

Ashley Clark

Subject: FW: 134-138 Babcock Street proposal/Sam Slater

From: Jodie Manasevit
Sent: Tuesday, July 11, 2017 1:56 PM
To: Polly Selkoe
Subject: 134-138 Babcock Street proposal/Sam Slater

July 10, 2017
To members of the Brookline Planning Board,

I am writing to most strongly voice my objection to the 134-138 Babcock Street proposal for a five story, 62 unit apartment building submitted by Sam Slater. I am a Stedman Street abutter to the property.

We bought our house almost 25 years ago. A compelling factor for this purchase was the yard behind the house. At that time, the yard was a trash heap. Unused plaster, concrete rubble, dead bushes, oil spills, and miscellaneous trash and debris dumped from the Babcock Street property, filled the space. But we saw the potential for a beautiful garden. After thousands of hours of work and thousands of dollars, the space is transformed and it is a joy.

I knew that eventually something would be built in the parking lot behind us, (the site of the proposed building). I never imagined that we would be facing such a massive, monstrously inappropriate, and badly designed building. There is nothing in this proposal which demonstrates consideration of the surrounding environment and character of Babcock and Stedman streets. It is too big, has virtually no setbacks around the perimeter, and will potentially destroy or compromise 31 trees, one of which is on the Babcock Street boulevard. Light will be blocked by the building's five story out of scale height, morning light to Stedman Street and afternoon light to the lovely park directly across Babcock Street. Significant loss of light and privacy will be the demise of our garden. Noise, night light, run off, parking exhaust pollution and increased traffic will make the entire neighborhood less desirable.

Furthermore, the drawings of this building are grossly misleading. They don't even show the change in elevation between the proposed site and the Stedman Street abutters. Because we are a full story and a half lower than the site, we will experience the height of the building as, at least, one story higher than it ends up being. The plans also do not accurately describe the location of the trees on the property, many of which, if preserved by greater setbacks, would maintain the much needed buffer. Please see the attached photo taken from our driveway. The red balloons represent the approximate 5 story, 50 foot height of the proposed building as we will experience it. The trees in the photo are the compromised buffer.

I have no objection to something being built on this property and I fully support the creation of affordable housing. I was instrumental in negotiating an agreement between a developer, tenants, the town of Hoboken and the state of NJ to secure 33 units of affordable housing on my block in the 80's when landlords were burning out rent stabilized tenants. What I don't understand, and I object to, is the complete disregard of Brookline's reasonable zoning regulations, passed to protect against this kind of ugly, massive development, in the name of allotting a percentage of units for affordable housing. There is no reason that a combination of affordable and market rate units can't reflect the thoughtful aesthetics and scale of existing housing and green, open space which makes Brookline a beautiful place to live.

The irony of using affordable housing as an excuse for greedy overdevelopment is sad and disturbing. I hope Brookline can do better.

Jodie Manasevit
119 Stedman Street

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