

BOSTON PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

February 12, 2021

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Executive Director

Gregory J. Galer, Ph.D.

Stephen Harvey
Boston Planning & Development Agency
Boston City Hall
Re: 80 West Broadway, South Boston

Dear Mr. Harvey,

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, 103 Corporate Members, and a reach over 100,000 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 strongly urges the preservation of the Amrheins building at 80 West Broadway. We informed the BPDA of this concern years ago as sale of the Amrheins property was first rumored, and we were pleased that the development proposal being considered respected preservation in its plans. We understand that BPDA staff and a number of elected officials agree that this building should not be lost. This iconic corner building and legacy business, operating since 1890 and the oldest restaurant and bar in South Boston, touts itself as having the oldest hand carved bar in America and the first draft beer pump in Boston. It is a destination for Bostonians and visitors alike, and one of the few historic buildings to survive intense, ongoing development pressure on West Broadway. It is a gateway to the South Boston neighborhood, steps from the Broadway T station, and a marker of the roots of the neighborhood as Southie evolves.

We are aware of some voices in the community who are suggesting that demolishing this building would allow for a wider sidewalk at the corner of West Broadway and A Street. We encourage the proponent, the BPDA, and the Boston Transportation Department to collaborate with advocacy organizations and residents to find a solution to any safety concerns at this intersection that do not require the loss of this building. Because the other buildings on this block will not be moved back on their sites, the sidewalk on this block could not be widened beyond the Amrheins parcel anyway. Loss of this special building would not be the best solution.

In addition, as is increasingly clear as more and more data is compiled, demolition is contrary to the city's carbon neutrality goals. When there is no

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justification for such loss compounded with the idea of yet another piece of historic fabric erased from the city, it is hard to fathom why demolition would be seriously considered. The proponent stepped forward with a plan that has no issues with integrating preservation, and we urge the BPDA to embrace that plan and discount calls for demolition.

As South Boston continues to lose its historic built environment and sense of place, it is imperative that places like Amrheins are protected, restored, and celebrated.

Thank you,



Greg Galer
Executive Director

CC:

Jonathan Greeley, Boston Planning and Development Agency
Michael Cannizzo, Boston Planning and Development Agency
Alexa Pinard, Boston Planning and Development Agency
Elizabeth Stifel, Boston Civic Design Commission
Andrea Leers, Boston Civic Design Commission
B.K. Boley, Stantec
John Matteson, Matteson Companies
Doug Kelleher, Epsilon Associates
Representative Stephen Lynch, 8th District, United States Congress
Kim Janey, President, Boston City Council
Ed Flynn, Boston City Council
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Michael Flaherty, Boston City Council
Julia Mejia, Boston City Council
Michelle Wu, Boston City Council
Stacy Thompson, Livable Streets Alliance
Wendy Landman, Walk Boston
Robert Allison, South Boston Historical Society