

BOSTON PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

July 23, 2019

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Executive Director

Gregory J. Galer, Ph.D.

Michael Sinatra
Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201
Re: 125 Lincoln Street

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 meet with the proponent and to hear from members of the community regarding 125 Lincoln Street. We are not opposed to the redevelopment of the site, including the demolition of the existing garage for a new building with reasonable height. However we do feel it is important that the new design be in better dialog with the adjacent historic Leather District. The proposed design feels alien to the scale and character of its context. The differentiation between the base and the tower should be more pronounced, perhaps with a clear setback above the fifth floor, a stronger cornice line, and a change in materials and/or color. Such changes might also help to break down the overwhelming mass of the building. The balcony cutouts fail to provide significant relief from what would be the tallest building in this area and are not in keeping with the character of the district.

In order to more fully understand the relationship of the new design and the existing architecture in the neighborhood, we request additional views from the public realm throughout the Leather District as well as from Chinatown. It is unfortunate that two local Chinese businesses will be displaced by this development, further shrinking the cultural footprint of the Chinese community in this area. We strongly urge the proponent to accommodate these businesses on site or within their holdings nearby. Development continues to threaten Chinese heritage and sense of place here and it is untenable that these thriving, local businesses might be lost.

We look forward to reviewing design modifications and additional viewsheds of project.

Sincerely,



Greg Galer
Executive Director

CC:
Mark McGowen, Oxford Properties
Christopher Betke, Leather District Neighborhood Association
Karen Chen, Chinese Progressive Association

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