

Subject: FW: Appeal for Substantive, Respectful Design Revision at 134-138 Babcock Place

From: J R Anderson [mailto:andersonwinterbass@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2018 10:20 PM
To: Maria Morelli
Subject: Appeal for Substantive, Respectful Design Revision at 134-138 Babcock Place

To: The Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals c/o Ms. Maria Morelli

Dear Planners:

The Mass Housing Finance agency letter granting project eligibility for Applicant Sam Slater to build 134-138 Babcock Place is very clear in its expectations of the Applicant.

Among numerous specific requirements:

"In the course of the local hearing process, the Applicant should be prepared to address specific concerns relative to the size, scale and architectural style of the proposed multi-family building and to discuss possible mutually acceptable modifications to building plans and elevation aimed at improving its integration into the character of the surrounding neighborhood....and be prepared to address concerns relative to the Project's visual, shade, noise, and light impacts on individual abutting properties and to fully describe proposed measures to address and mitigate these concerns."

In the Board of Selectmen's public hearings that followed the State's project eligibility letter, the consensus from the Planning Department and the Selectmen was clear: The building as designed is too big. It's too tall and it lacks adequate setbacks from its neighbors on all sides.

Subsequent to the Selectman's hearings, members of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Town's architectural consultant have likewise criticized the massing, height and/or insufficient setbacks for this proposal. Members of the community have posted over 100 letters in opposition to the current project design. 240 neighbors have petitioned for a much smaller project that was outlined by the Town's architectural peer reviewer. And now, as the clock runs out and the Applicant controls extensions for public hearing on the project design, what can we say has been accomplished?

To date, the response of the Applicant Sam Slater and his design team to the Mass Housing expectations cited above and requests for downsizing from the BOS, ZBA, Planning Department and consulting architect has been to offer minimal modifications and, when asked for substantive change, threaten to go back to the State for authorization of the original project design on the grounds that it must be huge to be financially viable (Engler).

Regrettably, the building as currently proposed will

- cast early shade on the adjacent park throughout the summer for decades to come;
- destroy at least 18 mature trees and threaten a dozen more;
- clog Babcock Street with delivery vehicles, trash and trash collection;
- crowd it's neighbors on 3 sides with setbacks of only 10-15 feet & oppressive height;
- concentrate exhaust fumes & vent its garage 15 feet from abutters' gardens;
- remove 50 existing parking spaces;
- employ wood construction without fire/emergency/corridors;
- punish neighbors with the noise of mechanical parking stackers;
- and diminish both light and privacy for neighbors with its unprecedented and unnecessary 5-story height.

As a citizen of Brookline concerned for the future of our beautiful town and the legacy defined by your recommendations at this important moment, I write to invite each of you to consider whether overreach by developers should proceed without meaningful constraint as now only you can provide. To each of you on the ZBA, please stand for our community and reject this bloated project. Make clear to the Applicant that the only building you would endorse on this site has:

- 25-foot minimum setbacks at the western property line;
- 4-story maximum height on the long arm of the "L";
- 3-story maximum height on the short arm of the "L".

Sounds simple. Sounds fair. Please make charges to the Applicant for a building that respects its neighbors and our community. After all, this is your legacy, too.

With respect and admiration for all your good work,

John Robert Anderson, MD
119 Stedman Street
Brookline, MA 02446

The substance of this message, including any attachments, may be confidential, legally privileged and/or exempt from disclosure pursuant to Massachusetts law. It is intended solely for the addressee. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and delete the material from any computer.