

Proposed development, 40 Centre Street

Traffic Impact Statement, Abutter input, from Don Sherak

My name is Don Sherak. I am an abutter and homeowner. I have lived at 50 Centre Street since 1997 and have raised two sons there. Quick math will tell you that with commuting and errands, over the past 19+ years, I have pulled out of my driveway on to Centre Street approximately 7,000 or so times times. I have also pulled back in another 7,000, at all times of the day and night. The house has a 6 foot slatted wooden fence around its perimeter. When it came time to repair it I moved the fence back on to the property a few inches and increased the width of the driveway opening. Why? Because pulling out on to Centre Street is a complex negotiation and is often potentially hazardous. Over the years I have encountered a wide range of challenges – from motorcyclists who treat this brief road as a speedway, to children running ahead of their parents, to kids on scooters, to joggers, to preoccupied teens wearing ear buds, to many elderly people moving slowly in motorized wheelchairs, using walkers or canes - at all hours of the day and night.

I very quickly devised a strategy to help lower the risk When pulling out, I honk my horn every time before pulling out as far as the sidewalk area. I also ask all my guests and visitors to be mindful and to please do the same. And when they do pull out, to do so cautiously, hesitantly, and conscious of the potential risk. When it is dark, I add a second layer by putting on my blinkers. I trained my sons to do so, also. Over the years, on many occasions I have been surprised and sometimes had to stop abruptly and frequently have found individuals lined up right on one or another side of my driveway – people who were just about to cross into the path of my car and might have done so had I not warned them. It is hard to fully estimate the traffic risk on this short, charming street so close off a major thoroughfare. I am not sure if a brief traffic survey in the dog days at the end of summer tells the whole story. However, I have lived it and wish to make it clear that the risk is substantial.

When considering the Traffic Impact of a new building at 40 Centre Street, please multiply my experience of by the factor of how many tenants will drive, and do not neglect the fact that I have a slotted fence that I can see through. The most current building plan for 40 Centre Street has essentially no “set back” at the street level, pedestrian and driver level of vision. Drivers will be pulling out into the road from behind a solid obstruction, the built out atrium that extends almost to the sidewalk.

The most recent design for 40 Centre Street that I have seen, if anything, presents a situation substantially more challenging for drivers and potentially more dangerous for pedestrians than the one I negotiated for the past 19 years. I am requesting that the ZBA consider further modifications that will lower this risk, including a true 15-25 foot setback as well as a possible driveway entrance that does not empty out on to the street directly.

Thank you.
Don Sherak