



111 Cypress Street
Response to “Overview Recommendations”
By: Town of Brookline Planning Board
Letter: March 28, 2017
HDS Response: July 14, 2017

Overview of Recommendations

1. Lower the height of the building, which currently reads more like a high-rise. Five-story wood construction over a concrete podium could be more economical than the steel or concrete construction that would likely be necessitated by the seven-story proposal.

The building height has been lowered from seven stories to six (five-story wood construction over concrete podium).

2. Create a welcoming façade on Cypress Street by increasing the significance of the entry to the building here and eliminating the exposed garage level and 18 parking spaces on this floor. Space along Cypress could be configured as a welcoming lobby and common space amenity for occupants. Another suggestion is to create several townhome entrances to the building along Cypress to better integrate the apartment building into the smaller-scale residential neighborhood.

The upper garage level and 18 parking spaces facing Cypress Street have been eliminated. A welcoming lobby entrance and common space has been provided at the previous curb cut location. Residential units have replaced the parking spaces.

3. Eliminate garage access on Cypress. A curb cut anywhere on Cypress to the site is not recommended both for safety concerns and the need for a better activated streetscape.

The curb cut and parking garage access has been removed from Cypress Street.

4. Create a deeper setback on Cypress to increase the width of the sidewalk and to improve the setback-to-height ratio viewed from this public way.

The building has increased its setback by approximately 8' at the northern end along Cypress Street.

5. Increase setback at Cypress/Brington corner to improve the viewshed for pedestrians and mitigate the wall-like effect of the building (increasing a sense of safety at night, as residents walk along Cypress Street to Brington Road).

Additional setbacks of approximately 5' north and west of the corner of Cypress and Brington Road provide greater visibility around the corner.

6. Increase setback of the portion of the building closest to the transformer to allow vehicles unencumbered access along the existing easement.

The new design sets back an additional 12' from the neighboring property line and transformer location.

7. Consider expanding the basement level garage slightly under the driveway to maintain vehicular circulation from one level to another internally within the building footprint. (Note this suggestion is to improve circulation from one garage level to another. The Planning Board is averse to increasing the parking ratio on this site, where traffic is already very congested.)

The basement garage has been expanded slightly under the entrance courtyard to help eliminate exposed surface parking. All parking circulation is internal to the building. The parking ratio has been significantly reduced from 1.06 to .67.

8. Increase articulation at the roofline to alleviate the monolithic, wall-like effect. Providing roof decks and arranging upper floors facing Brington in tiers with terraces would improve the massing and add some variety to the regimented fenestration.

The building massing has been modeled in plan to better fit and relate to the site. The result is a more variegated façade and less of a wall effect of the previous design.

9. Create safer pedestrian pathways for occupants of the project throughout the site and to public transit, which is especially a necessity in a walkable neighborhood.

The updated landscape plan shows crosswalks and pedestrian pathways along Cypress Street and Brington Road and into the site. The objective is to provide safe and inviting passage for neighborhood residents.

10. Eliminate the surface parking and reconfigure the driveway to reduce the commercial appearance.

The parking lot of the previous scheme has been replaced by a shared pedestrian and vehicular plaza/ courtyard with only five adjoining parking spaces.

11. Adjust the footprint to create a U-shaped building to soften the wall-like effect of the building and create pockets of open space. For example, expand the footprint at the southern end of the building on Brington to create a node analogous to the one at the northern end of the building (while maintaining adequate setbacks to the Brington Road neighborhood). Maintain the height of the southern node at 40 feet so that it is inscale with the single- and two-family homes on Brington. In addition to improving the massing, the result would soften the Brington Road edge and the viewshed of the expansive driveway so that the site reads as more residential and less commercial.

The building footprint has been reconfigured into a U-shaped building to soften the effect of the building at all edges, in particular the corner of Cypress and Brington Road.

12. Create a deeper vegetative buffer along the property line shared with 19-21 Brington Road.

The vegetation buffer has been enlarged with the addition of lawn and large deciduous trees at this location per the updated Landscape Plan.