

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee**  
**Architecture Subcommittee**  
**January 18, 2019**



**MEETING NOTES**

Chair, Neil Wishinsky  
Alan Christ  
Anne Meyers  
Catherine Donaher  
Elton Elperin  
Frank Caro  
Ken Lewis  
Lauren Bernard  
Linda Hamlin  
Linda Olson Pehlke  
Maura Toomey  
Roger Blood  
Sergio Modigliani  
Steve Kanes  
Susan Roberts

*Subcommittee Members Present:* Alan Christ, Elton Elperin, Sergio Modigliani

*Subcommittee Members Absent:* Linda Hamlin

*Other Coolidge Corner Study Committee Members Present:* Lauren Bernard, Catherine Donaher, Linda Olson Pehlke, Susan Roberts

*Staff:* Kara Brewton

*Guests:* Paul Saner; representatives from Chestnut Hill Realty including Jacob Bloom (Cambridge 7 Architects), Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert (Law Office of Robert L. Allen, Jr.), Joe Geller (Stantec).

*Materials:* Draft Waldo-Durgin Special District Design Guidelines with Critical Issues indexed (1-17-19); Cambridge 7 Revised Program Summary (dated 1-14-19, presented 1-18-19)

Sergio Modigliani opened the meeting by explaining the draft guidelines have issues indexed at the top (A-H), keying where the Committee's concerns are being reflected in the guidelines. He then invited everyone to take a minute and read the preamble.

Catherine Donaher suggested that the preamble ought to do three things:

- 1) State that the Committee wants to see a building of significance that is worthy of this location;
- 2) State that the whole purpose of these guidelines is to be extremely explicit about what we want here, rather than constraining ourselves; and
- 3) At the point of actual permitting and building design (if/when zoning and design guidelines are passed), give any future architect a little prod as a tool for their client.

Sergio asked that Catherine write up some specific revisions to the preamble and email them to Kara Brewton.

Elton Elperin reviewed issues "A" and "B" identified throughout the document.

The group discussed about how specific the guidelines should be (e.g., "a building entrance on Waldo Street within 20' of Pleasant Street"). The Subcommittee noted that the final programming and more detailed building design with elevators, building systems, etc., will drive these types of decisions. They felt it was more appropriate to focus on what the Committee wants as a kind of performance standard (e.g., "encourage entrances from the most publicly active part of the streets").

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Linda Olson Pehlke would like to strengthen the importance of the potential connection to Harvard Street through the Booksmith, and will send specific revisions to the text in Section 6(e).

Alan Christ will send Kara suggested revisions to Section 6(a) regarding the “Woonerf” of Waldo Street, so that not only is it clear that the intent of the design should be that all modes of travel share the entire right-of-way, but also specify that the grade differentiation between sidewalks and street should be minimized.

Alan will also send suggested revisions regarding the residential building and John Street so that it is clear that extending the scale and character of the John Street condos’ streetscape should be more than just the building base facade, but also the landscape design and the proposed individual residential unit entries closest to the John Street condos.

The group discussed whether or not the open space buffer to adjacent condos at the northern edge of the site should have benches, encouraging pedestrians to cross the driveway close to the garage entrance. Since there will not be a sidewalk on the north side of the John Street entrance, the Subcommittee decided that this did not make sense to encourage. However, the Subcommittee did agree that the John Street entrance closest to John Street should be necked down at the intersection to shorten the distance John Street pedestrians have to cross vehicular lanes. The proposal includes one travel lane in each direction, and then a “live parking” lane for pick-up and drop-off. The “live parking” lane should be forced to merge back with the exiting vehicular travel lane to John Street prior to the intersection with John Street.

Alan Christ noted that the south facing wall of the John Street Condos adjacent to the John Street driveway should include a green wall, and that idea should be noted in the design guidelines. He will send comments.

Alan will also send revisions on 9(c), since delivery vehicles for the hotel are expected to be able to use the alley between the hotel and the Pleasant/Beacon/Harvard Street retail buildings, but delivery vehicles for the residential building will not. These types of “box truck” vehicles are not going to use the garage because they are too tall for the proposed garage height.

The group discussed that some items needed to be defined globally, such as:

- i) the alley between the hotel and the Pleasant/Beacon/Harvard Street retail buildings – perhaps with an attached site diagram.
- ii) The “knuckle” at the southwest corner of the hotel massing.

The group had mixed perspectives about how much difference massing setbacks made in a pedestrian’s sense of how tall a building is. Some thought that they would be willing for the residential building to be even taller if the massing setbacks on some of the upper floors were increased significantly. Others wanted to keep the number of residential stories limited to 13, and thought that the perceived massing could be further reduced with materials, color changes, etc.

Regarding sustainability, the group had mixed perspectives about whether the energy efficiency section was the most important portion of the LEED standards. They agreed to hold off on this

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discussion until Chestnut Hill Realty is able to come back to the Committee with specific standard(s) that they will be able to provide, beyond the required Stretch Building Code.

Throughout the discussion, there was general agreement in the following edits (insertions and deletions):

3(c) ii – “All mechanical, electrical and telecommunications systems should be screened acoustically and visually ~~from view and should~~ to minimize audible sound impacts ~~from~~ to the surrounding streets and structures;”

3(e) i – “~~All buildings~~ The residential building should provide at least one primary building entry or entry to a retail space to John, Pleasant, and Waldo Streets.”

3(e) iv – “Entries to ground floor uses should be direct ~~where possible~~ to encourage active pedestrian use.”

3(f) i – strike the phrase giving examples of the different types of LEED guidelines, as they are all important.

3(iv) a – add language so that “solar-panel ready” is defined by the language directed by Town Meeting for Town building projects.

4 (ii) – need to define “common space” of the first floor residential building more – does it mean public versus private areas, areas that are not building systems and single units, etc.

4(v) – regarding the mid-height Pleasant Street building setback “...These steps in the massing ~~may continue along~~ shall wrap to Waldo and John Streets.”

5(i) – regarding the hotel massing “...by stepping ~~from a segment no greater than 10 stories to a segment no greater than 8 stories~~ down at least two stories” [There was discussion to move the maximum story restriction to the zoning].

5(ii) – “Facades facing Beacon and Harvard Street  
~~The facades of these steps which face the existing alley should be as carefully considered as the Waldo Street façade.~~ The hotel facades facing Beacon and Harvard Streets should be carefully considered for their scale, fenestration, and detailing, in light of the fact that they present significant civic exposure while having no direct street presence.”

6(c) – “A café, or similar small commercial shop, should be provided for in the design, with entrance from Pleasant or Waldo Streets...”

9(d) – “Parking ~~structures~~ should be located below grade or along the alley and should conceal the view of all parked cars from the adjacent right-of-way on Waldo Street;

9(f) – “A sufficient number of live-loading spaces should be provided at the John Street connector and residential entry to accommodate current use of Uber and Lyft, to discourage such activity on Pleasant ~~or~~ and John Streets.”

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10(a) – “Screening

Plantings at the northern end of ~~the hotel~~ Waldo Street should match the scale of the low entry mass and screen the adjacent existing residential units without casting them in deep shade.”

Jacob Bloom from Cambridge Seven then reviewed revised first floor plans of the residential building to provide programming for a more active streetscape. By increasing the height of the first floor of the residential building, they are able to add a mezzanine level, and have some space allocated to residential common areas, some space allocated to a membership-based co-working space, and a café space available on the corner of Pleasant and Waldo Street for use by the residents as well as the co-working members.

The Subcommittee liked the direction this was headed, but noted that the direction from nearby residents, Town Meeting Members, and the Committee was clear: to provide a public retail space. Space for rent by membership is not the same as a retail or café space where anyone from the public feels welcomed to wander in and use those services/ purchase goods. They asked the representatives to have Chestnut Hill Realty reconsider the café area so that it was open to all.

The Subcommittee also noted that they would like to see updated renderings of the first and new mezzanine floors from the street.

Additionally, Sergio Modigliani asked the architects to report back with some kind of written documentation on how much of the transformer space the energy utility company would *require* to *be located on the first floor* (rather than at the garage level, for example).

Linda Olson Pehlke wanted to add more definition to the outdoor seating in the public realm, and would send the Subcommittee specific thoughts.

The Subcommittee decided that they would like to meet again prior to the full Committee meeting, and decided to meet 8 am, January 24<sup>th</sup>. Everyone present would get their comments to Kara by 11 pm on Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Meeting Adjourned**