

MEMORANDUM

134-138 BABCOCK PLACE, BROOKLINE, MA



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20 Park Plaza, Suite 1202
Boston, MA 02116

DATE: August 23, 2017
TO: James Fitzgerald, P.E., LEED AP
COMPANY: Environmental Partners Group, Inc.
ADDRESS: 1900 Crown Colony Drive, Suite 402
CITY/STATE: Quincy, MA 02169
CC:
FROM: Arthur G. Stadig, P.E.
PROJECT NAME: 134-138 Babcock Place, Brookline, MA
PROJECT NUMBER: 16-2823.00
SUBJECT: Peer Review of Parking

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Walker Parking Consultants (WPC) has been retained by the Town of Brookline through Environmental Partners Group to review parking for the 134-138 Babcock Place application. WPC has reviewed the application materials presented by the proponent that are generally available on the Town's website for this project.

134-138 Babcock Place is currently designed for 62 residential apartments. Vehicles enter and exit the site from a curb cut on Babcock Street. There is one level of parking at grade with 31 spaces, including 3 accessible spaces.

We have reviewed the materials and offer the following comments:

1. For the Transit Parking Overlay District (TPOD), the Town requires 1.0 spaces per studio unit, 1.4 spaces for 1 bedroom units and 2.0 spaces for 2 and 3 bedroom units which totals 82 spaces or an average of 1.32 spaces/unit. The project is reducing the number of required spaces to 31 spaces or 0.5 spaces/unit. The proponent should be more definitive in defending a large reduction in required parking. We suggest a review by the proponent of the actual residential demand that occurs in the neighborhood. In our research, if these spaces are market rate for the area, we suggest an appropriate parking supply be between 0.7 to 0.9 spaces per unit, or 44 to 56 spaces. The pricing and parking allocation for residents should be discussed in the context of parking demand.
2. The traffic report bases their peak hour volumes (PHVs) on the number of units and not the number of spaces in the garage. Additionally, their PHV numbers do not include "a reduction for non-automobile trips" (i.e. biking, walking and using public transportation). We take no exception to the numbers in the traffic report. The PHVs in the report appear high based on the number of spaces in the garage, but when looking at a more appropriate parking demand for the development the traffic PHVs are more realistic.

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3. The drawings show openings in the sides of the parking level walls which implies natural ventilation for the parking facility. Parking facilities that are below residential use can either be classified from a code standpoint as an "Open Parking Garage" or an "Enclosed Parking Garage". If the parking complies with the requirements of an Open Parking Garage, then a mechanical ventilation system is not required. Section 406.5 of the Massachusetts State Building Code indicates the requirements that need to be met for an Open Parking Garage. To meet openness, the exterior sides of the parking shall have uniformly distributed openings on two or more sides. In addition, the area of those openings shall not be less than 20% of the total perimeter wall area for that level. Other requirements for the distribution of openings also apply. Also, the openness would be affected by fire separation distance from the property line on all sides. An open parking garage may be 10'-0" or greater from a property line to meet fire separation distance. At distances closer than 10'-0", the openings may be restricted. Currently there is not enough information to determine openness of the parking to comply with the requirements of an Open Parking Garage. If requirements of an Open Parking Garage are met (which appears likely), it is my opinion that there would be no adverse effects of air quality that would be any greater than the existing surface lot on the site. If the requirements of an Open Parking Garage are not met, then mechanical ventilation would be required for an Enclosed Parking Garage in accordance with the mechanical code.
4. It is unclear what the current plan is for access control to open and close the garage doors. There is one door for entry and one door for exit. The plans do not indicate a width of the doors. The entering door is approximately 38' from the curb at the street. A queuing car may block the sidewalk, but there is enough distance for 2 cars to queue without blocking the street.
5. There are 3 ADA spaces per the requirement and one is labeled as a "van" space. The access aisle next to the space is required to be 8'-0' wide and it doesn't appear to meet this dimensional requirement on the plans. The proponent should confirm the access aisle at the van space is 8'-0" wide, the space is 8'-0' wide, and the headroom clearance is 8'-2" to, from and at van accessible spaces. This may affect car count.
6. The parking dimensions comply with zoning, but many of the spaces are immediately adjacent to columns or walls with no extra relief for maneuvering or door-swing. The columns restrict parking and un-parking maneuvers. The standard spaces may measure 8'-6", but they will perform like 8'-0" or smaller spaces and do not meet the spirit of the zoning ordinance. Cars may need to make multi-point turns to enter or exit the spaces next to the columns. Spaces next to walls need an extra foot of door-swing to meet the spirit of the ordinance.
7. Zoning allows 7'-6" wide compact spaces up to 25% of the total. The current plan indicates 9 compact spaces or 29% of the total number of spaces. 7'-6" is a very narrow dimension and maneuvering around a columns will be a challenge. Also due to the proposed low parking space/unit ratio, it further reduces the number of more desirable spaces. There is a provision about increasing the number of compact

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spaces up to 50%, but it requires special permitting and an increase in the number of spaces.

- a. From the Zoning By-law: *If authorized by special permit, the percent of compact spaces may be increased up to 50% provided that one additional parking space (either full size or compact), not to be included in the total number of spaces required pursuant to §6.02, paragraph 1., is provided for every eight compact spaces proposed beyond the 25% allowed by right, but at least one additional space shall be provided in any case where a special permit is granted pursuant to this section.*

We remain available to answer further questions and attend the Town's ZBA meeting as required.