

**From:** [Susan Veligor](#)  
**To:** [Matt Panfil](#)  
**Subject:** Pleasant @ Union Street condos  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 4:06:43 PM

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Hi Matt,

I am writing as a new homeowner on Dunning Street. I learned about the 6-unit condo project above from Gretchen Feiss. While it is not my intention to get involved I did promise to write and share my experience with Portland where I have lived for 17 years. More recently we moved to the Munjoy Hill section which is a hot spot for development and has had various moratoriums on permitting while the council reflected on the goals for the city. Alas, the economic benefit – increase in real estate tax revenue – has won out against the quality-of-life benefit (which of course cannot be measured in dollars).

It is one thing to abide within the code and what is allowed and an entirely different issue when considering the local character. It is the latter, I understand which is of concern for this current proposal. So I would urge that your board strongly consider the vision for the community in determining if a scaled back version may be in order – it does seem rather a large footprint of construction!

At any rate, I would like to tell you that we have always been attracted to Brunswick, and decades ago as Massachusettsians in the dreaming stage of making a move to Maine, it was Brunswick that first caught our attention. There is so much to love about the community and we are thrilled to finally be homeowners in the Town of Brunswick.

Sincerely,  
Susan Veligor



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Dear Village Review Board Members,

I write this letter in reference to Steve and Merci Normand's proposal for a 6 unit condominium development on the lot at 36 Pleasant Street. As the residents of 46 Union Street, our home abuts the property where the condominium is proposed, and thus is the most impacted by this proposal, which has given us a lot of opportunity to consider its advantages and disadvantages.

Before presenting my case, however, I urge us all to take stock of the historical significance of this property. The homes on either side date back to 1772 (best estimate) and 1820. The lot on which this proposed development is to be situated has been vacant since before Brunswick was a village. This part of town is popular with pedestrians, and beloved for its serenity and historical feel. I hope we all agree that the final structure that is built here not only honors, but actually enhances the unique character of this neighborhood and site.



Figure 1: Neighboring Homes for context of neighborhood character. Photo A shows residences across the street from proposed development, B shows historical homes abutting the proposed development, C shows the front view of the properties directly south of the development.

I wish to begin by complimenting Steve on his incorporation of so many sustainability features into the design. We applaud the use of geothermal heating and solar panels to minimize the carbon footprint of the project, as well as the effort to reduce the impermeable footprint by situating the building over the parking area. We also appreciate his efforts to echo the roofline of the historical home next door in the design of the condominium, to aim for consistency in design with the neighboring homes.

The main concern I wish to address in the design is its magnitude. This is in reference ordinance 5.2.8c:

**“New construction or additions shall be visually compatible with existing mass, scale and materials of the surrounding contributing resources.”**

The application acknowledges that the proposed structure would be taller than surrounding residences. However, the justification that this difference is compatible with the above ordinance states that:

“Although the proposed condominium building is of a larger scale, it does not appear disproportionate to its surroundings as seen from the public right- of-way. One manner of which this is achieved is the use of an approximately 80-foot front setback instead of the minimum 15 feet established within Table 4.2.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.”

However, it is notable that the proposed structure is not the only one with an 80 foot setback from Union Street; so do all neighboring structures on that side of the street. As the proposed structure rises above the two neighboring homes by 10 feet on the south side and 14 feet on the north side, this difference in height would therefore not be remediated by the setback. Furthermore, the circular drive consuming the green space between the sidewalk and the home actually draws the structure visually closer to the street, thereby enhancing its greater size. Finally, due to the garage visible below the structure, the street view actually encompasses all three stories of the structure, drawing attention to its height is so much greater than the surrounding buildings. Even though the height from the “ground level” does not exceed the maximum 35 foot ceiling, the actual height from the includes the bottom garage floor to the peak of the roof is 44.6 feet. While the peak is set back from this particular elevation, it can still be seen. Thus, the overall mass of the proposed condominium appears to significantly outsize the neighboring homes, as observed in Figures 2 and 3 below.



Figure 2: Architectural rendering of proposed condominium in situ. The roofline of the north home (ours) is rendered indistinct by the trees; it is in fact 14 feet shorter than the condominium.



Figure 3: Architectural sketches showing disproportionately large structure. The home on its south side is already one of the largest in the Union Street neighborhood. The southern abutting home (ours) is not shown, and is much lower in stature than either structure.

That the elevation of the proposed structure is incompatible with the existing residences is further illustrated by the shadow survey by Matt Panfil. Even though the proposed condominium is placed 40 feet away from the southern abutting home (ours), it would overshadow that home's daylight three months of the year; November through January. See below diagrams; Figure 4.

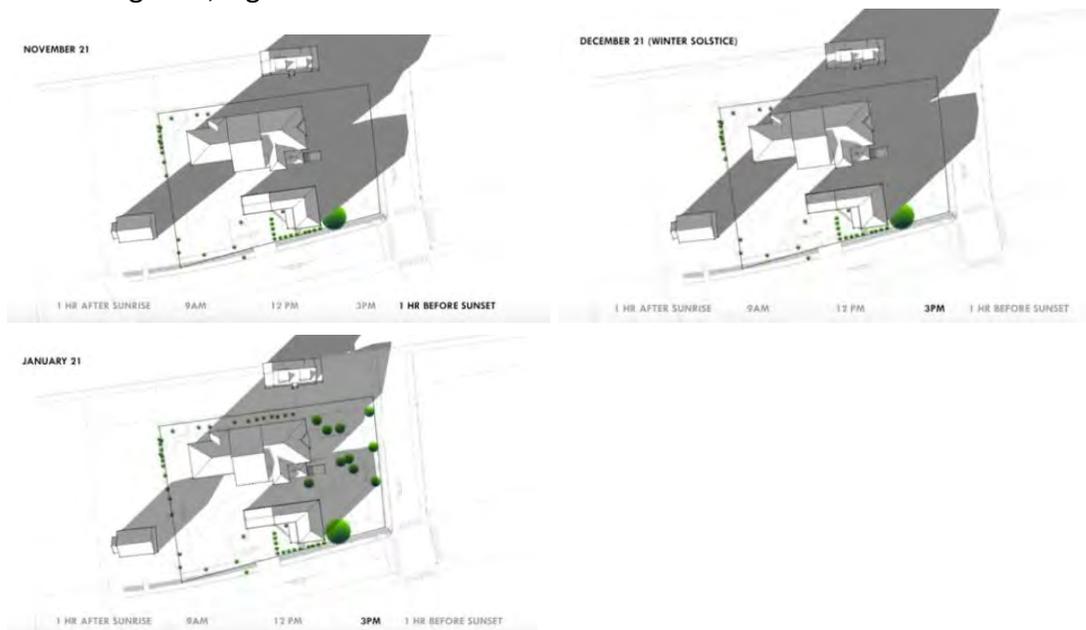


Figure 4: The proposed structure would overshadow the north abutting home's daylight three months of the year.

Final evidence that this proposed development fails to meet the mass and scale compatibility guidelines is in its footprint. We have been provided with two slightly different values by Matt

Panfil (7,350 sq ft) and Steve Normand (7,306 sq ft). In either case, the footprint significantly outsizes every other structure in our neighborhood, except the Credit Union, which is not far off. Please see Figure 5 for reference. Additionally, the footprint of the proposed development exceeds the 2244 sq ft average footprint of all structures throughout the entire village (including downtown) more than threefold.

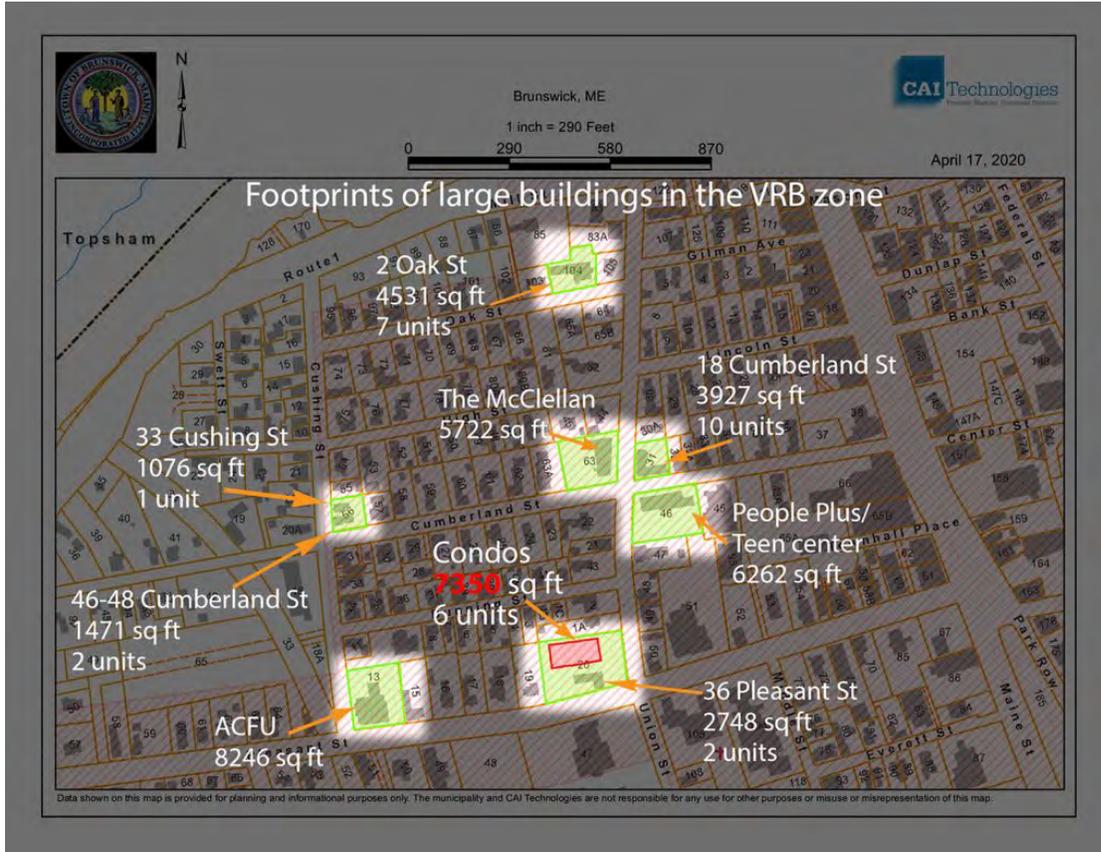


Figure 5: Comparison of proposed condominium structure’s footprint to those in the neighborhood. Only the Atlantic Federal Credit Union exceeds it, and in that case, by less than 1000 feet.

As our own town’s ordinance mandates that new construction be compatible in mass and scale to surrounding contributing resources, the presented evidence clearly shows that the proposed condominium development will have to be scaled significantly back in both height and footprint before it meets that mandate.

Beyond mandates, however, we are all here because we are invested in making sure that the compatibility of this development contributes to the unique character of this important place. Let us work together to propose improvements to this plan that ensure that the final building compliments and improves the neighborhood, as well as Brunswick Village as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.

Gretchen Feiss  
46 Union St.