

BOSTON PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

www.bostonpreservation.org

September 17, 2021

Nick Carter
Boston Planning and Development Agency
Boston City Hall
Re: Alexandra Hotel, 1767-1769 Washington Street

Dear Mr. Carter,

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 of 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 has had the opportunity to meet with the developers and to attend a virtual public meeting to review updates to this project. Because the only consequential change to the proposal is the switch from a hotel use to a residential use, the Alliance's position remains the same. We are supportive of the project because it appears to be the only viable option to preserve at least the facades of the historic Alexandra Hotel. After years of neglect and deferred maintenance, the building is in poor condition and we understand that, largely because of the small size of the site, it is challenging for a redevelopment to feasibly restore the facades and incorporate them into a successful new project, much less save the entire building. As unfortunate as it is to lose all but the outer two facades, we feel that time is of the essence for preservation. Many other options have been thoroughly explored to no avail. We feel that a residential use is actually preferable to a hotel use and will allow the occupants to be more connected to their space and neighborhood.

The only item that gives us pause is the fact that we only supported the height of this project in its previous hotel form because a certain number of rooms was required for the hotel project to be financially viable. After meeting with the developer we find that as a residential project at this location the calculus differs little, and the number of units within the proposed envelope is necessary for the project to pencil out. The developer has explained to us that the price point for residential units at this site will be lower than similar units in other parts of the city, making the project financially challenging. Therefore, we remain supportive and ask BPDA to approve the revised project.

Thank you,



Greg Galer
Executive Director