

## **Electrical Service Redesign Delays Mausert Block Eateries**

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ADAMS, Mass. — Commercial tenants have been delayed from moving into the ground floor of the Mausert Block so the electric service installations can be altered.

Following a walk-through with the Adams Historical Commission in December, concessions in original designs to install electric

equipment to the building's exterior are being made by National Grid to uphold the integrity of the downtown development project.

Stephen Stenson, of the project management group RedPM, said the projected date for the two restaurant owners to prepare for business was pushed back between four and eight weeks. Despite pushing their access into February, Stenson said it was a good thing that the design changes are being made.

"We are very pleased that National Grid were able to provide these concessions to their normal operating policies and procedures, which will benefit the look of the building," Stenson said. "We just thought we should do the right thing here with the building."

The electrical utility has standard procedures and designs it uses for installing transformers and meters for electrical installations. Because of the use of the building for multiple restaurants, a three-phase electrical system will be used, according to Stenson, which now requires technical variances on the location of a transformer.

Initially, National Grid also planned to position 15 electrical meters next to an egress on the back of the building intended for residents of the upstairs apartments.



**National Grid is redesigning the new electrical service on back of the Mausert Block at the behest of the Historical Commission to make it more aesthetically pleasing.**

The Historical Commission determined that the original designs for the transformer and meters would be detrimental to the project.

"Given what is going on with the downtown development long-term, trying to make the rail trail accessible to Park Street and what not, it really did hamper the aesthetic of the building," commission Chairman Ryan Biros said.

Because of its use as an apartment complex and retail building, the commissioners argued that the Mausert Block effectively has two sets of main entrances, on and opposite Park Street. Furthermore, the intentions of the project are to maintain a certain aesthetic quality — including the area spanning the view from the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail — which would be compromised by allowing National Grid to conduct its standard installation procedures.

"It's not like it used to be that the back of the building that nobody would see because of the railroad tracks," said Commissioner Bruce Dumouchel, a Park Street tenant. "Now it's a main thoroughfare and they're having outside dining at one of the restaurants on the rail trail. We certainly want it aesthetically and historically correct."

The concessions made by National Grid will lead to more complex service installations, Stenson said. Electrical meters will be installed in the building's basement while the transformer will be built farther away from the site, leaving the back of the building with what he called a "clean" look.

The service also includes the installation of electrical lines underground and the site has been cleared for the excavation work.

Stenson and RedPM are only waiting on the completed design to begin work.

"We're kind of almost done and we're ready to hand it over. This is kind of a hold for us," Stenson said.

Based on the projected timetable for completion of electrical work, the restaurants will be ready sometime in the late spring, according to Stenson. The apartment units will be placed on the market in tiers between late spring and fall.

Dumouchel, a clinical psychologist, said the Mausert Block project has cerebral benefits to the community beyond the tangible electrical service installations, using a cognitive approach to preservation.

"One of the things that always made Adams work is you had a downtown and residents above the storefronts, so that people could either live and work in the same area or they could commute to their cars and just walk downtown to restaurants, go shopping and go back home. It's time to get back to that. That's really historical conservation, is to be able to get back to that concept," Dumouchel said.

In February 2013, permitting was granted to lease space inside the Mausert Block for three businesses, including a performing arts studio, pizza place and hibachi grill. Later in the year, the town's Planning Board approved its plans, which includes market-rate housing.