

To: John Gunn, Chair, and the City of Beacon Planning Board

Date: December 7, 2018

Re: **39 Front Street, HIP Lofts & Storage Amended Site Plan**

I reviewed November 27, 2018 response letters from Cuddy + Feder and Hudson Land Design, a November 27, 2018 Plan Change Summary by Aryeh Siegel, and a 10-sheet Amendment to Special Permit set, with Sheet 2 dated October 30, 2018 and all other sheets dated November 27, 2018.

### **Proposal**

The project would eliminate the previously approved construction of Buildings 9A and 12, demolish Buildings 16, 18, 24, and 25, construct a new Building 16, and extend Building 9 to include one live-work loft. This will increase the previously approved unit count from 143 to 172 lofts. The 8.7-acre parcel is in the Light Industrial district and Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone (HDLO).

### **Comments and Recommendations**

1. The City Council approved the amended Special Permit with certain conditions, including several that involve Planning Board decisions:
  - The Board should determine a date for construction of public access to the northern Greenway Trail from Front Street that is unobstructed by a gate, fence or similar barrier. After meeting with the Greenway Trail Committee, the applicant has suggested a completion date of October 1, 2019 for elimination of the locked gate and completion of the northern Greenway Trail redesign to provide a wider route and seven-foot landscaped area between the Trail and interior chain link fence.
  - The Board should also set a date for construction of the stairs, walking route, and gate for residents of HIP Lofts to access the northern portion of the Greenway Trail. It seems reasonable to have these improvements timed to the first Certificate of Occupancy in Building 16, as requested by the applicant.
  - The Board should consider alternative architectural designs for Building 16, such as one with vertical piers to incorporate significant breaks in the façade, reflecting the standard in Section 134-7 B(2)(d). The applicant has maintained that this standard was primarily intended for Main Street buildings and a flat facade is more consistent with the existing mill buildings on the site. On the other hand, historic Buildings 4 and 11 on the site have subtle breaks in their front facades and the standard to include breaks was also included in the Fishkill Creek Development and Linkage districts. The concern was that long, flat-faced buildings would look larger, too imposing, and more modern without some varied elements to break down the scale and add depth, shadows, and details. There is also the Secretary of Interior standard that new work should be compatible with its historic surrounds, but it should also be differentiated to clearly distinguish the old from the new.

2. Since this parcel is in the HDLO Zone, final approval also requires a Certificate of Appropriateness consistent with Chapter 134. The Historic Preservation chapter has a new list of design standards since this application was last before the Planning Board, the most relevant of which are reviewed in a letter from Hartgen Archeological Associates in Exhibit E of the application packet. I agree that the proposal complies with these Historic Preservation standards.
3. Sheet 3 should include the type and species of landscaping now proposed along the northern section of the Greenway Trail. A mix of plant types would be more attractive than a long continuous row of the same species.

If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me.

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