

# CREATIVE CONSTRUCTION

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**NATHAN SZANTON:**

## An historic district's eyesore receives a major makeover

**F**OR DECADES, 41 State Street looked like a structure that someone hadn't finished building. Developer Nathan Szanton discovered that that's exactly what the squat, graffiti-covered garage was—a dream never realized.

"Our first question was, could this structure hold up an apartment building?" Szanton explained. "We

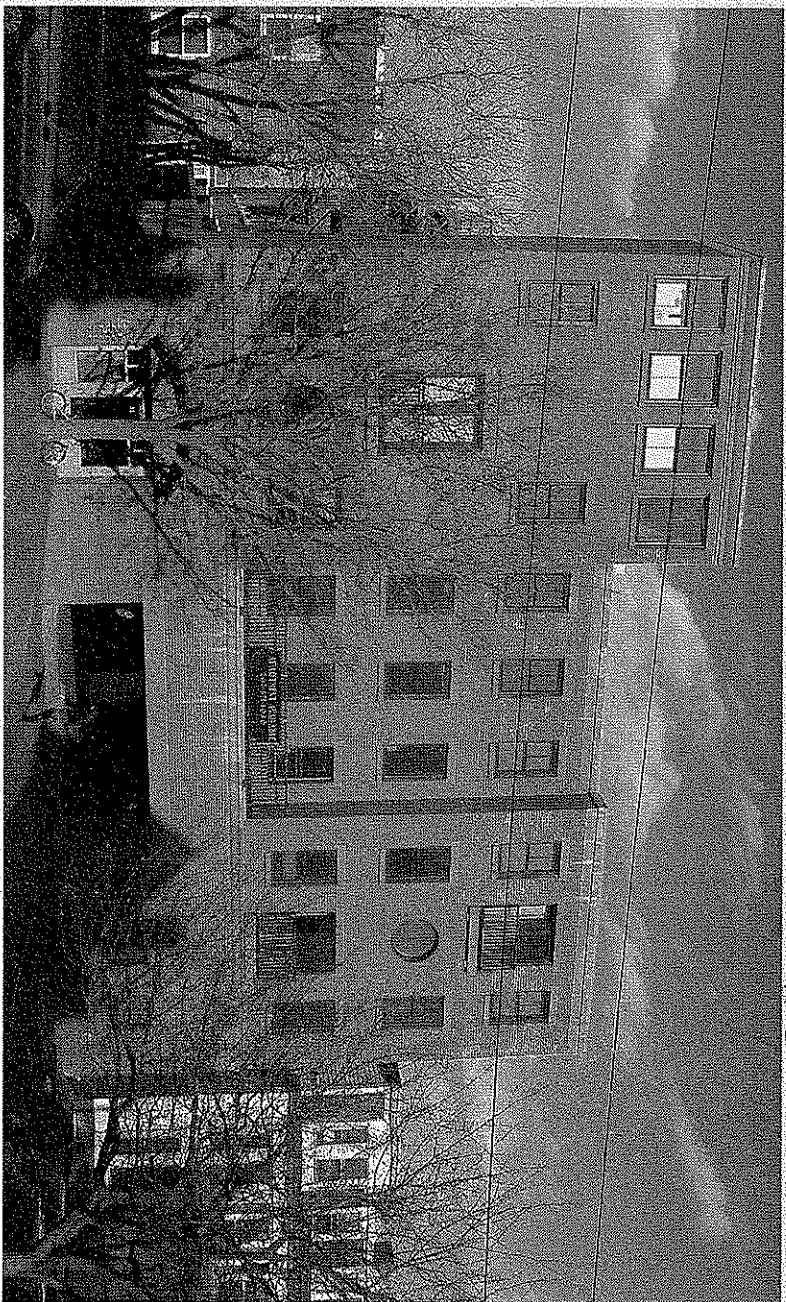
bored into the columns to see how strong they were and determined they could hold up a seven-story building. We also dug down to see what the footings were like — how much weight coming down through the columns would the footings

bear? We found they were massive footings. Someone had planned for this building to be something more than it was. We don't know exactly what."

In 2004 — eight decades after the garage was built — Szanton and partner Bobby Monks finished the job. They hired architect David Lloyd to design Casco Terrace, a 27-unit 3½-story apartment building atop the existing



Nathan Szanton



Nathan Szanton built apartments atop a one-level garage that had been an eyesore on State Street for decades.

garage. Because the modest, contemporary structure is in an historic district, its site plan required approval from the Portland Historic Preservation Board.

"I found it a very helpful process," Szanton said. "Members of the board came to it with thoughtful suggestions and constructiveness. They made a lot of helpful suggestions, some of which we took, some we didn't. We felt they approached it in a cooperative and non-adversarial way." The board, for example, suggested painting the windows black and offered advice on the mortar tint. The positive experience led Szanton to seek the board's expertise when he and Monks drew up plans for Walker Terrace on Congress Street (between Walker and Carleton streets) even though a review was not required.

The original construction at Casco Terrace was refaced with brick. The apartments' lobby was punched into the uphill side of the structure; the rest remains as a garage serving tenants.

Two circular windows add interest to the new construction's brick veneer façade. Window sills and headers and the stringcourse are precast concrete tinted to resemble brownstone. Because the roof is visible from the Casco Bay Bridge, Lloyd chose lead-coated copper to avoid the monochromatic look of a flat-roofed brick building. While the columns were strong, the garage's waffle slab roof did not have the structural capacity to support the building. The problem was solved by erecting a steel "cib" over the columns and erecting a wood frame building over that. ■