

Sept. 29, 2017

Dear Ms. Morelli and ZBA board members,

As a Stedman Street abutter, I write with frustration and anger in response to the revised plans for 134-138 Babcock Street. Despite numerous and specific recommendations from Ms. Morelli, ZBA board members and Mr. Boehmer, (the architectural peer reviewer), to make a much smaller building with more open space, the revised plan represents an insignificant change in footprint, (approximately 3.7%), only 10 fewer than the original 62 units, no additional green space, and an increase in height. (Refer to transcript August 23, 2017- pages 15, 16, 26, 29, 31, 33, 34, 106, 107, 108, and 109)

The revision ignores multiple reviewers' requests for a minimum of 20' rear and side setbacks. The side setbacks remain unchanged at barely 11' and more than a third of the rear setback (Stedman abutters) is only 10' 8.5". The maximum setback along two short sections of that edge is improved but still inadequate at 15'. We would be overpowered by the mass and height of this building. Despite the misleading renderings showing lush, mature trees around the perimeter of the building, inadequate setbacks place our existing green screen at risk from loss of light and proximate construction damage. Comparable replacement plantings are unlikely to survive in narrow corridors of shadow.

The loss of privacy from this MASSIVE building will be exacerbated by the new roof deck on the top floor. The air-conditioning units relocated from the roof down to the 4th floor will be lower and closer to us so we can anticipate a symphony of white noise broken by the whirring and banging from the underground garage lifts for 39 parked cars.

Multiple reviewers have acknowledged the negative impact of the 10-12' change in grade between the Stedman abutters and the project site. It is therefore infuriating that after 5 months of conversation, the developers have presented deceptive modeling yet again. The images of the new building continue to make it look like we are on the same ground plane. We are a full story lower. The proposed 5-story building will loom six stories above us. The red balloons in the left photo are suspended 50' above the building site. The proposed 58' tall building will be taller than the existing trees.



In addition to being a story below this site, our homes are sitting on a bed of peat rather than solid ground. Destabilization of root systems from construction and groundwater run-off from a building of this mass and proximity threaten the foundations of abutters' homes.

This building blocks our light and view of the sky, invades our privacy, threatens the stability of our foundations, kills some if not most of the green space between us and the developer's property, pollutes our outdoor environment with noise, aims garage exhaust at us, crowds the street visually with its oversize, overbuilt footprint, and causes serious traffic problems for Babcock Street. Few of these concerns have been mitigated in this revision. A substantially smaller building would resolve most of them. The greed and disingenuous character of developers exploiting 40B is sadly reinforced by this still massive proposal. Yes, the look of the building is more residential. Nevertheless, it is the same oversize monster it always was. It seems the developer thinks that putting a bit of make up on the design will obscure this reality.

Thank you for your time,
Jodie Manasevit
119 Stedman Street