



TOWN OF BROOKLINE

Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS Engineering & Transportation Division

Andrew M. Pappastergion
Commissioner
Peter M. Ditto, PE
Director

Jesse Geller, Chairman
Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals

November 30, 2016

RE: 420 Harvard Street 40B

Dear Mr. Geller:

Safety and Visibility of Pedestrians

In conjunction with the Building Commissioner Daniel Bennett and Deputy Building Commissioner Michael Yanovitch, I have reviewed the driveway design for the proposed development at 420 Harvard Street within the parameters specified under Zoning By-Law Section 6.04.4.f. The plans reviewed are dated October 28, 2016, and were formally submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals by the applicant.

The Building Commissioner and I have determined that there is adequate sight distance of pedestrians positioned within 5 feet of the either side of the driveway to be located on Fuller Street. The driveway as designed presents no safety hazards to pedestrians. Furthermore, the driveway design includes measures to enhance the safety of pedestrians who might have visual, auditory, or ambulatory disabilities, as specified under Zoning By-Law Section 6.04; namely:

- Flashing lights and auditory signals to alert pedestrians that a vehicle is exiting the driveway
- A driveway slope of less than 10% for the first 20 feet from the property line to ensure that vehicles exiting the driveway can stop safely before proceeding onto the driveway apron
- Textured surfaces where the driveway and sidewalk meet to alert pedestrians that they are approaching a driveway
- Mirrors installed at the driveway exit to further enhance visibility (ensure that they are noted on plans)

The existing seven-foot high fence on the property line shared with 44 Fuller Street is owned by the abutter not the applicant. At five feet away from the driveway exit, it does not present a visual obstacle to drivers exiting the driveway. However, as noted by independent traffic peer reviewer, James Fitzgerald, P.E. (October 18, 2016 report to ZBA on this case), to improve the stopping sight distance (SSD) from 150 feet to the required 200 feet of vehicles traveling 30 mph on Fuller Street toward Harvard Street, the fence should be modified. The applicant has confirmed that he is working with the owner of the fence to

modify it at his own expense to meet the SSD requirement. There are no retaining walls or guardrails higher than 3.5 feet in this area that would present a visual obstruction.

In addition, a utility pole is currently located on the sidewalk beyond the property line of this project and does not present a visual obstruction. The applicant is working with the utility company to relocate the pole underground, which will further improve sidewalk conditions for pedestrians.

I do recommend that condition be applied that prohibits plantings taller than 3 feet within the space between the driveway and lot shared with 44 Fuller Street.

Waivers Pertaining to Traffic Visibility and Off-Street Parking Design

Under separate cover, I am submitting to the ZBA a letter with my comments on the applicant's request for waivers from local regulations. I would like to explain my review of two of those waiver requests in this letter on pedestrian safety; namely, waivers from Zoning By-Law Section 5.45 (traffic visibility across corners) and Zoning By-Law Section 6.04.4.c (exceeding maximum curb cut of 30 feet).

Waiver from Section 5.45 - Traffic Visibility Across Corners: As specified in this section, only the ZBA may grant an exception to by-law so that a structure may be built in the plane specified (a 4.5 foot high expanse that is 2.5 feet above curb running 25 feet from the intersection of said lot lines; fig. 5.11).

I would like to provide the Board with my technical review of the proposed conditions to confirm that there would be no adverse impact on public safety in regard to both drivers and pedestrians.

- The proposed conditions (that is, no front yard setbacks) are not unique to Harvard Street street corners.
- Harvard Street angles in such way to increase sight lines for drivers at the Harvard -Fuller intersection of both oncoming traffic and pedestrians.
- Harvard and Fuller Street has a stop-control traffic signal.
- The stop line on Fuller Street is positioned to allow drivers optimal sight lines of approaching pedestrians. In addition, the required SSD of oncoming traffic is met.

Waiver from Section 6.04.4.c – Exceeding Curb Cut Width of 30 Feet: In a previous iteration of the plans, the curb cut was 48 feet. However, the independent traffic peer review James Fitzgerald, recommended southern curb cut be increased so that vehicles turning right onto Fuller would not clip the curb. The applicant applied this recommendation by increasing the curb cut to 52 feet. Along this 52 foot curb is a loading zone that partially shared with a handicapped pick-up/drop-off space. I recommend that the loading zone be striped so that it is better delineated from the driveway entrance ramp. It appears that this is intended on the plans; however, I would add a label on the plans and a condition reinforcing this measure.

In summary, the proposed driveway on Fuller Street presents no adverse impact on drivers and pedestrians.

The Building Commissioner and I are available to address any questions you may have about public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter M. Ditto".

Peter Ditto, P.E.

Director