

From: Abby Cox
Sent: Tuesday, May 09, 2017 9:46 PM
To: Maria Morelli; Bobby Allen
Subject: Public Comment on 134-138 Babcock

Dear Ms. Morelli and Mr. Allen,

Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend tomorrow night's ZBA meeting on the 134-138 Babcock Place proposal. Would you please share my letter below with the members of the board and Mr. Slater?

Thank you,
Abby Cox

Dear Members of the ZBA,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed development at 134-8 Babcock Street. I understand that the owner/developer, Sam Slater, has asked for feedback on the proposed development. As a homeowner in the neighborhood, I appreciate Mr. Slater's interest in hearing concerns about the project from the community. Furthermore, as a Town Meeting Member representing precinct 8, I am often asked about proposed development and the preservation of the character of our neighborhood. We believe the neighborhood in the area of Babcock Street, with its historic districts and walkable neighborhood school and commercial area, is a treasure of our town. We are hopeful that Mr. Slater's development will be of a scale and a style which will contribute to the neighborhood rather than overwhelm it.

In reviewing the plans and other documents provided on the town's website, I have identified some specific concerns and questions:

- 1) The Babcock sidewalk is heavily traveled by school children, the elderly, the B.U. track team, and many others. The fact that this neighborhood is walkable is what makes it special, and Babcock is the main thoroughfare to arrive at Coolidge Corner and reach the Devotion school. Looking at the plans, it appears that the configuration of the entrance/exit for the at grade parking under the building is very near the sidewalk and appears to be situated such that sight lines for cars exiting the garage area may be inadequate to observe pedestrians approaching or crossing the driveway. This could result in safety concerns. Would the developer please provide some information on how this safety issue would be addressed? With the number of cars expected to be entering and exiting during morning hours when the Babcock sidewalk is in heavy use by school children, this concern is particularly important.
- 2) The traffic department has proposed a number of improvements in traffic calming measures for Babcock Street. How does the site entrance/exit to the parking area accord with these plans?
- 3) The conceptual renderings and section of 9-30-16 indicate a flat site. However, the existing condition site plan shows a difference in grade of approximately 8 feet between Babcock Street and the back of the site. How will this difference in grade be accommodated? Will retaining walls or other structures be needed to match existing grades at adjacent properties? Will there be an impact to storm water drainage patterns based on the proposed change in site grading?

4) Have appropriate percolation tests been performed to demonstrate that the sizing of the leaching field is appropriate to accommodate storm water infiltration? The size of the storm water management area on the architectural plan looks different from the portrayal on the site plan....

5) The architectural renderings show a line of trees along the left side (facing from Babcock) of the building, but the landscape plans appear to show primarily shrubbery on that side. The limited setback would appear unsuited for the trees shown in the renderings.

6) Will there be an enclosure around the rooftop AC units to improve aesthetics and provide for noise reduction?

7) How will the (beautiful!) trees in the public right of way on Babcock Street be protected from damage during construction?

Beyond these questions, my greatest concern is that the vertical scale of the development seems so much larger than the surrounding buildings. It is not in keeping with the character of a neighborhood predominantly composed of three story Victorian houses and apartment buildings of a similar vertical scale.

I look forward to working with the ZBA and the developer as this project evolves.

Sincerely,

Abigail Cox
18 Osborne Road
TMM-8