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January 24, 2017

Alison Steinfeld, Director
BROOKLINE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

RE: 1180 Boylston Street
Architectural Final Peer Review Report **WITH AMENDMENTS**

Dear Alison:

PLEASE SEE AMENDMENTS IN ALL RED CAPS TO MY FINAL REPORT THAT WAS DATED DECEMBER 20, 2016. SECTIONS OF THIS REPORT WITHOUT NEW COMMENTS CAN BE ASSUMED TO BE UNCHANGED.

I'm writing to provide you with a Peer Review Final Report for the proposed development at 1180 Boylston Street in accordance with my proposal to you dated July 4, 2016. I will incorporate new comments within my previous Peer Review Report dated August 8, 2016. That report was presented to the ZBA on August 9, 2016. In addition, I have added another section that includes design-related considerations for conditions that could potentially be included in an approved Comprehensive Permit. All new comments and report section(s) will be highlighted in italics (blue, if printed in color). I am looking forward to presenting the content of this report at the ZBA meeting scheduled for December 21, 2016.

1. Review of the Developer's Application, Plans, and Drawings (and other related documents)

Documents reviewed (comments on documents contained in Section 5 below):

- Site Approval Application to MassHousing dated December, 2015.
- Letter from Brookline Board of Selectmen to MassHousing re: Application, dated February 10, 2016.
- Site Eligibility Letter from MassHousing to Raj Dhanda dated March 4, 2016.
- 1180 Boylston Street Comprehensive Permit Application dated April 2016 (14-section binder including the PEL from MassHousing, project preliminary architectural and engineering drawings (various dates), Traffic Impact Assessment, and other documents that may be referred to in this Peer Review).
- Transcript from June 9, 2016 ZBA meeting.
- 1180 Proponent's June 9, 2016 ZBA presentation slides.
- Email from Katherine Gerzon to Polly Selkoe dated June 15, 2016.
- Environmental Summary from GEI Associates to ZBA dated July 1, 2016 (indicated as DRAFT).
- Email from Kyle McEachern (Brookline Fire Department) to Maria Morelli dated July 5, 2016.
- Letter from Planning Board (signed by Linda Hamlin) re: 1180 Comprehensive Permit Application to ZBA dated July 6, 2016.
- Email from Julie Gross to Maria Morelli dated July 6, 2016.
- Letter from Peter Ditto (DPW) to ZBA dated, July 7, 2016.
- Letter from David Kobes to Maria Morelli dated July 7, 2016.
- Email from Bernice Wilner to Maria Morelli dated July 7, 2016.
- Planning Board presentation to July 11, 2016 ZBA meeting.
- Email from Abby Coffin to Polly Selkoe dated July 11, 2016.
- Email from Diane Schweitzer to Maria Morelli dated July 14, 2016.

- *Geotechnical Report prepared by GEI Consultants dated April 2015 (Prepared for Mason and Murphy, Inc.).*
- *Memorandum from Arthur Stadig to James Fitzgerald dated August 15, 2016 re: parking proposal.*
- *Email from Residents of 1162-1164 Boylston to Maria Morelli dated August 17, 2016.*
- *Memorandum from Rachna Balakrishna to Alison Steinfeld and Maria Morelli dated August 25, 2016 re: Proposed Loading Bay on Hammond.*
- *Meeting Minutes prepared by the Developer from September 12 meeting with neighbors at 1154 Boylston Street.*
- *Parking Plan narrative prepared by Michael Beck of Parking Plus, distributed by Maria Morelli to various parties on September 13, 2016.*
- *Letter from Andrew Adinolfi to Johanna Schneider dated September 15, 2016 re: Groundwater Flow.*
- *Memorandum from James Fitzgerald to Chestnut Hill Investments, LLC dated September 15, 2016.*
- *Email from Alexander and Katherine Gerzon to Maria Morelli dated September 15, 2016.*
- *Memorandum from Maria Morelli to Raj Dhanda dated September 22, 2016.*
- *"Summary Category" drawing set prepared by CBT dated November 23, 2016 (includes Access & Parking, Height & Articulation, Open Space & Buffering, Retail Space).*
- *Memorandum from James Fitzgerald to Alison Steinfeld dated October 24, 2016.*
- *Memorandum from Arthur Stadig to James Fitzgerald dated November 21, 2016.*
- *Memorandum from Raj Dhanda to Alison Steinfeld and Maria Morelli re: retail uses (undated).*
- *Loading Zone Access/Egress diagram prepared by VAI (undated).*
- *Narrative for Trash Removal for 1180 Boylston Street, Brookline, MA 02467*
- *Schematic Design Specification Outline – MEP, dated 9 December 2016.*
- *Schematic Design Specification Outline – Architectural and Structural, dated 9 December 2016.*
- *Response to Architectural Peer Review Report dated December 13, 2016,*
- *Code Summary dated December 13, 2016.*
- *Roof Equipment Summary dated December 13, 2016.*
- *Drawing set "ZBA Review" dated December 14, 2016.*
- *Drawing set 1180 Boylston St. dated 12.20.2016*
- *Letter to the ZBA and Planning Department" from neighbors at 1162-1164 Boylston Street, undated.*
- **A "LIVE" SKETCH UP MODEL WAS PRESENTED BY THE PROPONENT ON JANUARY 18, 2017**

(REFERENCE MATERIALS)

- Handbook: Approach to Chapter 40B Design Reviews, prepared by The Cecil Group, Inc. for DHCD, MassDevelopment, MassHousig, and MHP, January, 2011

2. Initial Meeting at the site with the Developer's Design team and Representative of the Town

The development team conducted a site walkthrough, commencing at about 11:45 on Tuesday morning, August 2, 2016. Attending included Cliff Boehmer (Architectural Peer Reviewer), Alison Steinfeld (Brookline Department of Planning & Community Development), Maria Morelli (Brookline Department of Planning & Community Development), Bob Engler (consultant to the proponent), two representative of the project architect, Raj Dhanda (the proponent), and one other representative of the proponent.

As the site is rather small, it was possible to observe all of the edge conditions, including the six-family structure to the east, the broad sidewalk along Boylston Street (with extensive overhead electrical lines), cars parked along Boylston (not obvious if legally parked), the adjacent two story commercial structure to the south on Hammond, and the two, 2.5 story, two-family homes directly to the south on Heath Street. There appear to be three mature trees at the perimeter of the site, all of which would be removed to facilitate the construction of the new building. The grade of the site drops a few feet from the adjacent commercial structure on Hammond to the Boylston boundary. East to west, there does not appear to be any significant grade change. There is an eastbound #60 bus stop just across Hammond, a westbound stop directly across Route 9. This bus travels from Kenmore Square to Chestnut Hill via Brookline Village and Cypress Street.

There was some discussion during the walkthrough regarding the parking scheme that has been proposed, in particular, is the valet-style parking appropriate for retail shop visitors. The proponent noted that the type of tenants he is seeking is not retail shops, but types of businesses where customers have longer visits (justifying the waiting associated with the valet parking concept). For most of the duration of the site visit, northbound cars on Hammond Street were backed up the entire length of the site. This was pointed out to the proponent as a reason why the loading area off of Hammond Street may not be successful (assuming that it is feasible to get permission from the Town to encroach on the right of way).

It was also noted that there were cars parked on Route 9 in front of the site, immediately to the west of where the proposed parking drive would be located. There appeared to be a potential safety hazard both pulling in and out of the drive, as site lines would be blocked by the parked cars. That immediate area is reportedly posted as a no-parking zone, which means that ensuring the safety of vehicular entry/egress at that location would require more stringent enforcement of the parking restriction.

No new comments.

3. Conduct site visit and reconnaissance assessment of surrounding residential and nonresidential areas within one mile of the project site.

The site is located on the southeast corner of the very active intersection of Boylston and Hammond Streets. Signalized crosswalks traverse both streets. To the south of the site on Hammond Street, there is an adjoining commercial structure with no side setback, or setback from the sidewalk. Beyond that point, on both sides of the street, there is mixed scale residential, with various setbacks. There is a nearby athletic facility, a cemetery, Pine Manor College, and the Beaver Country Day School. Further south and to the east is the Brookline Golf Club, and to the west, a little less than a mile from the site, is significant conservation land.

Immediately north on Hammond is the Longwood Club, and a little more than ¼ mile away is the Chestnut Hill MBTA train stop. The area is predominantly low density housing, with the Chestnut Hill School less than ½ mile away. And about a mile to the north is the beginning of the Boston College campus.

To the west on Route 9, on the north side, there is a sidewalk that is alongside about ¾ mile of commercial structures and parking lots, all the way past the front of The Shops at Chestnut Hill. Beyond that point continuing west, there is mostly commercial development with some small scale housing mixed in. The commercial development doesn't fully peter out until about .9 miles west of the site.

The south side of Route 9 (the project side of the thoroughfare), moving westward is a little different. For about .4 miles there is continuous commercial development directly on a sidewalk that abuts the road (as opposed to being set by the width of parking areas). There are very few street trees, but the sidewalk is continuous, broken only by side streets. There is a non-signalized crosswalk about 850 feet from the site. After about ¼ mile, this pattern gives way to commercial development set back something like 60 feet from Route 9, with parking and drive lanes intervening. Commercial development on the south side doesn't end until about .9 miles west of the site.

Eastward on Route 9, there is a continuous sidewalk, with a narrow planting strip and bike/parking(?) lane separating fast moving traffic from pedestrians. No guardrail is present. There is a spotty collection of street trees, as well as some trees on private property overhanging the sidewalk. After passing a few, small scale multi-family structures and nearby small commercial enterprises, there is a non-signalized crosswalk, followed by another one about 700 feet further on. The in and outbound lanes of roadway between the crosswalks are divided by continuous steel guardrails. The quality of the walkway is variable, but does continue past the Benevolent Association, on to the health care facility about .8 mile from the site. There is a signalized crosswalk at the Benevolent Association.

The conditions of the pedestrian walkway on the north side of Route 9, to the east of the site, are variable. As on the south side, there is no structured protection from traffic, and the walkway width varies, with some stretches somewhat overgrown with trees from adjacent private property. After passing the Longwood Club, there is no commercial development for a little less than a mile (just past the Brigham & Women's facility on the south side).

Most parties would agree that there are no architecturally notable structures within one mile of the site in either direction on Route 9, nor would that stretch of Boylston be considered pleasantly walkable by modern streetscape planning standards. Traffic is plentiful, fast moving, air quality is bad, and there is no physical protection afforded to pedestrians. Other than at major intersections and parking lots, lighting is poor. Crossing Route 9 at non-signalized crosswalks is less than optimal. By contrast, Hammond Street is a much more pleasant pedestrian environment, even though it is not lined with architecturally significant structures, nor interspersed with consumer amenities like Route 9.

No new comments.

4. Consult with the Applicant's design team, as appropriate.

This peer reviewer has had no contact with the design team other than at the walkthrough on August 2.

Two working sessions were held, one on August 25, and the other on September 8, 2016. A phone conference was conducted on December 20, 2016.

A WORKING SESSION WAS HELD ON JANUARY 18, 2017. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF, THE PROPONENT, PROPONENT'S ARCHITECT, PROPONENT'S DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT, AND THIS PEER REVIEWER ATTENDED. THE DEVELOPER PRESENTED A SKETCH UP MODEL THAT INCLUDED CONTEXT INFORMATION, AS WELL AS MORE 1180 DETAIL. SEE COMMENTS BELOW REGARDING DESIGN MODIFICATIONS.

5. Provide an oral presentation to the ZBA within approximately one month of the notice to proceed.

Said presentation shall include comments and preliminary recommendations on the following:

(the comments in this report will be presented to a ZBA meeting on August 9, 2016)

Final Report will be delivered to the ZBA on December 20, 2016

AMENDED COMMENTS WILL BE PRESENTED AT THE JANUARY 25TH ZBA HEARING

a. Orientation of buildings in relation to each other, and to streets, parking areas, open space, and on-site amenities, and to solar access.

The proposal is for a single, six-story, mixed use structure, including about 8000 SF of commercial with 45 units of age-restricted housing above (15 @ 1-BR, 30 @ 2-BR).

Unit mix is now 16 @ 1-BR, 29 @ 2-BR, for a total of 45

Commercial space has been reduced to 5560 SF

UNIT MIX HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY MODIFIED TO 16@1-BR, 29@2-BR

The footprint of the building occupies 11,250 SF of the 14,626 SF site (77%).

Current footprint at ground level is reportedly reduced to 9,950 SF.

Proposed setbacks from lot lines are variable: 5'-3" along most of the length along Hammond;

Revised setback from Hammond will be 8'-10" minimum.

2'-5" along Boylston;

4'-0" to 7'-0" revised ground level setbacks on Boylston

20' from the neighbor to the east;

Distance to main body of building from the lot line to the east does not appear to have changed. Increase in driveway width has moved ground level façade further away from the neighbor.

....approximately 6' to the neighbor to the south.

Setback distance ranges from approximately a foot to approximately 2-1/2 feet at grade, and from approximately 5 feet to 7 feet at upper stories.

There is no useable open space in the current plan, and landscaping appears to be limited to 5 street trees planted in the Hammond and Boylston street right of ways.

Increased set back from Hammond and Boylston creates more habitable space, and landscape buffer to east is shown at 5 feet, with 5 trees. Four street trees are located on Boylston, and one on Hammond.

There are no on-site amenities proposed, indoor or outdoor, other than bike and car parking.
Ground floor plan now indicates a "Tenant Event Amenity."

All parking is in the basement level, and consists of a combination of valet-packed "layers" of floor spaces and stacker spaces, accessed from car lifts operated by a 24-hour manned service. The lifts are accessed from a 20-foot wide (or 17'-6" wide?) parking drive on the east side of the building that connects with the eastbound lane of Route 9. There is no loading dock indicated to serve the commercial spaces, however, a pull off area within the Hammond Street public right of way is indicated on the site plan. Rear loading for the four retail tenant spaces as indicated on the plan takes place from the Hammond pull off and/or the parking drive, partially passing through the residential lobby, mail room, and bike parking. All retail spaces have direct public sidewalk entries.

Revised parking plan is significantly revised from the previous submissions. There are now a total of 69 spaces indicated, down from a proposed 80. 22 of the spaces are on the floor, and there are 20 stackers. In addition, there are 4 staging spaces in the drive aisle, and 3 surface spaces. The ground level plan currently shows a 30-foot wide drive aisle and larger lift size. There is also space where accessible drop off can occur.

Because the building lies to the north of its neighbors on Heath Street, there is no impact as far as direct access to sunlight. There is impact on access to diffuse, bright-sky light of the height of the building and its nearness to the southern property line of the site. This is mediated by the presence of out-buildings to the rear of the two Heath Street homes (the distance from the face of the actual residential structure to the property line is on the order of 25 feet). The proposed setback from the new structure is inconsistent in the submitted materials (the Site Plan-Setbacks indicates something like 6 feet, while the ground floor plan appears to be virtually zero setback).

As noted above, the setback from the southern property line has been increased. The height of the structure will still have an impact on the Heath Street neighbors' visual access to the sky, as well as potential late afternoon shadow impact in the winter months (shadow study included in the application materials only shows shadows up until 3:00 in the afternoon).

The structure that suffers the most solar impact is the 6-family structure to the east, separated by about a 20-foot setback from the property line, plus approximately 5 feet additional of setback to the 6-family on their side of the property line. The submitted shadow studies indicate year-round impact on that neighbor, significantly greater than what the existing conditions impose.

While the revised building massing indicates a "carved back" façade at the upper two levels at the eastern front façade, as well as a two-foot step back at the sixth floor on the east and southeastern corner. These modifications will create negligible improvement on the shadow impact or visual access to bright western sky for the neighbors.

THE SKETCH UP MODEL THAT WAS REVIEWED AT THE WORKING SESSION INCLUDED AN ADDITIONAL 2-FOOT STEP BACK AT THE TOP LEVEL. THIS MODIFICATION IMPROVES THE NEIGHBOR'S ACCESS TO LIGHT AND AIR FROM THEIR WINDOWS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE STRUCTURE. SHADOW IMPACT IS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED BY THE INCREASED STEP-BACK, BUT GIVEN THE ORIENTATION OF THE PROJECT, MOST SHADOWS FALL ON ROUTE 9.

b. Function, use and adequacy of open space and landscaped areas.

As noted above, the only available area that is landscaped in the proposed development is in the public right of way (i.e., street trees).

See notes above about increased landscape buffers and broadened setback from Hammond and Boylston Streets.

SKETCH UP MODEL, PARTICULARLY GIVEN CONTEXT THAT IS INCLUDED, GIVES A VERY GOOD SENSE OF THE GROUND-LEVEL, PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE OF THE BUILDING (AS WELL AS HOW THE BUILDING WOULD BE SEEN FROM ROUTE 9 AND HAMMOND STREET). ARTICULATION OF THE FAÇADE---THROUGH MATERIAL SELECTION, COLOR, AND CHANGE OF PLANE----THAT NOW CARRIES FULLY AROUND THE BUILDING----IS GREATLY IMPROVED FROM PREVIOUS VERSIONS.

c. Use and treatment of natural resources.

N/A

d. Building design, massing and scale in relationship to the surrounding context and topography.

The building is designed to “hold the edge” of the sidewalk, extending in a straight line along the Boylston Street frontage, and then curving around the Hammond Street corner, ending by directly abutting the north elevation of the adjacent commercial building (which will lose some of its north-facing fenestration on the upper level).

The developer reports that the adjacent building will not lose any of its existing windows as a result of the construction of the new structure.

CONFIRMED IN SKETCH UP MODEL

The aesthetic of the façade treatment, including material selection, is contemporary, with broad expanses of glass opening into the retail spaces, and the appearance of virtually floor-to-ceiling glazing in the apartments. There is horizontal banding at the floor levels, with vertically oriented wall panel and glazing systems spanning between the floor bands. Windows into the units appear to be a combination of operable awning and fixed panels (although it is difficult to reconcile the perspective rendering with the drafted elevations provided in the submission). The types of window, combined with the overall language expressed on the elevations—particularly in the perspective rendering—makes the building read more towards “commercial office” than residential.

Façade materials have been clarified in the current materials, and include “rain screen” composite panels, cementitious panels, decorative wooden sections at the ground level, and areas at top and bottom levels of storefront and curtainwall systems. The more “precious” paneling system is indicated on the Boylston, Hammond, and east elevations (although the outline spec calls out only the north and west façades).

The massing has been broken up along Boylston and Hammond by making full height vertical breaks in the skin, as well as by step backs at the upper floors at the eastern end of the building, with a strong break in the cladding material at the stepped back zones. At the upper level setbacks, the plans indicate habitable terrace areas. See comments below about mechanical system venting concerns on elevations.

THE SOUTH-FACING FAÇADE, VISIBLE FROM HAMMOND STREET AND THE NEIGHBORS ON HEATH STREET HAS BEEN WELL DEVELOPED SINCE THE LAST ITERATION. THE HIGHER QUALITY CLADDING MATERIAL HAS BEEN CARRIED AROUND TO THE SOUTH SIDE AT THE TOP LEVEL WHICH HELPS BREAK DOWN THE SCALE OF THE STRUCTURE. IN ADDITION, MORE DETAILED PATTERNING OF THE PRIMARY CEMENTITIOUS SIDING WAS INDICATED IN THE SKETCH UP PRESENTATION.

However, as noted above, there is no notable, coherent architectural context along Route 9 that this building could arguably perfectly fit into. There exists nearby a wide variety of building types, scales, massing, setbacks, parking solutions, etc. that make this site somewhat independent of a clear contextual imperative. Clues for inspiration (and constraints) include the adjacent 6-unit building to the east on Boylston, the two-family homes to the south, the large wall of the commercial structure adjacent on Hammond, and as important, the bleak, windswept, exposed streetscape at Route 9 and Hammond streetscape (as noted in the Board of Selectman letter to MassHousing, “This area of Route 9 warrants revitalization”).

Generally speaking, the building façade and massing make gestures that are responsive to its site, including:

- The first floor retail spaces and residential entry form a well-defined base for the structure, and engage the street with largely transparent storefront, articulated with wood plank screens.
- The tallest section of the façade runs along Boylston for about 40% of its length, and wraps around onto Hammond, serving to “celebrate the corner” (the words of the design architect).
- Other than the expanse of the corner piece, the top floor is set back, creating an overall tripartite composition (base-middle-top), that is generally proportionally effective, and serves to cut down on the apparent height of the building.
- The fenestration pattern changes to a finer grained, more regular look at both the eastern end of the façade along Boylston, and the southern end along Hammond. This breaks up the length of the façades, and is a look that is more compatible with structures beyond the footprint of the building.
- The setback of the building matches the commercial setback to the west on the other side of Hammond Street, and is increased at the residential entry area on Hammond.
- Route 9 is a broad enough thoroughfare, that the height of the building is not, in of itself, inappropriate.

Having made these observations, while the apparent design intent of the building is generally on the right trajectory, the fact remains that the building is significantly larger than its immediate neighbors, and has minimal setbacks (except on the eastern end) that serve to exacerbate its bulk and impact on neighboring structures. Suggestions for mitigating these effects are discussed in another section of this report.

See comments below.

e. Side and rear elevations visible from the public street, public areas and from the vantage point of nearby residential neighborhoods.

The proposed secondary east elevation (the vehicular entry area), in all likelihood, would be minimally visible from public streets (at least from street level, where it is largely blocked by the neighboring six-family building). The highest parts of the rear elevations that run parallel to Heath Street will be visible above the height of the neighboring structures as the site is approached from the south along Hammond Street.

The south facing elevation adjacent to the neighboring structure on Hammond Street is indicated to be clad in a pattern of fiber cement panels. Perspective views in the current drawing sets do not include what the view from Hammond Street will be. This should be studied in detail, and care should be taken to ensure that any view is attractive (not that it is fully exposed to the southern sky and will be very well lit).

AS NOTED ELSEWHERE, THE DESIGN REVISIONS THAT WERE REVIEWED AT THE JANUARY 18 WORKING SESSION ADDRESSED THIS REVIEWER'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE SOUTH ELEVATION LOOKING LIKE THE "BACK OF THE BUILDING."

f. Pedestrian and vehicular circulation

Pedestrian entry to the building will occur into the retail spaces off of Route 9 and Hammond Street. The residential entry and lobby is proposed off of Hammond, at the southern-most point of that façade.

Current plans show customer entry to commercial spaces only off of Boylston, with the residential lobby remaining on the Hammond Street side.

This reviewer is concerned about the proposed vehicular access to the building, as well as the mechanics of the parking system that relies on deep stacking of vehicles and a 24/7 valet service. Beyond the legitimate question of whether shoppers (or other forms of customers) accessing the commercial spaces would actually be bothered to take advantage of the valet service, there are some safety issues associated with the proposal. Most important is the sight line problem when cars are existing the parking drive, both related to their ability to look down the sidewalk, and the difficulty of looking west on Route 9 past parked cars, while straddling the sidewalk and blocking pedestrians. While it may be possible to ban all parking in the spaces immediately west of the parking drive, this would require rigorous enforcement to succeed. In addition, while difficult to quantify, neighbors have expressed concern about losing parking spaces on Boylston as well as commercial customers, averse to the valet system, taking up available street spaces on the smaller roads.

There has been much work done on the parking scheme to address the issue of sight lines, queuing, accessible drop off, dependence on stackers, lift cab size, etc. It is likely that there will still be a "learning curve" associated with commercial customers' use of the valet parking system.

It is also of concern that cars may queue excessively, given the time lag associated with valet parking (blocking the sidewalk, potentially extending out to Route 9). This reviewer does not have enough information to comment on concerns related to potential noise generated by the car lifts.

Submitted materials claim that noise generated by the use of the lifts will be minimal. This should be confirmed by the proponent, specifically addressing the limitations imposed by the Town's stringent noise standards.

In addition to residential and commercial parking concerns, the delivery needs of the commercial spaces have been questionably addressed by a proposed encroachment of the project into the Hammond Street right of way, specifically, a drop off zone near the residential lobby that would provide rear access into the tenant areas, as well as easy access to the sidewalk that leads to front entries. This proposed drop off seems unrealistic from a town approval perspective, but also potentially unworkable given the density of traffic at that corner, combined with the presence of vehicles that may partially block traffic on Hammond while delivering. The proponent has pointed out that these issues could be lessened by imposing time restrictions

on use of the zone. In order for this solution to work, the time restrictions would have to be strictly enforced. Drop off could more realistically occur at the parking drive, however, as currently designed, it does not appear that there is space for vehicles to turn around to re-enter Boylston front-first.

The issue of the Hammond Street loading area is reportedly “supported by the Town”, and appears in the current plans.

g. Integration of buildings and site, including but not limited to preservation of existing tree cover

As discussed in paragraph “d” above, the façade design and building massing take clues from their surroundings in an attempt to better integrate into the site. However, in the opinion of this peer reviewer, the gestures that have been made do not go far enough to tie the building in and minimize impacts on existing neighbors. Suggestions for addressing some of the problems are included in section “n” below.

Concern for impact on the neighbors to the east, as well as Heath Street, remain. More thoughts below.

REVISED DESIGN OF THE BUILDING HAS SIGNIFICANTLY MITIGATED IMPACT ON THE PROJECT ADJACENTS.

While there is very little existing landscape screening between the 6-family home and the project site, the submitted site plan does not provide enough buffer on that border for more significant screening that would be appropriate for the new, much-larger structure. An existing mature tree that is at the eastern property line at the sidewalk will likely have to be removed with the installation of the parking drive. Other smaller trees that appear to be within the site will also have to be removed to allow for construction. The submitted site plan indicates 5 new street trees planted in the public right of way.

See comments above about improved buffer areas.

h. Exterior materials

See section “d” above. Building is clad in what is likely cementitious “composite rainscreen” panels, standing seam aluminum panels (at the mechanical enclosure), aluminum window, storefront, and curtainwall systems, and intermittent wood plank screens at the commercial level.

See comments above.

i. Energy efficiency

It is not possible to ascertain in any level of detail from submitted materials. Architectural narrative notes “energy-efficient appliances” and “low-energy lighting fixtures.” The Application for Chapter 40B Project Eligibility/Site Approval states that “the project is designed for energy efficiency, with a goal of reducing its overall energy consumption by 20% over the baseline.” Additionally, “Units will be supplied with Energy Star rated lights, and appliances and low flow plumbing fixtures.” To back up any of the goals stated in the application materials, Brookline has adopted the energy Stretch Code, which will ensure a relatively high level of sustainability, at least from an operating perspective.

Architectural, structural, and MEP outline specifications have been submitted, and reviewed by this peer reviewer. Heating and hot water system appear to be gas-fired, combined individual systems for each unit. These are generally very high efficiency, and when combined with efficient condensing units for cooling, exceed requirements of the building code. There is some concern related to a note that indicates that heaters will be direct vented to the exterior wall. While sometimes more cost effective, this venting solution can be unsightly and difficult to integrate into the cladding system. Elsewhere in the specification it is noted that dryer exhausts would also discharge at exterior walls.

CONCERNS REMAIN ABOUT VISUAL IMPACT OF SIDEWALL VENTING. THIS WAS NOT DISCUSSED AT THE LAST WORKING SESSION.

j. Exterior lighting

Not possible to tell from submitted materials.

Developer has submitted a narrative describing the lighting scheme that includes down-lighting within overhanging soffits, combined with ambient lighting that comes from within the commercial spaces. Some accent up-lighting is planned for two locations on the building. At the parking area, the drive will be lit by down-lighting. Developers state that RCP’s will be developed as the project advances.

DETAILED LIGHTING PLAN SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO CONFIRM NO NEGATIVE IMPACT ON NEIGHBORS.

k. Proposed landscape elements, planting materials, and planting design

As noted elsewhere, there is very little available space for plantings.

See notes in other sections of this report for comments about landscaping.

l. Feasibility of incorporating environmental and energy performance standards in the design, construction and operation of the buildings, such as standards required for LEED certification

See "i" above. Partial compliance with Energy Star standards is stated.

MEP outline specifications reference the 9th edition of the Massachusetts Building Code, which is supposed to be placed in effect in 2017. Energy performance requirements will be more stringent than current code, and as noted elsewhere, Brookline has adopted the Stretch Code. The developer has stated that the development will "possibly exceed" the Stretch Code. Consideration should be given to, at a minimum, to making the building "solar ready", which would include conduit(s) from the rooftop to the electrical room, providing space in the electrical room for additional equipment, considerate placement of rooftop equipment to minimize shadow impact, and adequate structuring of the roof for additional load imposed by panels.

From an "environmental perspective", outline spec states that "some" units will be supplied with fresh air (in addition to having operable windows). This could be problematic from a code perspective, as well as potentially forcing residents to open windows along Boylston and Hammond Streets. In addition, the spec does not appear to include multi-speed, continuously running bath fans (which are generally considered to be good from an interior air quality perspective).

Outline spec commits to blower door testing of units to ensure compartmentalization.

m. Any other design-related considerations identified by the consultant in the course of its review

- Floor plans that are submitted only include two relatively detailed unit floor plans on floors two through 5 (all other units are only blocked out with gross square footage and number of bedrooms noted). Given that each floor plate has nine distinct unit plans owing to the odd shape of the building, unit layouts will be idiosyncratic. As such, it is not really possible to review conformance with some code requirements (for example, accessibility) in any level of detail.

A detailed floor plan is included for "typical" floors (presumably 2, 3, and 4). Plans vary considerably because of the unusual footprint of the structure. One stack of bedrooms will have very limited access to natural light due to the zero lot line condition along the neighboring building on Hammond Street.

- Locations/types/plans of proposed Group 2 accessible units are not provided. Note that all units in elevator-fed buildings must be at a minimum, Group 1 units.
Location of three, Group Two units is indicated. There appears to be adequate space in the three indicated types to work out all dimensional requirements. Distribution requirements appear to be met. Hearing impaired unit is also indicated on plans.
- Building elevations along Hammond Street do not indicate the existing slope down to Boylston.
Current plans have addressed this issue.
- There appear to be no resident amenities included in the plans (community room, work out spaces, etc.). Does this threaten the marketability of the units?
Ground Floor plan now includes "Resident Event Amenity" space.
- Space allocated for bicycle parking seems inadequate.
Plan indicates only 9 bicycle parking spaces, which may meet Brookline code requirements. This number seems extremely low to this peer reviewer, given standards adopted by nearby communities. For example, elderly housing of this scale in Cambridge would require 23 bike parking spaces.
PROPOSER INDICATED THAT OVERFLOW BICYCLES WOULD BE PARKED IN GARAGE SPACE BY ATTENDANT.
- Parking plans do not indicate how accessible space requirements would be accommodated given the valet parking scheme. If disabled residents drop their car off with the valet in the parking drive, they would have to access the elevator lobby by travelling about 150 feet through the rear egress corridor (after entering the "back door"). Alternatively, they could traverse the public sidewalks for approximately 300 feet to enter the front lobby, mail boxes, etc. At a minimum, in this circumstance, the MAAB would

require a drop-off area within 100 feet of an accessible entry...presumably the same entry that able-bodied residents use.

Both the entry for residents who arrive by car, as well as the pedestrian entry on Hammond Street, are accessible. No issues are taken with this situation.

- It appears that the Fire Department takes no issue with the building, at least at its current level of development.
No new comments.
- Is there a detailed narrative describing how trash will be handled on the site?
A "Narrative for Trash Removal" has been submitted. Residents will deposit trash and recycling in rooms on each floor where it will be picked up by maintenance staff and moved to the trash room at the garage level. Developer should ensure that trash rooms are accessible. Commercial tenants will store trash within their space, and will be responsible for their own pick-up scheduling.
- Given the intensive use of the site, what is the plan for stormwater management?
Large storage tank in garage level will keep stormwater on site for gradual release into the storm sewer system.
- While the number of proposed parking spaces is generous (80), there is real concern about the practicality of the proposed system that includes mechanical stackers and at least one full time employee present, on site 24/7 to manage them. Has the proponent developed contingencies for the eventuality of parking plans with fewer spaces, and considered means for mitigating a lower parking ratio (significantly by diminishing unit count, but also subsidized T-passes and/or membership to shared car services)?
New parking plans have been reviewed by another peer reviewer.
- Has the developer drafted a Construction Management Plan that describes community impact during the construction period?
Will reportedly be provided "as the project progresses".
- Will the proposed HVAC system be designed to deal with the poor air quality that surrounds the site due to heavy traffic on Route 9, as well as stopped traffic on Hammond Street?
This reviewer did not find any reference in the outline spec that accommodates this issue.
- Similarly, noise and vibration caused by heavy traffic should be dealt with in the structural and façade design.
An additional layer of GWB has been proposed for the units facing streets to help with acoustical separation. However, outline specification for windows does not include triple glazing.
- Will the developer be responsible for Town road and sidewalk damage resulting from heavy trucking?
Presumably will be addressed in the construction management plan, and perhaps a condition of the comprehensive permit.
- Is a roof deck possible to create usable outdoor space?
It appears that plans now include six private balconies.
- Given the strong possibility that the proposed drop off zone in the Hammond right of way may not be approve-able, should a time-restricted drop off/loading zone be considered between the existing commercial structure and the new structure. It may only be possible if a turn-around area is provided. It may make more sense for the commercial drop off to be moved to the parking drive side of the building (with rear corridor access to the commercial spaces).
Town reportedly has reviewed and will entertain developer's proposal for the drop off zone.
- How many parking spaces can be provided if the lift/stacker system is replaced by a more conventional ramp structure, perhaps limiting stackers to residential parking and surface spaces for commercial uses?
Revised parking scheme has been submitted and reviewed by another peer reviewer.
- The environmental report notes that dewatering will have to occur during construction, with the need to deal with any contaminants. How far down is the water table, and is the situation mitigated if the stackers are eliminated (basement ceiling height can be decreased). A shallower basement will also mean less engagement with bedrock (noted to be 2 to 13 feet below the surface).
Water table changes resulting from the construction of the parking garage have been discussed, in particular, the potential of creating increased flooding in adjacent existing homes. This existing flooding situation should be reviewed and documented. Consideration should be given to a requirement that the developer make necessary repairs to the neighboring structure(s) if the problem is exacerbated.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCUMENTATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS AT NEIGHBORING PROPERTIES WAS DISCUSSED AT THE LAST WORKING SESSION.

- Are potential issues related to VOC's adequately addressed (the environmental report stated that with a parking level in place, no vapor removal system would be required)?
No new comments. Should be monitored in future.
 - What role does MassDOT have in review of the project? In addition to a new curb cut, and potentially eliminating some parking, there appears to be a need to relocate a traffic signal box.
No new comments.
- n. Techniques to mitigate visual (and other) impacts**
- Increasing the setback, particularly on Boylston, in combination with street trees and perhaps other landscaping, would provide the opportunity for a significantly more pleasant and protected pedestrian "oasis" (and would improve visibility when exiting the parking drive).
This has been satisfactorily addressed with increased setback and building overhang, as well as proposed soffit lighting.
 - Consider using the existing grading of the site as it drops towards Boylston street to create an intermediate patio level that provides some separation from the sidewalk (this could be particularly effective if one of the tenant spaces is a coffee shop, bakery, etc.).
Not feasible, and current plans along Boylston are satisfactory.
 - In conjunction with increasing the setback, creating a protective overhang at the top of the commercial floor will both improve the pedestrian zone and bring the scale of the building down to a more human scale. It will also make the building look less office-like, and read more mixed use.
Has been adequately addressed.
 - To decrease the shadow impact on the 6-family structure to the east, consider stepping back the top two floors of the building at the east end. This will result in the loss of 4 units, but will significantly mitigate that issue. It will also help to visually integrate the building into the existing context ("ease the transition to adjoining sites" as stated in the BOS letter to MassHousing).
This has not been incorporated into the current plans, and remains a serious concern of this reviewer. The suggested cutting back at the top two floors would also diminish the impact on homes on Heath Street.
SEE COMMENTS ABOVE RE: TOP FLOOR STEP-BACK INCREASE AT EAST END OF STRUCTURE.
 - Increase the stepping back dimension at the "attic" level of the building, along with shortening the length of the "tower" element along Boylston, would help to decrease the apparent height of the building.
See note above.
 - It is possible to lose up to six feet in the overall height of the structure by diminishing the commercial floor to floor to 12'-6" (from 15"), and typical floor to floor to 10'-0" (from 10'-10").
Overall building height has been diminished since the original submission. As the design develops, in particular, the structural design, additional opportunities for lowering the building may exist.
 - Consider creating a plant-able, buffer area on the east side of the building between the parking drive and the property line.
A five foot, planted buffer is now indicated.
- o. Other items of note from review of submitted materials.**
- *Outline specification indicates inclusion of emergency generator in the scope. Where is it located?*
DEVELOPER IS STUDYING WHETHER AN EMERGENCY GENERATOR WILL BE REQUIRED.
 - *Where is the sprinkler service entry room (noted in outline specification to be in garage)?*
 - *Where will banks of gas meters and electric meters be located?*
THIS ISSUE WAS DISCUSSED AT THE WORKING SESSION. PEER REVIEWER REQUESTED THAT METER BANKS NOT BE VISIBLE TO NEIGHBORS TO THE EAST.
 - *Tel/com room noted in specification has not been located on plans (minimum size 7' X 10').*
 - *Intercom system indicated in specification appears to not meet code requirements (system must provide residents with visual access to entry area from their units).*

- *Roof plan indicates a mechanical screen 3 feet tall. Some specified equipment is taller than 3 feet. Any visual and acoustical impact should be confirmed in documents.*
- *Outline spec and Code Summary conflict as far as construction types of building. Should be coordinated.*
- *Developer should confirm that sound generation projected for building operations noted in specification conform with Brookline noise ordinance.*
- *Outline spec includes investigation of under sink gray water flush system. Is this actually under consideration, and is it approvable in Brookline?*
- *GEI Geotechnical report dated April 2015 assumes a four-story commercial/retail building with two levels of below grade parking. Has this assumption been updated and coordinated with current scheme?*


DISCUSSED AT WORKING SESSION. GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER WILL NEED TO OPINE ON THIS POINT AND THE FOLLOWING TWO OTHER GEO-TECH RELATED NOTES.

- *Geotechnical report notes that tie-backs that extend into adjacent properties may be required for lateral support for portions of the excavation support system. Is this the case?*
- *Geotechnical report recommends pre and post-construction condition surveys of existing structures within 250 feet of the project, particularly if blasting must be performed (bedrock ranges from 2 to 24 feet at their boring locations).*
- *What pedestrian signal upgrades are under consideration by the developer?*

DEVELOPER REPORTED THAT THEIR INTENTION REGARDING SIGNAL UPGRADES WAS LIMITED TO CONSIDERATION OF CHANGING CROSSWALK TIMING TO ALLOW MORE TIME FOR PEDESTRIANS TO CROSS ROADWAYS.

I hope you will contact me to discuss this memo in detail, or to talk about issues that I have failed to cover. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Clifford Boehmer, AIA