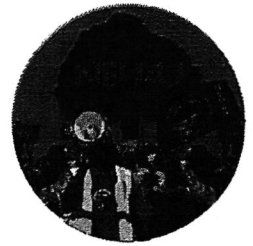
I have BCC'ed 10 neighbors in hopes that they will write second support letters, specifically focused on the mural as well as more windows on the Mass ave side.

Regards,

Desmond
48 E Springfield St.
Apt 1
Boston, MA 02118

New England United 4 Justice

1845 Dorchester Ave. Dorchester, MA 02124



Dear Johnathan Greeley, Director of Development Review at the Boston Planning and Development Agency,

My name is Mimi Ramos. I am the Executive Director of New England United for Justice (NEU4J). NEU4J is a member-based organization in Boston that believes in the voices of low- to moderate- income communities of color. We provide leadership development, coalition building, organizational coordination, and direct action. Through this, we empower our members to help themselves make the change they envision in their communities.

Because of our work, we know first-hand that strong communities require investments in jobs, education, and quality public services. Therefore, we urge that the Alexandra Hotel development project provides quality jobs and career pathways to Boston residents. Particularly, we urge that the Proponent of this development project use the Boston Education, Skills and Training (BEST) program to hire their hospitality workers. BEST is a non-profit, workforce development program that focuses on the hospitality industry and provides worker training designed to meet the needs of their hotel partners. They have a proven track record of not only delivering better business outcomes for hotels but also better jobs and wages for frontline workers.

The Alexandra Hotel will become a part of our community and we need to ensure that it becomes a good neighbor. Far too often, new development fails to generate high quality jobs and career paths for residents - particularly for of the poorest parts of the city. Research shows that targeted hiring programs are not only an effective way to provide good jobs but also an important step toward greater employment equity. Hiring local through programs like BEST can bring concrete benefits to the table, making development projects better and contribute the public good. We hope that the Alexandra Hotel development project become the good neighbor that we deserve.

You can reach me at

Sincerely,

Noemi Mimi Ramos

Executive Director, New England United 4 Justice

28 February 2019

Boston Planning & Development Agency
Attn: Michael Sinatra
1 City Hall Square
Boston MA 02201

Dear Michael Sinatra,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed project development of the Alexandra Hotel at the corner of Washington Street and Massachusetts Avenue. I understand that you may be still accepting comments; I had intended to attend the community meeting last night to voice my opinion but regrettably was unable to do so.

I am a South End resident since 1985, and among my memories of those early days I recall riding the elevated Orange Line down Washington Street, and driving under it through Dudley Square. In the entire time since those days, the Alexandra has sat mostly abandoned and vacant while Washington Street itself has undergone a tremendous renaissance. Numerous saviors have come forward with intentions to save the Alexandra, only to abandon their schemes before they had a chance to develop into firm proposals.

The current proponents appear to have a realistic plan that will return the corner to its historic hotel use, coupled with a ground floor restaurant, and they have made public commitments to working with neighborhood groups to employ local residents and respect local concerns.

Among the concerns expressed, and one that deserves a full hearing, is the perception by some area residents that the process has excluded meaningful input from Roxbury constituents. It's my understanding that the District 7 City Counselor, Kim Janey, has been consulted and informed of project details as they have developed, but unfortunately many of her constituents apparently believe that they have not been comparably informed. If true, this matter must be addressed through an open and ongoing dialog with stakeholders, but it should not be allowed to de-rail the good-faith efforts made thus far.

The opportunity to revitalize and activate this important South End node with a former landmark building re-born is one that must not be squandered over issues, such as building height or neighborhood boundaries, that can and should be reconciled by thoughtful and well-intentioned individuals—developers, the city, and neighborhood activists and residents—working together.

Respectfully,



Tom Parks
28 Upton Street #3
Boston MA 02118

Cc: Councilor Kim Janey, Councilor Michelle Wu, Representative Jon Santiago

COMMENTS ON THE HOTEL ALEXANDRA PROJECT

- **SELDC Review**

I had the opportunity to read a recent dissertation , George Walter Born's Home Rule: The Creation of Local Historic Districts in the New Boston 1953-1983. Some quotes from his work-

“The designation of the South End, Boston’s largest historic district, represents the high-water mark of neighborhood activists agitating for governmental regulation of historic resources in the city... [seeking] protection against the encroachment of large-scale new development.” It was a 15-year effort with a large and diverse group of citizens involved. Preservation was about architecture but also the integrity of the community, a neighborhood centered revolt against the sins of urban renewal. “The impulse to create local historic districts involves a certain amount of faith in local government to act fairly and responsibly in regulating private property.” Faith in local government not the federal authoritarian actions that were meant to revitalize but instead traumatized.

Residents need to affirm that faith with this process. Although the pivotal role of historic preservation and the South End District Landmark Commission has been minimized in the presentations ,the public meetings and in the PNF filed by the proponents., the Commission does hold the legal authority to determine what is appropriate. Let’s help them fulfill their responsibility. Thoughtful and through discussions are required. Material submitted for review so far has been inadequate; for example- multiple renderings that don’t show the full height of the project. Every aspect of this proposal deserves scrutiny.

When an application gets filed ,compatibility of scale will be the most significant criteria to consider ,the corner location at Massachusetts and Washington is a highly prominent site in Boston. Consider too that the proposed design is essentially a facadectomy; from the PNF-“ **the existing structure is no longer viable and will accordingly be replaced**. Behind the façade and on the adjacent vacant parcel, a new, approximately 150 room, twelve story **boutique** hotel will be constructed with approximately 66,000 sf.”

Related comment - according to most definitions from hospitality professionals - boutique hotels are small, less than 100 rooms, 150 “keys” doesn’t fit, take away 50 rooms and lower the height .

From the SEDLC Standards and Criteria-

NEW CONSTRUCTION A. GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT

...To ensure that new construction has a positive effect on the historic physical character of the Landmark District, proposals for new construction will be **reviewed for compatibility with the existing architecture in such critical factors as land coverage, bulk, material, and proportion**. Therefore, the

focus of the standards and criteria is on the compatibility of new construction with the existing character of the South End without dictating style or taste.

- **Roxbury's Role**

As noted at the most recent public meetings, the focus of the development team, beginning last summer before the PNF was filed, has been on South End neighborhood groups, not Roxbury's. The missing notifications to the Roxbury BPDA listserv, the lack of outreach to the Banner newspaper and local Roxbury neighborhood organizations is noticeably inequitable.

Prominently identified as the South End not Roxbury in the PNF

Quotes from the Introduction –

Alexandra Partners, LLC (the Proponent) proposes to redevelop an approximately 8,025 square foot site (the Project site), located on the southwestern corner of the Washington Street and Massachusetts Avenue intersection **in the South End neighborhood of Boston...The South End** has become home to some of Boston's most exciting restaurants, cafes, boutiques, and shops. To continue that tradition, the Project will include ground-floor café and restaurant space, as well as a rooftop bar.

- **MITIGATION**

Safety for pedestrians/transit users/and cyclists should be prioritized, vehicle traffic that interferes with bus service and double parking on Washington St. creating unsafe conditions will be an obstacle for the Silver Line impacting riders heading to Dudley Square.

A public benefit is locating a drop off and pick up zone for ride share and taxi service, NONE ARE IDENTIFIED. This is mitigation that should be resolved with BTM, setting aside spaces for private valet service is not an equitable solution.

submitted by Alison Pultinas/preservation advocate/Mission Hill Roxbury resident



Washington Gateway
main street

**Boston Planning & Development Agency
Attn: Michael Sinatra
1 City Hall Square
Boston MA 02201**

February 19, 2019

Re: Comments on Alexandra Hotel

Dear Michael Sinatra,

The Washington Gateway Main Streets Board of Directors is expressing its vigorous support for the proposal to restore the Alexandra into its former use as a Hotel. The Board feels that this endeavor will not only be an aesthetic enhancement of the historic building as well as a catalyst for several endeavors which will positively impact the immediate and surrounding neighborhoods. It will become a major center of social and community in the South End as it did when it was built in 1875. The following are some examples that we feel are especially important for your consideration.

- The façade of the original architecture of building will be preserved and enhanced by this project. The additional building will be set back to emphasize the original facade while incorporating many of the features and details of the historic design into the new structure.
- The issue of structural failure of the building is an increasing specter for pedestrians, commuters and abutters. This will be the immediate task addressed by the developers so as to insure the building's integrity and prevent a potential disaster.
- The sidewalk area will be expanded and the Silver Line Bus Stop will be moved and be within 40 feet of its present location so as to have access to the main entrance of the building without major disruption to the passengers.
- The businesses will realize an increase in the number of potential clients in the surrounding areas while providing opportunities for new businesses and enterprises to open as well.
- The hotel will also complement and connect to the Resident Inn Marriott hotel at the corner of Washington Street and help to establish a connection with Dudley Square area. Resultant development along that corridor is more likely to occur which will then continue to serve residents, business owners and visitors.



Washington Gateway

main street

- It will assist in creating a walking corridor supported by stores, restaurants, service providers and parks from Dudley Square to Chinatown.
- The abutting properties will realize an increase in value, cleanliness, and safety and have indicated support for the development with the normal precautions.
- The guests and workers will be a variety of both public, private and a shuttle may be provided for the guests/workers to get to various transportation locations without increasing traffic significantly.
- The security of the area will be increased because of the traffic of pedestrians, workers, deliveries, restaurants, hotel security and transportation in areas that has been inundated with challenges, especially in the last few years.

The WGMS Board has reviewed past proposals for this site and concluded that residential housing of any sort is not feasible because of size, parking, and financial as well as best usage issues.

Finally, we want to reiterate that although the site is part of Roxbury, it is also part of the South End and falls within the Historical District and all of its guidelines. If we are to restore and revitalize this area, then the hotel will need the proper number of rooms that is necessary to provide the revenue that will sustain a hotel, its workers and the services that are necessary. Therefore, we understand rationale for the additional stories as such.

We feel that end resultant will benefit the **whole community for decades to come.** **Therefore, we strongly support the renovation of the Hotel Alexandra and urge you to do the same.** After all, this is still the **GATEWAY TO BOSTON** .

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to working with you throughout the developmental stages.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Washington Gateway



Fwd: Alexandra Hotel Project ...

Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 9:20 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Charles P**
Date: Tue, Feb 26, 2019 at 9:34 PM
Subject: Alexandra Hotel Project ...
To: <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>
Cc: Carol W. Blair

Good Evening Michael,

Carol has prepared an exceptional document outlining the mitigating factors that the neighbors have requested, and I support the adoption of the items outlined in this document. I have attended three of the Alexandra Hotel Project meetings. I live at [677 Massachusetts Avenue](#), and this project is very close to my home.

I am in favor of the project.

The number one mitigating factor for me is traffic flow and transportation. Mass Ave already has a very, very high volume of traffic. Washington Street has a high volume of traffic at various times during the day. I feel it is critical that the owners of the Alexandra Hotel make every effort to manage the guests and cars arriving at the front door of the hotel. In addition to valet parking, I request that they have a shuttle. Best Western (roundhouse) at the corner of Mass Ave and Melnea Cass has a shuttle van and they do not have 150 keys or 12 stories. If they can have a shuttle, I believe that the Alexandra Hotel must have a shuttle.

They indicate that they are going to direct their guests to the Crossroads parking lot at the time they register. I am not at all convinced that a guest is going to park at the corner of North Hampton Street and Melnea Cass Blvd and carry their luggage up North Hampton to the hotel. I just do not believe it.

For me limiting cars traveling to and from the front of the hotel is a must.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

I commend Carol for the tremendous work she has managed for this project.

All the Best,

Charlie Petit
[677 Massachusetts Avenue #1](#)
Boston, MA 02118

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Fwd: Alexandra Hotel

----- Forwarded message -----

From:

Date: Mon, Feb 25, 2019 at 5:27 PM

Subject: Alexandra Hotel

To: <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Cc:

Mr. Sinatra,

I oppose the construction of this gross monument to greed!

The Restoration of the Alexandra is long overdue, but this tacked on monstrosity is a disgusting proposal in violation of everything from aesthetics to law!

This is a historic district yet gentrifying developers grabbed and exploit parcels in pursuit of profits at our expense. Bigger, higher, squeeze in a few more square feet for the "Luxury" marketplace. Governance loves its taxes and repeatedly betrays the trust of citizens who care more about quality of life than quantity of money. This towering ugliness is totally inappropriate for our neighborhood!

We are neighbors on Northampton Street, disgusted by comments supporting this corruption, mainly hoping it will bring them ancillary profits or are just tired of the too long neglected Alexandra.

The developer should be content to rebuild the adjacent historic building the Scientologists got torn down to maximize their profits!

This is all about money!

Tax dollars for the guardians of our heritage, luxury marketplace dollars for exploitative developers and resale dollars for speculating property owners

and more dollars from wealthy patrons. Greed has done enough damage! No tower! Rebuild "The Bean" and restore the Alexandra!

Lee Barron

--



**boston planning &
development agency**

Michael Sinatra, MPA

Project Manager

617-918-4280

michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov

Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA)

One City Hall Square, 9th Floor | Boston, MA 02201

bostonplans.org





Boston Planning & Development Agency
Attn: Michael Sinatra
1 City Hall Square
Boston MA 02201

Re: Comments on Alexandra Hotel

February 25, 2019

Dear Michael Sinatra,

The Washington Gateway Main Street Design Review Committee has reviewed the proposal for the Alexandra Hotel put forth by JB Ventures and TCR Development and our committee is in overwhelming support of the proposal.

Washington Gateway Main Street's mission is to support and maintain a vibrant, safe and clean community. WGMS is committed to ensuring that small and locally owned businesses remain and thrive in the neighborhood and that Washington Street and the South End district provide a safe and clean environment for residents and visitors.

The WGMS Design Review Committee believes The Alexandra proposal will support these goals in the following ways:

Safety and Cleanliness

Restoring the vacant Alexandra property to a hotel with an active ground floor will greatly enhance public safety for the community.

The proposed development will rehabilitate a currently abandoned and dangerous property. The proposed hotel and restaurant uses will generate additional activity at this corner and provide "eyes on the street" to aid informal surveillance of the urban environment. For residents to move safely through the neighborhood, other people need to be present, contributing to an atmosphere of safety. Additionally, the proposed ground floor restaurant use will provide lighting that spills onto the public way, helping to ensure that the site is safe both day and night.



Urban Design

Currently the abandoned building acts as a perceived barrier and inhibits pedestrian connectivity between Washington Street in the South End to Washington Street in Roxbury. The proposal will begin to connect these two vibrant neighborhoods and encourage more visitors and shoppers to support the businesses south of Massachusetts Avenue.

With respect to concerns that have been raised regarding the proposed building height of **twelve stories**, WGMS recognizes that the economic reality of renovation and construction costs in Boston limit the development options that can produce a financially feasible project. Given the importance of this intersection to the identity and vitality of the South End, WGMS believes the site is an appropriate location for building height that exceeds the norm. Although less height would be welcomed, if it were feasible, the impact of height has been mitigated by the building's stepped back form, while the benefits of the proposal far outweigh concerns about its height.

The proposed hotel use is consistent with the historical use of this site on Washington Street. Additional height on the corner of this major intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Washington Street is appropriate and consistent with its historic importance as a gateway into the South End.

Architecture and Design

WGMS Design Committee believes that a balance between preservation and pioneering should be maintained to ensure economic opportunity and social vitality in the South End. This proposal addresses those principles. WGMS applauds the developer for committing to restore the historic Alexandra façade. The historic building is architecturally significant and restoration of the building envelope will preserve its iconic presence in the neighborhood. Additionally, the architect has notified the public that the historic façade is at serious risk of collapse if not stabilized in the very near future. If action is not taken soon we may lose the chance to restore this beautiful historic structure.

WGMS welcomes distinctive and contextually responsive architecture that reinforces a strong sense of community. WGMS believes the proposal meets these requirements.



WGMS believes the proposal respects the neighborhood's past, while looking to the future, and welcomes the development as a positive addition to the South End community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
WGMS Design Committee



Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Hotel Alexandra

1 message

Bob Oppenheim

Mon, Feb 25, 2019 at 8:34 AM

To: michael sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Cc: kim.janey@boston.gov, Jon.Santiago@mahouse.gov, nicholas.armata@boston.gov

Dear Mr. Sinatra,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a visual artist with a studio on Harrison St. in the South End for over 16 years, who participates in the South End Open Studios and is represented by a South End Gallery. It is a pleasure to walk to my studio, from one historic district to another that shares a deep concern for architectural preservation. I choose different walking routes to my destination; the revitalized and burgeoning SOWHA / New York Streets district, where large developments are being carved out from parking parking lots and industrial buildings.

Which brings me to why I am so concerned about the current proposal for the Hotel Alexandra. While the blighted hotel is unfortunately unsalvageable, the spirit of this historic neighborhood does not need to be violated by a proposed structure which almost doubles the height for the South End Landmark District. The scale and design of the new construction would fit comfortably in New York Streets District, however it does not set a good precedent for the historic neighborhood surrounding Mass. ave and Washington St.

I hope, as this project moves forward, that the design and scale will be modified to offer more respect to the structure it is replacing and the neighborhood.

Sincerely,
Bob Oppenheim

440 Marlborough St
Boston Ma. 02115

**617 Massachusetts Avenue
Unit 2
Boston Massachusetts 02118**

February 20, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

We have purchased our unit at 617 Massachusetts Ave in October of 1985 and are proud to be residents of the South End and Roxbury. There have seen several changes through the years that have served all of us in this corner well. However, the most outstanding and most neglected is and has been the beautiful structure known as the Alexandra Hotel which is very much part of our block and impacts our daily lives in many basic ways.

Presently, it presents a place of abandonment and with an empty lot full of weeds and discarded needles. . There are issues of security, safety, cleanliness, structural failure, and all types of vermin residents, which affect our daily well-being and our financial value. This has been a long-standing issue and with many disappointments of potential development opportunities through the years.

However, we are very excited and hopeful about the proposed restoration of the property to its original use and purpose, that of a hotel. We feel that it will:

- Restore an architectural treasure to the South End and Roxbury
- Bring vitality and dignity to what is the original Gateway to Boston
- Increase security of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Enhance growth to existing businesses while expanding the opportunity for other enterprises to open and provide services to our community as well.
- Create a walking corridor that links Massachusetts Ave to Dudley Square.
- Enhance the property values on all sides of its perimeter.
- Offer employment opportunities to neighborhood residents.
- Change the image of the corner of Methadone Mile.
- Secure the building that could at sometime in the near future tumble on the sidewalks and streets below.

Height is not an issue for us. We understand that the hotel needs a certain number of rooms to provide the income necessary for sustaining its business and employees. Ultimately, They are welcomed partners in our immediate community and look forward to working with them. We urge you to do the same!!!

Sincerely,

A. F. "Bud" Lariev

Milton Vázquez

BLACKSTONE FRANKLIN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

February 1, 2019

Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Comment on the proposed redevelopment of The Alexandra Hotel

We write to express the Blackstone Franklin Square Neighborhood Association's strong endorsement of JB Ventures and TCR Development's proposal to redevelop and revitalize The Hotel Alexandra.

The proponents and their architect presented and took questions and comments at our November 2018 BFSNA meeting. The project met with enthusiastic and unanimous support from members and residents in attendance in both its general outline and particular details.

Specifically:

- We support the proposed use as a hotel and the plan to accomplish this by constructing a new 12-story tower on the site while preserving and restoring the façade of the historical structure.
- We support inclusion of a restaurant with use of part of the sidewalk on Washington Street for outdoor seating and a rooftop bar/restaurant.
- We support shifting of the existing MBTA Silver Line bus stop down the block and away from the corner at Massachusetts Avenue, to allow for access to the hotel while still meeting the needs of T patrons.

This proposal would transform a blighted property on a prime parcel that has languished for decades (and defied multiple prior efforts at its redevelopment) into a welcome new amenity for the South End and Lower Roxbury and new jobs and tax revenues for the city. We urge that the Boston Planning and Development Agency approve it.

Sincerely,

/s/

Blackstone Franklin Square Neighborhood Association,
and board member David Stone on its behalf.

BOSTON PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

February 13, 2019

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Regan Shields Ives AIA

Anthony Ursillo CFA

Peter Vanderwarker

Executive Director

Gregory J. Galer, Ph.D.

The Otis House
141 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02114
617.367.2458

bostonpreservation.org

Mr. Michael Sinatra
Boston Planning and Development Agency
Boston City Hall
Boston, MA 02201
Re: Hotel Alexandra, South End Landmark District

Dear Mr. Sinatra,

The Boston Preservation Alliance is Boston's primary, non-profit advocacy organization that protects and promotes the use of historic buildings and landscapes in all of the city's neighborhoods. With 40 Organizational Members, 125 Corporate Members, and a reach of 35,000 friends and supporters we represent a diverse constituency advocating for the thoughtful evolution of the city and celebration of its unique character. We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on projects that impact the historic character of the city.

The Alliance has had the opportunity to review the project, attend Boston Civic Design Commission hearings (one jointly with the South End Landmark District Commission), and to meet with the proponent directly to discuss the project. Though the proposed height of the new building does not meet the standards and guidelines for the Landmark district, we feel in this unique circumstance we could accept the complete restoration of the two outward facades of the iconic Hotel Alexandra as acceptable justification for the additional height. However we do have concerns and recommendations for the proposal.

The Hotel Alexandra has been vacant and deteriorating for over 30 years, creating a challenge for any redevelopment on this site that strives to retain the historic building. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made in the past, challenged in particular by the relatively small floor-plate available to offset the significant restoration cost. We fear that if this proposal also fails to move forward, time is scarce to save these historic facades. Therefore we feel an obligation to participate in the collaboration with the South End Landmark District Commission and the proponent to guide the most appropriate development possible for this site. We believe all involved share our concern to carefully balance restoration and new construction, assuring that the prominence of this local treasure is enhanced rather than weakened. It must be understood and put on record that this is a unique situation and should not be considered precedent for future proposals within the historic district, especially for interior sites in the district without similar scale nearby. Because of the site's corner location and the prominence of the Alexandra, as well as the community's long-held desire to save the building, we are able to support the proposed façade project. But

this is not a method of “preservation” that is typically acceptable and should be utilized only as a last resort.

While we support the concept of the proposal, we do have several concerns. We agree with remarks made by both BCDC and SELDC members that the tower needs to be set back significantly from the Washington Street façade of the Alexandra to give the sense of an occupied space in the original building. We were pleased to see this alteration in the most recent iteration. It is important not only to give prominence to the historic façade but to avoid the appearance that the new building is merely pasted onto the existing facade. The Hotel Alexandra should visually stand on its own with the new construction articulated as an independent building behind it. We feel that the deeper setback helps accomplish this design necessity.

Though we understand that the design of the new construction is still evolving and we are pleased with the direction the project is moving, we feel it is important to note that the design is not yet contextual to the historic architecture in the neighborhood. While the design should not attempt to mimic or replicate historic materials or details, it should be in dialogue with the masonry and copper materials surrounding the site rather than completely foreign to it. The infill portion of the building at the street level which replaces the demolished Ivory Bean building requires particular sensitivity to its neighbors. We encourage the proponent to be more sensitive to the colors, materials, and articulation of the Alexandra itself in the new design.

Additionally, we echo concerns expressed by commissioners about the blank party wall that faces Dudley Square. It is important that all facades of the building be exceptionally well designed. We feel that it might be appropriate, in this unique situation, to allow a mural concept on this new construction that engages South End and Roxbury residents, creating a visual connection between the two neighborhoods rather than a wall. In many ways a painted mural is advantageous to a permanent architectural feature because the design on this prominent façade can be changed over time if needed, providing more flexibility and dynamism. If allowed, the mural should never be an advertisement for the hotel itself but a depiction or abstraction that is representative of the residents of these neighborhoods thus creating the sense of local “ownership” of a hotel building, which is traditionally considered reserved for the use and advantage of outsiders and visitors. We support the idea of adding more windows to that façade as well as the required variance.

The expressed expectation is that, in exchange for the necessary height and variances to make this project successful, the proponent will fully and sensitively restore the two remaining facades of the Hotel Alexandra. This work should be completed to the highest preservation restoration standards, making appropriate accommodations for accessibility into the building and engagement with the public realm.

Finally, we feel this proposal should be the impetus for the City to create stronger regulations regarding neglected and abandoned buildings. It is unacceptable that this

building, a prominent and iconic structure in a protected historic district, should have been allowed to be vacant, vandalized, and exposed for decades preventing the possibility of a full rehabilitation. It is particularly troubling that the current owner (by our understanding not the proponent) will be compensated financially in some way through this project and indirectly rewarded for allowing the building to continue to deteriorate over many years. We strongly encourage the BLC, BPDA, and BCDC to work together, in partnership with advocates like the Alliance, to find a solution to this problem that is resulting in the loss of historic fabric throughout the city. Neighborhoods should not be put in the position of accepting otherwise untenable and unsupported projects in order to save their treasured historic places. Owners should not in the end financially benefit when they have been poor stewards of Boston's heritage.

Thank you,



Greg Galer
Executive Director

CC:

Rosanne Foley, Boston Landmarks Commission
Nicholas Armata, Boston Landmarks Commission
John Amodeo, South End Landmarks Commission
David Nagahiro, CBT Architects

**Boston Water and
Sewer Commission**



980 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02119-2540
617-989-7000

January 18, 2019

Mr. Michael Sinatra
Project Manager
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Alexandra Hotel, South End
Project Notification Form

Dear Mr. Sinatra:

The Boston Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) has reviewed the Project Notification Form (PNF) for the proposed Alexandra Hotel project located at 1767-1769 Washington Street in the South End.

The proposed project is located on an approximately 8,025 square foot (sf) site comprised of two parcels. The site currently contains vacant land and the existing Hotel Alexandra building. The proponent, Alexandra Partners, LLC, proposes to retain and restore the existing Alexandra Hotel façade and construct, behind the façade and on the adjacent vacant parcel, a new approximately 150 room, twelve story approximately 66,000 sf hotel with ground floor restaurant and café space. On the twelfth floor, there will be a rooftop bar/restaurant with access to a roof deck. There will be no on-site parking. The site is bounded by Washington Street to the southeast and Massachusetts Avenue to the northeast.

According to the PNF, the proposed water demand is approximately 22,963 gallons per day (gpd). The Commission owns and maintains a 16-inch Southern Low DICL water main and a 12-inch Southern Low DICL water main, both installed in 2003 in Washington Street and a 12-inch Southern Low DICL water main installed in 1976, a 12-inch Southern Low PCI water main installed 1908 and lined in 1977 and a 30-inch Southern Low PCI water main installed in 1892 and lined in 1972 in Massachusetts Avenue.

According to the PNF, the proposed sewage generation is 25,325 gpd. For sewage and storm drainage service, the site is served by a 12-inch sanitary sewer and a 42-inch storm drain in Washington Street and a 16-inch by 22-inch storm drain in Massachusetts Avenue. The Commission owns and maintains the 99-inch by 101-inch Boston Main Interceptor in Washington Street.



The Commission has the following comments regarding the PNF:

General

1. Prior to the initial phase of the site plan development, Alexandra Partners, LLC should meet with the Commission's Design and Engineering Customer Services to review water main, sewer and storm drainage system availability and potential upgrades that could impact the development.
2. All new or relocated water mains, sewers and storm drains must be designed and constructed at Alexandra Partners, LLC's expense. They must be designed and constructed in conformance with the Commission's design standards, Water Distribution System and Sewer Use regulations, and Requirements for Site Plans. The site plan should include the locations of new, relocated and existing water mains, sewers and drains which serve the site, proposed service connections, water meter locations, as well as back flow prevention devices in the facilities that will require inspection. A General Service Application must also be submitted to the Commission with the site plan.
3. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in cooperation with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and its member communities, is implementing a coordinated approach to flow control in the MWRA regional wastewater system, particularly the removal of extraneous clean water (e.g., infiltration/inflow (I/I)) in the system. In April of 2014, the Massachusetts DEP promulgated new regulations regarding wastewater. The Commission has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for its combined sewer overflows and is subject to these new regulations [314 CMR 12.00, section 12.04(2)(d)]. This section requires all new sewer connections with design flows exceeding 15,000 gpd to mitigate the impacts of the development by removing four gallons of infiltration and inflow (I/I) for each new gallon of wastewater flow. In this regard, any new connection or expansion of an existing connection that exceeds 15,000 gallons per day of wastewater shall assist in the I/I reduction effort to ensure that the additional wastewater flows are offset by the removal of I/I. Currently, a minimum ratio of 4:1 for I/I removal to new wastewater flow added is used. The Commission supports the policy, and will require proponent to develop a consistent inflow reduction plan. The 4:1 requirement should be addressed at least 90 days prior to activation of water service and will be based on the estimated sewage generation provided on the project site plan.
4. The design of the project should comply with the City of Boston's Complete Streets Initiative, which requires incorporation of "green infrastructure" into street designs.



Green infrastructure includes green spaces, such as trees, shrubs, grasses and other landscape plantings, as well as rain gardens and vegetative swales, infiltration basins, and paving materials and permeable surfaces. The proponent must develop a maintenance plan for the proposed green infrastructure. For more information on the Complete Streets Initiative see the City's website at <http://bostoncompletestreets.org/>

5. The water use and sewage generation estimates do not appear to be correct. The Commission requires that these values be recalculated and submitted with the Site Plan. Alexandra Partners, LLC should provide separate estimates of peak and continuous maximum water demand for residential, irrigation and air-conditioning make-up water for the project. Estimates should be based on full-site build-out of the proposed project. Alexandra Partners, LLC should also provide the methodology used to estimate water demand for the proposed project.
6. For any proposed masonry repair and cleaning Alexandra Partners, LLC will be required to obtain from the Boston Air Pollution Control Commission a permit for Abrasive Blasting or Chemical Cleaning. In accordance with this permit Alexandra Partners, LLC will be required to provide a detailed description as to how chemical mist and run-off will be contained and either treated before discharge to the sewer or drainage system or collected and disposed of lawfully off site. A copy of the description and any related site plans must be provided to the Commission's Engineering Customer Service Department for review before masonry repair and cleaning commences. Alexandra Partners, LLC is advised that the Commission may impose additional conditions and requirements before permitting the discharge of the treated wash water to enter the sewer or drainage system.
7. Alexandra Partners, LLC should be aware that the US Environmental Protection Agency issued the Remediation General Permit (RGP) for Groundwater Remediation, Contaminated Construction Dewatering, and Miscellaneous Surface Water Discharges. If groundwater contaminated with petroleum products, for example, is encountered, Alexandra Partners, LLC will be required to apply for a RGP to cover these discharges.
8. It is Alexandra Partners, LLC responsibility to evaluate the capacity of the water, sewer and storm drain systems serving the project site to determine if the systems are adequate to meet future project demands. With the site plan, Alexandra Partners, LLC must include a detailed capacity analysis for the water, sewer and storm drain systems serving the project site, as well as an analysis of the impacts the proposed project will have on the Commission's water, sewer and storm drainage systems.



Water

1. Alexandra Partners, LLC must provide separate estimates of peak and continuous maximum water demand for residential, commercial, industrial, irrigation of landscaped areas, and air-conditioning make-up water for the project with the site plan. Estimates should be based on full-site build-out of the proposed project. Alexandra Partners, LLC should also provide the methodology used to estimate water demand for the proposed project.
2. Alexandra Partners, LLC should explore opportunities for implementing water conservation measures in addition to those required by the State Plumbing Code. In particular, Alexandra Partners, LLC should consider outdoor landscaping which requires minimal use of water to maintain. If Alexandra Partners, LLC plans to install in-ground sprinkler systems, the Commission recommends that timers, soil moisture indicators and rainfall sensors be installed. The use of sensor-operated faucets and toilets in common areas of buildings should be considered.
3. Alexandra Partners, LLC is required to obtain a Hydrant Permit for use of any hydrant during the construction phase of this project. The water used from the hydrant must be metered. Alexandra Partners, LLC should contact the Commission's Meter Department for information on and to obtain a Hydrant Permit.
4. The Commission is utilizing a Fixed Radio Meter Reading System to obtain water meter readings. For new water meters, the Commission will provide a Meter Transmitter Unit (MTU) and connect the device to the meter. For information regarding the installation of MTUs, Alexandra Partners, LLC should contact the Commission's Meter Department.

Sewage / Drainage

1. In conjunction with the Site Plan and the General Service Application Alexandra Partners, LLC will be required to submit a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. The plan must:
 - Identify specific best management measures for controlling erosion and preventing the discharge of sediment, contaminated stormwater or construction debris to the Commission's drainage system when construction is underway.
 - Include a site map which shows, at a minimum, existing drainage patterns and areas used for storage or treatment of contaminated soils, groundwater or stormwater, and the location of major control structures or treatment structures to be utilized during the construction.



- Specifically identify how the project will comply with the Department of Environmental Protection's Performance Standards for Stormwater Management both during construction and after construction is complete.
2. The Commission encourages Alexandra Partners, LLC to explore additional opportunities for protecting stormwater quality on site by minimizing sanding and the use of deicing chemicals, pesticides, and fertilizers.
 3. The discharge of dewatering drainage to a sanitary sewer is prohibited by the Commission. Alexandra Partners, LLC is advised that the discharge of any dewatering drainage to the storm drainage system requires a Drainage Discharge Permit from the Commission. If the dewatering drainage is contaminated with petroleum products, Alexandra Partners, LLC will be required to obtain a Remediation General Permit from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the discharge.
 4. Alexandra Partners, LLC must fully investigate methods for retaining stormwater on-site before the Commission will consider a request to discharge stormwater to the Commission's system. The site plan should indicate how storm drainage from roof drains will be handled and the feasibility of retaining their stormwater discharge on-site. All projects at or above 100,000 square feet of floor area are to retain, on site, a volume of runoff equal to 1.25 inches of rainfall times the impervious area. Under no circumstances will stormwater be allowed to discharge to a sanitary sewer.
 5. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) established Stormwater Management Standards. The standards address water quality, water quantity and recharge. In addition to Commission standards, Alexandra Partners, LLC will be required to meet MassDEP Stormwater Management Standards.
 6. Sanitary sewage must be kept separate from stormwater and separate sanitary sewer and storm drain service connections must be provided. The Commission requires that existing stormwater and sanitary sewer service connections, which are to be re-used by the proposed project, be dye tested to confirm they are connected to the appropriate system.
 7. The Commission requests that Alexandra Partners, LLC install a permanent casting stating "Don't Dump: Drains to Boston Harbor" next to any catch basin created or modified as part of this project. Alexandra Partners, LLC should contact the Commission's Operations Division for information regarding the purchase of the castings.



8. For the cafeteria or food service facility to be built as part of this project, grease traps will be required in accordance with the Commission's Sewer Use Regulations. Alexandra Partners, LLC is advised to consult with the Commission's Operations Department with regards to grease traps.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Yours truly,

John P. Sullivan, P.E.
Chief Engineer

JPS/afh

cc: Jas Bhogal, Alexandra Partners, LLC
K. Ronan, MWRA via e-mail
M. Zlody, BED via e-mail
P. Larocque, BWSC via e-mail

222 Northampton St
Boston, MA 02118
February 13, 2019

Michael Sinatra, Project Manager for The Alexandra
Boston Planning & Development Agency
1 City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: The Alexandra Hotel Expanded Project Notification Form

Dear Mr Sinatra;

When my husband and I need a car, we get a Zipcar at Parmelee St, across Washington St from the Alexandra. But most of the time, we walk, bike, and ride the many buses and trains serving our neighborhood. So it was when the Alexandra built in 1875. A 20-ft wide, tree-lined, promenade marched down the middle of Massachusetts Avenue, inviting residents and visitors to walk and to enjoy Chester Park – an urban oasis then (in the 1950s, six lanes of pavement cut the heart from the park). A rich network of horse-drawn trolleys carried those going further than they wanted to walk. Nearby stables offered horses, wagons and carriages.

When I heard there was a proposal to restore The Alexandra Hotel with no parking, and to have the hotel certified by Leaders in Energy and Environmental Design, I was delighted. But the EPNF says the plan is to carve valet parking from the public sidewalk where the Silver Line now boards; and to park vehicles elsewhere in the neighborhood. The proposal estimates 53% of guests and employees will arrive by car. But this neighborhood has more than enough cars choking thoroughfares, dominating our public space, polluting the air, and competing for parking.

This proposal does not help address today's realities. In December, after wrestling with congestion, transportation inequities and climate change, Governor Baker's Commission on the Future of Transportation envisioned "a 21st century transportation system to move more people in fewer vehicles" Their report offers 18 recommendations, beginning with "(1) Prioritize investment in public transit and (2) transform roadways and travel corridors."

The proposal is not consistent with Boston's transportation goals. Go Boston 2030 hopes to reduce driving by almost half. Washington and Mass Ave is to become a mobility hub.

Bus rapid transit will run the length of Mass Ave and Columbia Road, connecting to Red Line, Orange Line, Green Line and commuter rail.

Alexandra Partners offers the restoration of a historic treasure. The finished hotel would be three times as tall as neighboring row houses and reduce daylight for nearby homes and public spaces. If we are to allow generous variances for height, parking, open space and more, I'd like to see practical benefits for the whole community.

Chester Square Neighbors requested a number of transportation measures, including reconfiguring the four corners of the intersection to improve safety and operations for pedestrians, bicycles, buses, drop-off/pick-up, and general traffic. These improvements will be good for those who own cars and those who do not (about half of households in the South End). They will benefit those who struggle with rising rents and slow, unreliable buses, as well as those whose property will appreciate with the "activation" of this corner. Those of us who live around the corner and those who visit from afar will enjoy the transformation.

I sincerely hope Alexandra Partners will work closely with Boston Transportation Department, Boston Planning and Development Agency, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, and Boston Medical Center transportation management association to make this a great place to be without a car.

I hope my comments are helpful in guiding your decisions on The Alexandra.

Sincerely,

Carol W Blair

Cc: Councilor Kim Janey



<https://chestersquareneighbors.org>

info@chestersquareneighbors.org

Feb 11, 2019

Michael Sinatra, Project Manager for The Alexandra
Boston Planning & Development Agency
1 City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: The Alexandra Hotel

Dear Mr Sinatra;

Having watched The Alexandra, an architectural treasure marking the entry to Chester Square, suffer decades of neglect and speculation, Chester Square Neighbors are excited that an award-winning team proposes to restore the beautiful façade and build a LEED-certified hotel. But, three years ago, when we envisioned the restoration of The Alexandra as a boutique hotel, we did not foresee adding 90 feet to the existing 66-foot height, the total being three times the height of surrounding row houses.

If the new Alexandra is to tower above our rowhouses at this gateway to the South End and Roxbury, it should be a beacon, signaling the durable strength of our architecture and the innovating power of our diversity. For the new Alexandra to thrive at this historic place - now a congested crossroads - it will need 21st Century innovations to promote and facilitate car-free mobility. For the health and enjoyment of all, we need wide sidewalks with trees, benches, and public art. The streets here must be transformed so that walking, cycling, bus, and train offer the best ways to get around.

According to Article 37 of Boston's zoning code, the project must "minimize adverse environmental impacts; conserve natural resources; promote sustainable development; and enhance quality of life." To demonstrate compliance, the Expanded Project Notification Form (EPNF) offers a LEED checklist with best practice strategies for green building and energy efficiency; yet the Alexandra proposal targets only 45 points out of a possible 110.

This area suffers traffic, litter, noise, air pollution, light pollution, heat and flooding. The Alexandra will bring more cars, heat from cooling systems, long shadows and wind gusts. Our natural environment is subordinated to tall buildings and hardscape almost everywhere. The Alexandra Partners are poised to benefit from this urban compactness; in turn, we ask for a more ambitious effort to sustainability, especially with respect to transportation – a fundamental to the experience of hotel guests and employees, to the success of neighborhood businesses, and to the welfare of our neighbors.

Alexandra Partners propose a hotel with no on-site parking. In lieu of parking, and to accommodate new activity, we ask that the project collaborate with the City and MBTA to enhance transit, cycling and walking opportunities. Conversations with stakeholders, including the MBTA, suggest improvements at each of the four corners of the intersection that, together, can provide active drop-off /pick-up space in front of the hotel, wider sidewalks on Massachusetts Ave, reconfiguration of bus stops and bike lanes for safe & smooth operations, and information boards to facilitate transportation choices. If the hotel's Yelp reviews declare this is a great place to be car-free, then the hotel will most certainly recoup the investment.

We want to see this project succeed and have worked hard to assemble quality feedback with ideas to make The Alexandra and its surroundings an amazing place for everyone. I believe BPDA, MBTA and Alexandra Partners will lead a holistic transformation at this corner.

Attached, please find **Chester Square Neighbors' Specific Requests re: The Alexandra**. Thank you for your attention and for your help in bringing The Alexandra and this important crossroads back to life.

Sincerely,

Carol W Blair, President
Chester Square Neighbors

Cc: Mayor Martin Walsh
Rep Jon Santiago
Councilor Kim Janey
Councilor Ed Flynn
Councilor Michelle Wu
Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George

Chester Square Neighbors' Specific Requests re: The Alexandra

(revised 11 Feb 2019)

Transportation:

1. Instead of 3 valet parking spaces, create active drop-off / pick-up spaces, legal for all vehicles, but only while actively loading or unloading. Work with MBTA & the City to improve each of the four corners at this crossroads - moving bus stops and bike lanes and widening sidewalks to make the intersection work better for pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and general traffic. Plant & nurture trees, install benches & public art.
2. Collaborate with Boston Medical Center Transportation Management Association <http://www.bumc.bu.edu/transcomm/about-us/> to shuttle guests to/from parking, BMC and Orange Line.
3. Provide guests with complimentary Charlie ticket for first ride
4. Subsidize Charlie Cards for employees
5. Install transportation info boards in lobby and on sidewalks, showing buses, BlueBikes, Zipcars, walking map (departure time, travel times, cost, and "get started")

Design:

1. Façade restoration should comply with list of items provided by SE Historical Society
2. Architecture & materials for new structure should complement the historic Alexandra.
3. Minimize building height. Contact all within shadow to address loss of daylight.
4. Because the site lies in a heat island where temperatures can soar to dangerous levels, the design should explore possibilities for adding trees, green roof/wall.
5. "Bar" is a forbidden use here, according to Boston's zoning code. A rooftop restaurant, however, will be a welcome addition to our neighborhood.

Construction

1. Sidewalk and lane closures during construction can dramatically increase congestion and danger to pedestrians and cyclists. To prepare for constrained conditions, transportation measures should be initiated before construction.
2. Rodent control must be proactive. In addition to extermination strategies, nearby buildings should be secured against infestation in advance of construction.
3. Recruit local workers

Operations

1. Hire and support local workers. Maintain neutrality with respect to unions
2. Maintain public access to roof.
3. Manage operations to preclude noise intrusion on neighbors (deliveries, roof deck)
4. Keep sidewalk clear of litter and snow, truck snow offsite (bus lane needs to be clear)
5. No Comet place deliveries between 9 pm and 7 am

563 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02118

January 13, 2019

Michael Sinatra, Project Manager
Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Alexandra Hotel

Dear Mr. Sinatra:

I write to oppose the current proposal to develop the Alexandra Hotel (hereafter the Hotel), situated on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Washington Street, in the South End of Boston. I have lived at 563 Massachusetts Avenue since 1978 and have been an active member during this period of not only the Chester Square Area Neighborhood Assoc. but also in local concerns, having been the key convener of the opposition to the siting of an asphalt plant in the South Bay.

The written proposal, the "EXPANDED PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM" submitted by Alexandra Partners, LLC, and dated November 30, 2018, has several missing and/or incomplete pieces. These concern parking, shadows, structural integrity and appearance.

PARKING

The report states that:

"No on-site parking will be provided due to site constraints and the proximity of the Project to public transportation. Valet parking will be provided for guests and will utilize a nearby parking garage or lot." (pg. 2-20 top para.)

However, there is no description of the site constraints, and the proximity to public transportation is not relevant to the arrival of guests. Heretofore, developments of this scale have included onsite underground parking, such as the Penny Bank addition, and Langham Court. No case is made that would preclude such, especially as the design, according to the presentation of the architect at the public meeting of January 9th, includes mechanicals placed on the roof, rather than in the basement **If the proponents choose to remove all of the Hotel except the outside public walls, as they have proposed, there is no physical restriction cited which would prohibit underground parking for a substantive number of vehicles.**

The valet parking to garages and/or parking lots several blocks distant, in and of itself is not a sufficient answer to the reasonable concern that guests may well seek neighboring

residential streets to park their cars for a several day visit at no cost, especially if their visit is occasioned by relatives or friends living in the area. (Business travelers coming by car may well have an expense account to cover valet parking.) There is no provision for enhanced enforcement of such illegal parking. Further, that a visitor living in another state would indeed pay a Boston parking ticket once back in his/her home state is a dubious assumption.

A major issue concerns the portion of the sidewalk removed to allow for a designated valet parking area (fig. 2-12). As illustrated, the width of that area approximates the width of cars with perhaps an extra foot for a width of 7 foot. However, as the driver opens his/her door and steps out, he/she will be in the bus lane. The valet parking lane must be wide enough to accommodate the driver not having to step into a moving traffic lane. As well, the tree pits suggest that passengers will likely need to step into the tree pits themselves, (Whether trees make a reasonable feature at the point of the valet parking site is questionable.) Finally, the current sidewalk in front of the Hotel's property line is 19.5 feet (measured on 1.13.19). With a too narrow valet parking lane of perhaps 7 feet, an additional 4 feet for the tree pits and the proponents' suggested sidewalk dining area which might be as wide as 7 feet, the remainder (19.5'-7'-7'-4') of 1.5 feet is too narrow for a major walkway such as is intended to be Washington Street.

Some hotels have resolved this problem with a curved drive that crosses the sidewalk, as have the Four Seasons on Boylston Street and the Marriott on Huntington Street. Such a change in design might require the Hotel proponents to sacrifice some of their planned use of interior space rather than expecting the public to sacrifice their public space for a dubious solution. Given the proposal's valet parking, **Sidewalk dining outside of the Hotel's property must be prohibited as a condition for construction** as the proposal will make the sidewalk impassable for pedestrians.

SHADOWS

The shadow projects concern themselves entirely with the impact on public streets, sidewalks and bus stops. "The analysis focuses on nearby open spaces, sidewalks and bus stops adjacent to and in the vicinity of the Project site." (pg. 3-14) Further on the developers observe:

"The results of the BRADA analysis indicate that the Project will result in increased daylight obstruction over existing conditions with values of the Proposed Conditions similar to or slightly lightly higher than the Area Context viewpoints, and typical of urban areas." (pg.3-36)

The report does not address which houses will lose sunlight through front or rear windows, or rooftops. Indeed, there are reasons to question the validity of the shadow diagrams. For example, in figure 3.2-12, regarding added shadows at 9 a.m. on December 21st, the diagram suggests that there is a higher roof line for 571 Mass. Ave. than the two buildings to its northwest, which is not the case. *Therefore the shadow will impact parts of the roofs of 567 and 569 Mass. Ave, which impact is not illustrated.*

The studies included do suggest a negative impact on some of the residences on Massachusetts Avenue, Northampton St., Worcester Square, E. Springfield Street and Washington Street. Sunlight is a sought after commodity in urban areas especially, but not only in the winter months. Limiting the examinations to 9 a.m. through 3p.m. with two exceptions, does not provide sufficient data for residents to know the full extent of the negative impact of the shadows cast by the proposed tower of 12 stories – 13 to the top of the roof. (The height in feet is not detailed in the report.) And that the obstructed daylight is “typical of [unqualified] urban areas” does not make it desirable any more than would be a 30 story commercial building or a massive energy generating plant in a residential area. Many, if not most, streets in the South End do not suffer what the developers term “typical” daylight obstruction.

Finally, I am in the midst of having solar panels installed on my roof, primarily as a personal response to climate change and secondarily as a long term cost saving measure. This is a fairly costly project in excess of \$40,000. I suspect that there will be shadows cast on those panels earlier than 9 a.m. which will negate a portion of the electricity I have planned on generating, **The proponent must be directed to provide accurate shadow studies for 7:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. for all seasons, and 8 p.m. for summer in order to provide complete impact information on the surrounding private residences.** Homeowners should be encouraged to make use of solar panels, rather than being discouraged by shadows caused by developments such as this.

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

The developers assert that the structural integrity is such that the building is in danger of collapsing –“Due to the decades of neglect and extensive water infiltration, the existing structure is no longer viable and will accordingly be replaced.” 1.3.3 , referencing “...compromised interior structural members...” (sec.6.2.1)

The few pictures of the inside conditions do not validate any claim of deterioration to the structure. Page 13 of the photo album accompanying the Expanded Public Notification Form (<http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/71223b19-6a01-4f0e-8854-e51057f05cef>). shows only several charred floor joists, not uncommon within south end townhouses prior to restoration efforts. There is nothing in the report regarding any significant structural damage, except for those floor joists. That there has been a ground floor commercial occupant (A beauty products store) for many years up to and including this year suggests that the city believes the building is safe, and not likely to collapse.

APPEARANCE

Finally, while the proposal suggests that the exterior will provide a complimentary design to the Victorian townhouses in the South End, so would a cement batching facility, given the lack of any definition of the word “complimentary.” The example the proponents cite from another area of the South End, e.g. the Penny Savings Bank extension on Washington Street (pg. 16 of the accompanying picture addendum, <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/71223b19-6a01-4f0e-8854-e51057f05cef>), multiplies

the height of the Penny Savings Bank by less than double the height of the pre-existing building, while the structure under review multiplies the height of the Hotel by approximately two and a half. Additionally, the Penny Savings Bank example enhances the squat/blocky nature of the building from which it rises.

In the case of the Hotel, standard roof tops in the Chester Square area are approximately 50-55 feet above grade. The proposal under review tops out at 155 feet. The current 5 story block nature of the Hotel contrasts to the proposed singular vertical structure addition. As a "gateway" to the core of the South End, the proposed addition is a poor representation of the Victorian nature of the neighborhood. Its height is nowhere else found on Massachusetts Avenue from Harrison Street to the Orange Line Cut, nor on Washington Street from Melnea Cass Blvd. to Herald Street.

For these four reasons, I urge the city to reject this current proposal. A substantive lessening of the height, requiring underground parking, and projections of the impact of shadows on residential windows and roofs, for the hours between 8a.m. and 6p.m. in all four seasons must be requirements of any additions to the Hotel. Additionally, the use of a predominantly glass tower can not be considered a compliment to the Victorian housing environment, but rather be a contrasting and distracting focal point.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Fillion

Cc. Counselor Kim Janey

Rep. Jon. Santiago.

Nicholas Armata, S.E Landmarks Commission

Carol Blair, member Impact Advisory Group

B

Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Hotel Alexandria Project

2 messages

Sophie Gellot [REDACTED]
To: michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov

Tue, Dec 4, 2018 at 1:45 PM

Hi Michael,

I am writing in support of the Hotel Alexandria Project. The building has been deteriorating over the past 30 years and I support the developer's efforts to turn it into a hotel that includes a restaurant and roof deck bar and restaurant.

NAME/OWNER. Sophie Gellot
48 E Springfield St UNIT # 3
Boston MA 02118

Thank you!

am writing in support of the Hotel Alexandria Project. The building has been deteriorating over the past 30 years and I support the developer's efforts to turn it into a hotel that includes a restaurant and roof deck bar and restaurant.

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>
To: [REDACTED]

Tue, Dec 4, 2018 at 2:06 PM

Sophie,

Thank you for submitting your comments. I will add this to the record. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime.

[Quoted text hidden]

--

**Michael Sinatra, MPA**

Project Manager
617-918-4280
michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov

Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA)
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor | Boston, MA 02201
bostonplans.org

KEEGAN WERLIN LLP

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99 HIGH STREET, SUITE 2900
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(617) 951-1400

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(617) 951-1354

January 10, 2019

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov

Michael Sinatra, Project Manager
Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Expanded Project Notification Form: Proposed Redevelopment of the Hotel Alexandra

Dear Mr. Sinatra:

On behalf of Ms. Nerlin Hernandez, I am providing comments on the Expanded Project Notification Form ("EPNF") for the proposed development known as the 'Hotel Alexandra' at 631 Massachusetts Avenue and 1767-1769 Washington Street (the "Project"). Ms. Hernandez has been an occupant of 612 Massachusetts Avenue, #4, for more than 6 years and intends to continue living there for many years. As described below, she will be directly impacted by the Project.

The Project is located in the Multifamily Residential/Limited Service (MFR/LS) zoning subdistrict within the Roxbury Neighborhood District. The proponent states in the EPNF that the Project will require zoning relief in the form of Variances and Conditional Use Permits.ⁱ For the reasons stated below, zoning relief to the Project should not be approved by the Boston Planning & Development Agency ("BPDA") or granted by the Boston Zoning Board of Appeals.

A. Dimensions

The proponent acknowledges that the Project will require dimensional variances. While the specifics of the dimensional variances are not outlined in the EPNF, they likely are maximum FAR, building height, and yard setbacks.ⁱⁱ Ms. Hernandez opposes zoning relief for the Project primarily because according to Figure 3.2-13 on page 85 of the EPNF, the additional height proposed for the Project will cast a shadow over her residence for a substantial portion of the year.

The maximum FAR for MFR/LS zoning is 1.0.ⁱⁱⁱ The two parcels have an area of 8,025 square feet^{iv} and the *current* building has a gross floor area of 27,400 square feet,^v leading to an FAR of 3.4. The *proposed* building has a gross floor area of 66,000 square feet,^{vi} leading to an FAR of 8.2. The proposed structure is over eight times the density of what is allowed by right on

the site and more than double what currently exists. Ms. Hernandez believes that this significant increase in density will have an adverse impact on the quality of life at her residence.

The maximum building height for MFR/LS zoning is 45 feet and four stories,^{vii} while the existing structure is already 69 feet and five stories.^{viii} The Project would be 144 feet and twelve stories.^{ix} The proposed height is over three times the height allowed by right and is far out of character in this section of Massachusetts Avenue, which includes primarily residential rowhouses. The excessive height of the Project will result in a substantial increase in shadow and wind, as well as obstruction of daylight that will adversely affect her quality of life, particularly in the winter months.^x This is of particular concern because she values the skylight during the winter, and Figure 3.2-13 on page 85 shows that her residence will be covered in shadow that time of year.^{xi}

Ms. Hernandez is also concerned because the increased massing and height of the Project above what is allowed by right will cause strong winds on Massachusetts Avenue, both immediately in front of her residence as well as across the street. The proponent states that the Project increases mean wind speeds to 17 mph on some areas of Massachusetts Avenue,^{xii} which is near the cutoff for making walking uncomfortable.^{xiii}

B. Uses

The EPNF notes that the Project will include approximately 150 hotel rooms, a twelfth floor “rooftop level bar/restaurant with access to a roof deck”, and a “restaurant and café” on the ground floor.^{xiv} Given the Project location within the MFR/LS subdistrict, it is important that reasonable limits on uses be maintained. This subdistrict was established to encourage medium density multifamily and ground floor retail.^{xv} While the Project proponent acknowledges that the *hotel* use is a conditional use in Table B of Article 50, the EPNF does not detail other Project uses, which are either conditional or Forbidden.^{xvi}

Table B of Article 50 describes Hotel Uses and ground-floor restaurants as “Conditional.” However, *bar uses* are Forbidden, and Footnote 4 of Table B notes that a restaurant not located on the ground floor is Forbidden. For the conditional uses, the proponent would be required to seek conditional use permits in accordance with Article 6. However, for the forbidden uses, the proponent would be required to seek variances for nonconforming use of the land.^{xvii}

In the EPNF, the proponent failed to make an argument regarding the forbidden use of the “rooftop level bar/restaurant.” Under Section 7-3(a), the proponent must demonstrate that there are “special circumstances or conditions” applying to the land or structure that would inhibit the “reasonable use of such land or structure.” Under Section 7-3(b), there must be practical difficulty and substantial hardship that require the granting of the variance. Under Section 7-3(c), it must be shown that the variance will be in harmony with the intent of the code and not injurious to the neighborhood. The proponent did not demonstrate how the twelfth-floor food and beverage venue would be required for the “reasonable use” of the structure, how denial would cause “substantial hardship,” or how this use will not be “injurious to the neighborhood.”

The proponent claims in the EPNF that the Project would have few adverse effects on the neighborhood, but Ms. Hernandez has a different view because the adverse effects from the hotel and destination ground-floor restaurant would violate the conditions in Sections 6-3(b), 6-3(d), and 6-3(e) that must be met to allow a conditional use.

C. Traffic

As a Hotel with two food and beverage outlets, as well as meeting spaces and valet services, this Project will directly increase traffic near Ms. Hernandez's residence, leading to an increase in traffic noise and congestion. All projections also assume a relocation of the Silver Line bus stop, a process which relies on a state agency to administer and presumably fund. Additionally, the trip analysis appears to underestimate the total vehicle trips generated by the Project, because the analysis^{xviii} does not include trips generated by either the 151-seat ground floor restaurant or the 177-seat rooftop lounge.^{xix} The proponent suggests these venues will "continue the tradition" of "Boston's most exciting restaurants,"^{xx} but that means they will generate additional trip volume above and beyond that anticipated in the traffic analysis for the hotel alone.

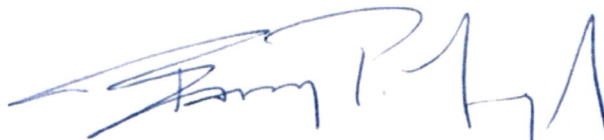
Furthermore, given there will be no parking on-site, the proponent proposes valet services with a nearby garage and mentions the Crosstown Center Garage (over a quarter-mile away) as the largest capacity garage in the area.^{xxi} However, the trip generation analysis did not double the private auto trip generation to include the valet trips to and from area garages.^{xxii} Lastly, the 2025 Build Condition traffic analysis does not include a number of other projects proposed on Massachusetts Avenue to the north, such as Parcel 12, 1000 Boylston, and Back Bay Gateway.^{xxiii}

D. Conclusion

In light of these adverse impacts on enjoyment and use of her residence, and based on the proponent's failure to demonstrate that the criteria for variances have been met, Ms. Hernandez urges the BPDA and the Boston Zoning Board of Appeals to deny the requested variances.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and concerns.

Sincerely,



Barry P. Fogel

Comment Letter to Boston Planning and Development Agency
Re: EPNF: Proposed Redevelopment of the Hotel Alexandra
January 10, 2019
Page 4 of 4

i	Page 22, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
ii	Page 23, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
iii	Boston Zoning Code Article 50 Table F
iv	Page 16, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
v	Page 16, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
vi	Page 225, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
vii	Boston Zoning Code Article 50 Table F
viii	Page 168, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
ix	Page 225, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
x	Pages 72 and 85, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xi	Pages 72 and 85, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xii	Pages 66 and 193, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xiii	Page 62, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xiv	Pages 16 and 21, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xv	Boston Zoning Code Section 50-26(5)
xvi	Page 22, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xvii	Boston Zoning Code Section 7-2
xviii	Page 177, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xix	Page 150, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xx	Page 14, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xxi	Page 44, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xxii	Page 177, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18
xxiii	Page 40, Hotel Alexandra EPNF 11/30/18



Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

**Opposition comments re: Hotel Alexandra, 1761 Washington Street at
Massachusetts Ave. South End Landmark District**

Stephen Jerome

Wed, Feb 13, 2019 at 4:59 PM

To: Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Cc: Kim.Janey@boston.gov, A.E.George@boston.gov, noah.coolidge@boston.gov, ed.flynn@boston.gov, Rosanne Foley <rosanne.foley@boston.gov>, brona.simon@state.ma.us, South End Historical Society

[REDACTED]
saynab.maalin@boston.gov, SoniaDiaz-Chang <SoniaDiaz-Chang@mahouse.gov>, jon.santiago@mahouse.gov

Mr. Michael A. Sinatra
Boston Redevelopment Authority/BPDA
Boston City Hall
One City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Dear Mr. Sinatra:

In 1983, the South End Landmark District was passed into law through the leadership of Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, the result of years of effort by the South End Historical Society, community members, preservationists and others who rightfully sought to protect what is considered the largest Victorian row house district in the United State. This designation followed the listing of the South End on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. All proposed exterior work and new construction visible from the public way in the Landmark District are subject to review in public hearings. No applications should be filed that are not in compliance with the Standards and Criteria for the Landmark District.

The proposal to enlarge the Hotel Alexandra - an outstanding example of a Ruskinian Gothic apartment building - by parties who currently hold an option to buy the site is not in compliance with the Standards and Criteria as the proposed 142' height is almost double the eighty feet height limit for new construction. I have reviewed the PNF and other public documents and have not found any justification for the excessive height in the current proposal. While the Alexandria has been neglected for decades, other historic buildings in the Landmark District and elsewhere that have suffered similar neglect have been successfully rehabilitated without adding excessive towers.

Issues of height, design and context may be addressed in the proper settings of public hearings before the South End Landmark District Commission and other public agencies with oversight of any proposals for this site, an important corner in the Landmark District with one of its most architecturally distinguished landmarks. The architecture of the Alexandria should not be compromised by dwarfing it under a ponderous and badly designed structure that is too large for the site. Any roof additions and infill for the Ivory Bean House site should conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for additions and new construction in historic districts (as well as the aforementioned SELDC Standards and Criteria).

Thanks for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,

Steve Jerome
Executive Secretary, South End Landmark District Commission, 1984-88
Architectural Historian and Preservationist
[16 Harvard Street](#)
[Boston, Massachusetts 02129](#)

cc: BLC
SELDC
MHC
City Council
State House
Press

B

Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Alexandra Hotel Project

1 message

Brian Langevin [REDACTED]
To: "michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov" <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Fri, Feb 15, 2019 at 2:49 PM

Michael,

I see that I have missed the comment period but I hope it is not too late to provide some information comments from a resident of the South End. (I live on Tremont St)

First, I imagine that I'm with the majority of neighbors that would like this to proceed in any form. Almost anything that can be placed at that intersection would be a great improvement over the current building. A hotel at this intersection is a great addition and way to increase foot traffic in the area. I'm hopeful the city is able to enact policies or legislation that will prevent vacant buildings from sitting tax-free for such a long period of time in the future. It is a disgrace to the neighborhood that so little could be done.

My first wish as a neighbor is that the original façade is maintained. It appears this is a key component to all of the project documents so am happy to see that in the plan.

However, I'd also advocate for as much attention to historical detail as possible on the new addition. The existing project documents present this as a glass box, which is unappealing and will forever change the nature of the historical district in this year. I understand that this will increase costs on the developer, so I would propose a trade off to requiring a more historically accurate brick style façade (as we are in the Landmark district) would be permitting an increase in height than would otherwise be allowed. That said, there are some architectural details that help the project, namely the step back from street line to the full height of the building. I think this helps to preserve the character of the neighborhood quite well.

For the missing building to the side of Washington St. my preference would be to keep the building massing the same as the Alexandra (Option D), or the existing buildings further south. However, it is even more desired here that the architecture is consistent with neighboring buildings, instead of a new glass style that is out of character.

Finally, it is important that the needs of transit are considered for the project. Silver Line stops should not be negatively impacted by the development and a plan for street use should be developed to eliminate double parking of vehicles along the corridor.



Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Hotel Alexandria - Letter of Support

1 message

Desmond Murphy [REDACTED]
To: michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov

Mon, Nov 26, 2018 at 10:06 AM

Dear Michael,

I hope you are well.

I am writing to provide written support for the Alexandria hotel project. I am writing for several reasons:

- 1) I believe that the developer has gone above and beyond the requirements to raise awareness of the proposal (coming to the South End Forum meeting with an early proposal, coming to WSANA, Chester Square, etc.) - getting newspaper articles. way more than i've seen with most projects around here. Far beyond minimum requirements in terms of introducing themselves to the community.
- 2) Second, they arrived with a specific height and did not start high as a negotiating tactic. (e.g. they didn't pull the.. "hey we're thinking about 22 stories..." and then "ok fine we hear you - 12 works with us" - I appreciate the honesty.
- 3) Third, they have experience developing historical buildings and it's clear they will do their best to make the building fit within the neighborhood's character.
- 4),4th - target hotel level and valet/parking situation- as a regular business traveler (110 nights in hotels in the last 1.5 years), I understand the developer's rationale for targeting a Hilton/Marriott/etc brand name hotel - fits within the character of the neighborhood, will draw tourists who will spend money at local restaurants to get "the local South End experience". This type of traveler wants a brand name hotel - ensures highest quality when staying in old buildings. These type of tourists will be using uber/lyft to get around the city. London House Chicago is a great example of what the developer is looking to do (old building, brand name chain running behind the scenes, roof deck patio/bar/restaurant). By the way, literally no hotels in NYC have self parking and there are several hotels in the area that lack self parking - so valet makes a lot of sense - the developer has confirmed on numerous occasions that there will be sufficient parking via valet. Given our proximity to Logan Airport, I reiterate that I believe most customers will use Uber or Lyft.
- 5) I like the proposal to move the bus stop and move the Mass ave light electrical box (both are deactivating the street)- the bus stop move will also ensure traffic doesn't back up onto mass ave.
- 6) The developer is committed to hanging onto the historical facade - that's really amazing.

Michael, please keep me in the loop on when you have a public hearing. Happy to repeat the above points in person.

Thanks so much!

Desi Murphy

48 E Springfield St.
Apt 1
Boston, MA 02118
(Owner)

Desmond Murphy, PharmD
[REDACTED]

578 Mass. Ave., #1
Boston, MA, 02118
estreich@verizon.net

February 13, 2019

Michael Sinatra, Project Manager
Boston Planning and Development Agency
Hand-delivered

Dear Mr. Sinatra:

I write in opposition to the Alexandra Hotel proposal for the following reasons:

1. BPDA ignored Roxbury and race/ethnicity in determining IAG membership:

The Letter of Intent clearly states that the development site is “located in the Roxbury Neighborhood District”, yet the 10-member IAG consists of two Roxbury residents, two Roxbury community organization representatives, and six South End residents, including three nominated by the BPDA.

Further, race or ethnicity does not seem to have been considered. BPDA statistics indicate the South End is 45% non-white while Roxbury’s population is described as “African American, Hispanic, and Asian families along with young professionals”. The IAG as currently constituted does not appear to reflect the racial or ethnic make-up of either Roxbury or the South End.

2. Building design and construction materials are inappropriate for neighborhood:

The area around the Hotel consists primarily of historic 19th century brick and stone town houses of 4-5 storeys and low-rise 20th century publicly-funded housing constructed for the most part to blend with the earlier Victorian styles and roof-heights. The Hotel plan proposes a jarring lurch into a modernist 12-storey glass tower that will cast shadows across Massachusetts Avenue and probably beyond. This style is appropriate for other parts of Boston, particularly the Financial District, but not to either Roxbury or the South End and especially not as a boxy vertical appendage to the lovely structure that is the Alexandra Hotel with its Victorian curves and ornamentation.

3. Parking problems will harm local residents and businesses:

150 hotel rooms at capacity will probably mean 250 guests. Add to this some hundreds of employees, visitors to the two restaurants and the advertised Conference facility and the proposal will add some 400 - 450 people to the corner, all relying on garages some blocks away or public transportation. It is inevitable that some of these hundreds will want to park nearby, depriving local businesses and residents of parking spaces since out-of-town visitors may not obey local parking

prohibitions. Furthermore, the blithe statement by a BPDA representative that all employees will take public transportation or use valet service seems overly optimistic. A night manager or a bar tender working the evening shift may well drive and park close by, especially if the shift ends after 2 a.m.

4. Air and noise pollution will increase:

Anyone living on Mass. Ave. is aware of the soot and oily dirt that comes in our windows all year long as a result of the heavy traffic, including 18-wheel trucks, on this main thoroughfare. Mass. Ave. and Washington Street residents also are subjected to traffic and ambulance noise on a 24-hour basis. Adding to the existing traffic the hundreds of cars connected to the Hotel, whether driven by a valet, an employee, or a restaurant/hotel guest, will create higher pollution levels. Neighborhood people will not have the luxury of air-tight, noise-proof rooms which the Hotel guests may have.

5. A 4-star hotel will gentrify the neighborhood and displace local businesses and residents:

The disasters caused by the fast-paced gentrification in parts of Roxbury have been recognized, and deplored, by City and elected officials. Local residents testified at Councilwoman Janey's public hearing in November 2018 to the displacement of local residents, 81% of whom are renters who cannot afford the increased rents that inevitably follow gentrification. Washington Street on the South End side of Mass. Ave. gentrified quickly after 2000, forcing many shops and residents to leave, while high-end restaurants and expensive condos moved in. That earlier experience should serve as an example of what happens under these circumstances.

The City of Boston has also lamented the small number of minority-owned businesses in the city. Gentrification on South End Washington forced out minority businesses. History will undoubtedly repeat itself on the Roxbury side as development moves up towards Melnea Cass. Most if not all of the businesses near the hotel along Washington are minority-owned or -operated. (I note that none of these businesses are represented on the IAG.) More trees, benches and public art are nice, and I for one will enjoy them, but they cannot compare with the losses that will result from gentrification.

This Roxbury neighborhood does not need a 4-star hotel. It needs affordable and medium-priced housing, and the services and commercial establishments appropriate to that price range. Roxbury has an important place in Boston's history. Turning it into an extension of the South End does a grave and harmful injustice to its people.

Respectfully submitted,


Carol Streiff

Cc: Councilwoman Kim Janey
Representative Jon Santiago
Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz

B

Michael Sinatra <michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov>

Alexandria Hotel.

1 message

Carl Todisco [REDACTED]
To: michael.a.sinatra@boston.gov

Tue, Feb 12, 2019 at 10:56 AM

Dear mr. Sinatra,

My name is Carl Todisco i have been a resident of Roxbury for forty years and was delighted to hear that the Alexandria hotel was finally going to be rehabbed. It is such a beautiful building and a keystone for that corner.

To my dismay, i was horrified to see what was proposed to go on top of it. The whole concept is out of place and does not fit in with the historical significance of the area.

Please lets not do any more harm to that once elegant building, by altering it in that way.

Sincerely,
Carl Todisco
60 Winthrop St
Roxbury, Ma.