



TOWN of BROOKLINE

Massachusetts

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December 20, 2018

Jessica L. Malcolm
Planning and Programs
Massachusetts Housing Finance
Agency
One Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

RE: Application for 40B Project Eligibility Letter
500 Harvard Street, Brookline
MH ID No. 1007

Dear Ms. Malcolm:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the application for Site Approval submitted by 500 Harvard Street, LLC to develop a mixed-use project under GL Chapter 40B at 500 Harvard Street, Brookline. In addition to the Board's statement provided below, I am attaching herewith written comments from the public for your consideration.

As you may know, DHCD has just certified the Town of Brookline's Housing Production Plan, thereby granting the Town a two-year safe harbor beginning on October 29, 2018. This is indicative of the Town's support for affordable housing and the significant progress it has made toward meeting Brookline's regional housing goal. Despite the fact that the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory is now officially at 9.87% and there are several Comprehensive Permit applications currently pending before our Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), the Town remains committed to expanding the supply of subsidized residential units.

Simultaneously, the Select Board is acutely aware of the overwhelming burden that an unrelenting onslaught of 40B projects has placed on a concentrated area in the town. Specifically, the proposed development at 500 Harvard Street is within 0.7 miles of: five 40B projects approved within the past four years totaling 189 units; three pending projects totaling 496 units; and an additional project proposing 25 units, the public hearing for which is scheduled to open in January. This combines for a total of 710 units within walking distance of each other—not including 500 Harvard Street. The cumulative impacts of these units within an already densely developed area are self-evident.

However, despite the extraordinary and undoubtedly unprecedented concentration of new housing

development within a 0.35 miles radius, the Select Board acknowledges that the proposal for 500 Harvard Street could potentially be a well-designed mixed-income development that is sensitive to the needs of the abutting neighborhood, creates new housing, and contributes to the economic vitality of Harvard Street, one of our major commercial corridors. Therefore, the Select Board is open to the possibility of recommending to the ZBA that a modified development plan be considered should the applicant receive a PEL and apply for a Comprehensive Permit. However, in order for the Select Board to consider making such a recommendation, the developer must address the following list of preliminary issues and concerns identified by the Select Board:

- The proposed building is simply too big. The height and massing of the building are totally out of character for the area. The proposed structure towers over the surrounding properties and fails to relate to either the residential or commercial neighborhoods in which it is located. The size of the proposed building is compounded by the fact that the 6,969-square foot parcel is small by any standards. Development of the site therefore demands a high quality design that is sensitive to the size of the property and the extent to which it can accommodate density. The lack of reasonable—indeed virtually any—setbacks—is disconcerting and must be addressed. That being said, it is still unlikely that any increase in the setbacks would ameliorate the visual impact of the building on the residents of the abutting property at 514 Harvard Street unless significant changes are made to the design of the building including stepping-down facades and incorporating articulation creatively. As currently proposed, the building not only blocks the windows—many of which provide the only light into individual residential units—it presents as a looming mass. This is categorically unacceptable.
- The developer should incorporate usable open space for all residents and introduce landscaping to improve the visual appearance of the property and its relationship to the residential area.
- While the ZBA has issued several Comprehensive Permits for projects involving parking stackers, none of these projects has been built to date. Therefore, the Town still does not have any direct experience with this emerging technology and requests that the applicant insure that the parking system is appropriate for the proposed development and does not result in queuing, impediments to pedestrians' use of the sidewalk, or noise impacts.
- Noise impacts are, in fact, of particular concern to the Board given the close proximity of the building to abutters. Noise generated by the proposed stacker system and condensers to neighboring homes must be ameliorated.
- The Board acknowledges that the property is within close proximity to both the MBTA Green Line and a bus service. The Board further acknowledges that there may be some self-selection of prospective tenants who will rent space understanding and accepting that parking is not available. However, the Select Board cannot help but take issue with the developer's claims that this is a transit-rich area given that public transportation service is not dependable and is grossly overcrowded. Accordingly, the Select Board is concerned that not enough parking is being incorporated for residents or the patrons or employees of the retail space. Six parking spaces for 30 residential units at a ratio of spaces to housing units of 0.2 per unit with no provisions whatsoever for the retail use are clearly insufficient. Given the dearth of public parking in the general vicinity of the project, the developer should not rely on public parking to accommodate retail customers reliant on vehicles.
- Tenants of affordable units should have the same access to parking as the tenants of market rate units and that the former should not be charged for parking.
- The developer must be committed to making significant improvements to the design of the building including but not limited to articulation of the façade.
- The developer must work with the Fire and Building Departments to ensure that all relevant codes are strictly adhered to—particularly in light of the fact that the developer is proposing a wood-framed structure within a densely populated area.

- Most importantly, the applicant must meet with the neighborhood—individually and/or in groups—to engage in a genuine dialogue to identify and mitigate their concerns.

We also suggest that should the petitioner secure a PEL and decide to apply for a Comprehensive Permit, the applicant submit the following information prior to or as part of an application to the Town's Board of Appeals:

- a noise study
- a comprehensive shadow study
- an actual or virtual 3D model of the proposed project showing abutting and nearby buildings
- a site plan showing abutting buildings with setbacks of the proposed building to its property lines and to abutting buildings
- site sections through the building
- a traffic and parking circulation study, including the impact that this project will have on the availability of existing on-street parking in the immediate area.
- detailed information regarding the stacking system
- a storm water and drainage report
- a waiver list in tabular form

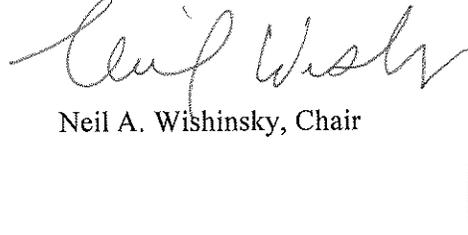
If and when the developer submits an application for a Comprehensive Permit, the Select Board anticipates that it will submit a recommendation to the ZBA for its consideration. It therefore behooves the applicant to address the concerns set forth in this letter.

To reiterate, the Select Board maintains that this project presents the potential to serve as a signature mixed use development that links a residential neighborhood with a commercial area while providing needed affordable and market rate housing—if and only if the developer is willing to mitigate concerns expressed by the neighborhood and Town.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

SELECT BOARD



Neil A. Wishinsky, Chair

Attachments

From: John Duesenberry & Debra San
Sent: December 1, 2018
To:
Select Board of the Town of Brookline
Polly Selkoe, Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning

Dear Select Board,

We write in response to a recent notification, postmarked 11/20/2018, about the 40B Development at 500 Harvard Street, proposed by "500 HARVARD LLC", aka The Danesh Group.

We have been Brookline residents, taxpayers, and voters for 35 years. We own two units of Avalon Terrace Condominium. Avalon Terrace is a 100-year-old, 16-unit multifamily building at 514/516 Harvard Street. Avalon Terrace directly abuts 500 Harvard Street, and as such would be the neighbor most affected by the proposed structure.

We appreciate the notification, but we are alarmed to be presented with a 127-page technical project specification (and other documents) and given fewer than 10 days to respond. This doesn't even allow time for us to convene our condominium's Board of Trustees to discuss the matter.

The documents available show little evidence that the developers are concerned about, or have any plans to mitigate, a number of obvious (it seems to us) problem areas. These include:

1. During construction, major disruptions and inconveniences to abutters and the surrounding neighborhood are almost inevitable. These problems can and do go on for years. They include disruption of utilities and/or pipelines, wiring, etc.; traffic jams; obstruction of emergency vehicles; intrusions on privacy; noise, debris, trash, vermin infestations, etc.
2. The former Rubin's Delicatessen building was built right up to the 500/514 Harvard St. property line, with only a fraction of an inch between structures. The removal of the Rubin's building has the potential to cause permanent or long-term damage to our building and its retaining walls. We do not see any evidence that the developers have investigated what problems might lie between or under the adjoining properties. A complete engineering report and plan is required for this phase of the project.
3. Parking issues: The proposed building will exacerbate the severe shortage of parking spaces that exists in our neighborhood and throughout Brookline. The plan to include six parking spaces under the building is simply not adequate to accommodate either the building's residents, or its business customers.

Without wishing to appear facetious, we suggest that a three-story parking garage at 500 Harvard Street, offering leased spaces for cars and bicycles, would be extremely welcome in our neighborhood, and possibly quite lucrative.

4. Other long-term effects: The proposed building will put large portions of 514/516 Harvard Street in permanent shade. This is likely to cause damaging snow/ice accumulations on our roof and gutters. The effect on the internal temperature of our building could result in higher fuel costs. The proposed building will block all existing windows on the 514 Harvard half of our building. These units will lose their views and probably some of their value as a result. It is grossly unfair that the owners and residents of 514/516 be forced to bear these added costs, without compensation, while "500 HARVARD LLC" reaps the profits of the project.

5. The presence of a 5-story building in this location will interfere with, and likely damage, trees rooted on adjoining Verndale and Kendall Street properties.

6. The proposed building's resident population and business customers will exacerbate the problems of the already overcrowded and poorly operated MBTA bus line #66, which stops directly in front of 500 Harvard Street

7. The following is an aesthetic judgement, but so is the "Architectural Narrative" of the proposal. We believe that the character of Brookline's "commercial corridor" is defined by its fine, traditional brick and wooden structures; all of these are one to three stories in height. A five-story design may look excellent elsewhere, but does not fit well at 500 Harvard Street.

Conclusion: The 40B Development at 500 Harvard Street, as proposed by "500 HARVARD LLC" aka The Danesh Group, gives rise to many questions and some objections. Until and unless the developers can address these satisfactorily, we cannot support their proposal at this time.

The authors write as private citizens of Brookline, not as representatives of the Board of Trustees of the Avalon Terrace Condominium Association, of which they are members.

John Duesenberry

Debra San

514 Harvard St. Apt. 2B/3B Brookline, MA 02446

Alison Steinfeld

From: Polly Selkoe
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 4:19 PM
To: Alison Steinfeld
Subject: FW: 500 Harvard Street 40B

-----Original Message-----

From: victoria longino [<mailto:victorialongino@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 11:40 AM
To: Polly Selkoe
Subject: 500 Harvard Street 40B

Date: 12/4/18
To: Polly Selkoe, Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning, Town of Brookline
Re: 500 Harvard Street 40B application by 500 HARVARD LLC

Dear Select Board:

We support affordable housing in the Town of Brookline, but we do not support the proposal for 500 Harvard Street by the Danesh Group (aka 500 Harvard LLC). We are asking the Town of Brookline to deny "an application for site approval that was submitted by 500 HARVARD LLC to MassHousing in accordance with M.G.L. c.40B to construct a residential building at 500 Harvard Street" for several reasons:

1. The Town of Brookline's SAFE HARBOR status allows the Town to deny this request, and doing so would be in the interest of Town residents' quality of life by protecting them from the congestion, density, and other negative effects of an exploitative, towering building shoehorned into the property at 500 Harvard Street, further exacerbated by unnecessary ground-floor retail.
2. Before moving forward with any new 40B plans, the Town of Brookline needs to use the SAFE HARBOR period in at least 2 critical ways: a) The Town of Brookline needs to determine whether other affordable projects in the works will achieve the Town's 10% affordable housing goal needed for compliance. b) The Town needs to implement a plan to reach and exceed the 10% affordable housing goal that is visionary, strategic, and coordinated with all town departments, and that engages the talents, ideas, suggestions, and vision of residents, rather than follow a haphazard, piecemeal approach that excludes residents, the largest stakeholders.
3. 500 HARVARD LLC is controlled by the Danesh Group, which is another reason for denying this corporation another building project in addition to their nearby 40B project on Harvard Street. The Danesh Group and family have proven to have contempt and disregard for the residential neighborhood in which 500 Harvard Street is located, and their actions have degraded our neighborhood: a) The Danesh Group (with a Danesh family member present, approving, and supervising the process) butchered two mature large-canopied trees on its lot on March 23, 2018, cutting them to the ground and depriving the neighborhood of valued trees that provided beauty and relief from pollution and noise. The reason for the butchery was that the "the trees and their leaves are a nuisance," according to a spokeswoman for the tenant, Shan a Punjab. The Danesh Group disregarded the safety of passersby, and our daughter was terrified when one of the trees came crashing down with no warning or protection as she walked by 500 Harvard Street. (Please note that these trees may actually have belonged to 9 Kenwood Street, in which case the Danesh Group would have violated that property's rights.) b) The Danesh Group has completely failed to control cooking odors produced by its tenant, Shan a Punjab, and spewed from its property despite our concern and request for odor control expressed at a Select Board meeting on September 19, 2107. The cooking odors saturate nearby properties, including our yard and home, 12 hours per day, making it impossible for us to enjoy our home and yard and degrading the quality of life of our home and neighborhood. c) The Danesh Group has completely failed to maintain their property at 500 Harvard Street and has allowed weeds to overtake the property creating an eyesore and potential shelter for vermin.

Based on all of this evidence, there is every reason to believe that the Danesh Group's contempt for, disregard for, and degradation of our neighborhood would continue and be magnified by a large property built by it at 500 Harvard Street.

We hope the Town of Brookline will take advantage of the SAFE HARBOR period and institute a responsible, creative, inclusive plan to add affordable housing and will deny new 40B projects until the Town's affordable housing plan is in place.

Sincerely,
Victoria Longino & John Ambler
16 Verndale Street

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.

Alison Steinfeld

From: Polly Selkoe
Sent: Tuesday, December 04, 2018 4:19 PM
To: Alison Steinfeld
Subject: FW: How to direct comments on the 40B for 500 Harvard Street

From: Lee Biernbaum [<mailto:lee@acrossb.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 28, 2018 4:32 PM
To: Polly Selkoe
Subject: Re: How to direct comments on the 40B for 500 Harvard Street

Thank you Polly.

My comments.

Dear Select Board,

I recently received the notification about the proposed 40B Development at 500 Harvard Street.

While I understand this is a preliminary plan and many details and approvals are forthcoming over the next months, I wanted to offer a few words in general support of additional housing and additional density in the neighborhood.

As an abutter at the top of Verndale Street, I am aware there will be short-term disruption during construction and I look forward to future presentations discussing those aspects of the project.

However, it is vitally important that Brookline continue to support additional housing and the density that comes with it. My family moved to Brookline in 2012, and already could not afford to move into our same apartment today. This increase in home value is only of monetary benefit to me if I decide to leave metro Boston, but the downsides from the rapid appreciation will be manifest every day. A Brookline that is unaffordable to all but the richest-of-the-rich is not what drew me to the Town and it is profoundly disappointing to know I cannot recommend our neighborhood to friends or coworkers.

The idea of this project should be a prime example of what we need more of in Brookline... removing single-story retail, half occupied by a parking lot, on a major street, and replacing it with a multi-use building with limited parking. Living just across the street from this proposed site, I know you can live in this part of town with kids, and have no car (as I do with my 2 kids). Maximizing the use of space for people, as is proposed here, is commendable.

I leave to future hearings any judgement on the exact details of the project and reserve my right to complain (as any Brookliner would!) if there are problems with the project specifics, but, generally speaking, this a time for me to speak up and be able to say, literally, "Yes, even in my (front) yard."

Thank you for your time and I look forward to the opportunity to attend future hearings in person.

Lee Biernbaum
7 Verndale Street.

Alison Steinfeld

From: Karen Martin
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2018 12:46 AM
To: Alison Steinfeld
Subject: Fw: Opposition to Ganesh Company proposal for 500 Harvard Street

From: Michael Maso <michaelhmaso@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 5, 2018 10:41 PM
To: Karen Martin; Neil Wishinsky
Cc: Lisa Coady
Subject: Opposition to Ganesh Company proposal for 500 Harvard Street

At the December 4 hearing regarding the 40B application we were encouraged to send our thoughts to the Planning Board in advance of the town's submission to the Commonwealth. Here are my thoughts, as I testified at the hearing:

My wife Lisa Coady and I are owners at 12 Kenwood Street, where we have lived since 1986, directly opposite the proposed development. I am in support of affordable housing in Brookline, and with different scale, massing and architecture could support such a project on the proposed site, but my wife and I are strongly opposed to this project because of its size, design and massing, all of which are totally inconsistent with either the design and scale of Kenwood Street or the larger scale, design and massing of buildings on Harvard Street.

The proposed building is 30 feet over the zoning for the area, and double the size of the abutting Harvard Street building. The architect showed the height of all buildings on the same side of the street on Harvard Street from Kenwood Street to Commonwealth Avenue in Allston, but neglected to mention that the proposed height is larger than any of them, including the building on the corner of Commonwealth Avenue. The design is totally devoid of nuance, as if it were a beach ball blown up to its greatest capacity, without set-backs or any design elements that would mitigate the blunt mass of the structure. On the rear side of the building, which I and my neighbors would face every day, the architect has proposed a massive, flat, grey monolith. This is an unacceptable design from every standpoint.

This project is simply much too large for the neighborhood, whether judged in the context of residential Kenwood Street or commercial Harvard Avenue. It is also, in my opinion, a very ugly and disrespectful design, optimized for maximum profit above all other considerations. The lack of parking spaces would exacerbate the current lack of street parking on the portion of the block near Harvard Street, and the shadow study was incomprehensible in its current form.

I urge the town to petition the Massachusetts Department of Community Housing and Development to reject the developers' application for inclusion in the 40B program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Maso

12 Kenwood Street
Brookline, MA 02446
617-283-8352

MARGARETA WHITE

23 Kenwood Street
Brookline, MA 02446-2412

December 7, 2018

Town of Brookline
To whom it may concern

This is in response to the hearing on December 4th regarding the plan to build a 6 story building (with 30 apartments, 6 parking places) on the corner of Harvard and Kenwood streets.

This building would definitely be an eye sore in the neighborhood. It is way too tall and imposing and leaving little space for planting (especially along Kenwood Street to blend in with the properties around it). Obviously no thought has been given to try to blend in with the architecture around it.

But, more important, the planned building would increase the local traffic and the amount of cars trying to find parking on the already busy local streets.

This neighborhood is a little oasis in the middle of a very busy and concentrated population area (Boston-Allston-Brighton). It allows parents and pet owners to enjoy a lovely park.

There are other problems, but other neighbors have eloquently pointed them out.

I hope that the Town will take this in consideration before allowing the existing plan to be approved.

Sincerely,


Margareta White

Alison Steinfeld

From: Polly Selkoe
Sent: Friday, December 07, 2018 10:42 AM
To: Alison Steinfeld
Subject: FW: Public Comment for <https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/6ezGC31KwvCmGBZMfgHUtn?domain=brooklinema.gov>

FYI. Will be posted. Polly

From: susie [mailto:susiedavidsonjournalist@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2018 7:05 PM
To: Polly Selkoe
Subject: Public Comment for <https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/6ezGC31KwvCmGBZMfgHUtn?domain=brooklinema.gov>

Dear Ms. Selkoe,

I attended the public hearing Tuesday night at Town Hall and would like to submit a public comment on this project. I don't see anywhere on the page where you can submit, so I am sending it to you in the hopes that you will forward it to the proper place so that it can be posted along with the others.

Thank you very much,
Susie Davidson
516 Harvard St. #1D
Brookline, MA 02446

To: Select Board of the Town of Brookline
Polly Selkoe, Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning

Re: Proposed 40B Development at 500 Harvard Street, proposed by "500 HARVARD LLC," aka The Danesh Group.

Dear Select Board,

I am a trustee and condo owner at 516 Harvard Street, which is adjacent to the proposed building site at 500 Harvard Street.

I attended the hearing on Tuesday night and was not intending to speak, but three things that I heard during the developers' agent's presentation were very concerning to me.

1) The representative stated that this project would "connect the urban area [across Commonwealth Avenue; Allston] to this neighborhood."

I was very shocked. Why would they assume that we would like to have an urban area in our neighborhood? We live in Brookline and pay for that privilege because we enjoy the fact that Brookline has the feel of a small town, but the proximity to such urban areas as Allston and Boston where we can go anytime we would like.

And I do. But that doesn't mean I would necessarily want to live there. My neighbors and I greatly enjoy living in a quieter area with trees and families and children, rather than an area more geared to college students. And I

believe that it is presumptuous and disrespectful for this company to assume that we would like to have the areas connected.

2) I was not happy to hear that this proposed building would be a wood-framed building. Following devastating massive fires in Waltham and Dorchester which received a lot of press last year, I read many articles including one in the Brookline Tab about the dangers of such wood-framed buildings. According to these articles, it is the cheapest way to build buildings and is subject to ignition from many different sources. In them I also read that measures were being taken by towns to restrict the amounts of wood-framed buildings being built because of firefighters' concerns.

When I brought this up at the meeting, a Select Board member, I believe it was Mr. Wishinsky, said that they had used wood framing in the new structures in Cleveland Circle. However, they did not about any residential buildings when they were built.

3) I also mentioned in my remarks that I was concerned about seeing the Danesh family name on many properties in Brookline lately, and I am wary of having one family have such a large footprint in the town. The family members present protested when I said this, but it was not they in particular I was concerned about -- but rather, any conglomerate having such a large footprint in the town.

Those were my three main concerns, but as I listened to the remarks of other neighbors, I was also very affected by their concerns. These included the fact that there is a popular children's playground at the end of Kenwood Street that is not fenced in. The developers mentioned that they are aiming for a target group of young professionals, and I know that many would not have cars. Therefore, there would be a lot of delivery trucks and Ubers going around that one-way section to exit through Verndale Street, and that would put these children at great risk.

Noise from the HVAC roof system and other mechanical systems, from stacked parking, and from young residents are very concerning to me as well.

Other concerns are:

A huge increase in the population of this smaller section.

A minute amount of room between this structure and my own building, which would lose the views from its South facing windows.

Greatly increased searching for already limited parking spots from residents and their visitors.

The massive height and size of the proposed building. Our building is three stories tall, and would be dwarfed by it. There is no building this high in the immediate area.

The proposed look of the building itself, which to me looks like a fortress and is ghastly. Certainly it is not aesthetic to me in any way.

I greatly support and want affordable and low income housing, and I would love to have it next door to me. But not as part of this proposal, which is totally out of scale for this neighborhood.

Thank you,
Susie Davidson

MEMORANDUM

To: The Brookline Select Board
From: Vitaly Veksler, Anna Veksler, 23 Kenwood Street, Unit 2
Subject: Problems with the Proposed Building at 500 Harvard Street
Date: December 7, 2018

Dear Brookline Select Board Members:

Thank you for sending us a letter notifying us about the application that The Danesh Group submitted for construction of a building at 500 Harvard Street. Also, thank you for organizing a public hearing that allowed us to look at the proposed building's design.

We oppose the proposed design of the building at 500 Harvard Street for the following reasons:

1. **Wrong Benchmark or Wrong Town:** The developer's architect talked about the building and how it would match building in Allston or Brighton in terms of its population density. Yet, they propose to build it in Brookline. Shouldn't the building match the population density and architectural style of Brookline? The building that the developer advertises as a 5-story building is close to a 7-story one, with a very tall first (business) floor. In fact, there is not even a single 5-story building (even without a business floor) on Harvard Street north of Beacon Street. The proposed building would stick as a giant eye sore in the neighborhood around the Coolidge Park, where the tallest building is 3-story high. The size of the building, the developers' benchmarking it against buildings in Brighton and Allston, and the developers' focus on attracting people renting apartments to the neighborhood with a very high house- and condo-ownership rate makes us believe that the design was developed not for Brookline but either for Allston or Brighton. In our opinion, each building design should be developed to match the style of the town or neighborhood where it is going to be built.
2. **Significant Parking Situation Deterioration around the Proposed Building Site:** The developers propose to build a building with 30 residential units on the corner of Kenwood Street that has only 23 houses. Since most of these houses are single-family homes, several of which were converted to two-family homes, the addition of the building at 500 Harvard Street would more than double the street's population. Since the building has inadequate parking, with only 6 spots for 30 units, its occupants would heavily rely on service vehicles, such as taxis, Uber, Lyft, and food delivery cars and trucks to support their needs. In addition, traffic and parking deficit would increase due to the need for visits by additional vehicles that would include postal delivery trucks, FedEx and UPS trucks, utility vehicles, repair people's cars and trucks, and many other ones. Since there is inadequate parking on Harvard Street, the main thoroughfare, even before the addition of the proposed building, all these vehicles would flood Kenwood Street and three neighboring streets – Verndale, Russell, and Columbia. However, it is difficult to find parking spaces on these streets as it is. Please see attached photos of parked vehicles on Kenwood, Russell and Columbia Streets taken previous Friday afternoon.

Recent additions of two large residential buildings similar to the one proposed by the developers on Brainerd Road (60 and 69 Brainerd Road) in Allston, demonstrate that traffic and pedestrian safety would be at risk as there are almost always double-parked vehicles (i.e. Uber, Lyft, taxis, repairmen, etc.) in front of these buildings.

3. **Reduced Safety due to Increasing Traffic around Coolidge Park:** Coolidge Park is a local gem that provides tranquility, sports fields and shade not only to residents from the four streets around it, but to residents of other parts of Brookline as well as of Allston and Brighton, who walk to Brookline from as far as North Beacon Street. In order to reduce traffic around the park and increase safety of people walking there, the Town of Brookline has permanently closed for traffic Columbia Street that used to connect Brookline and Allston. The extra traffic affiliated with 500 Harvard Street project would inevitably reduce safety for pedestrians walking to the park and kids that sometimes run out of it. What is especially troubling would be the fact that most of the drivers of the service vehicles would not be local residents and would drive faster than the residents, who do not speed in their neighborhood.
4. **Harvard Street is Congested and is Getting More So with New Projects:** There are three large construction projects, including one by The Danesh Group, that are under construction on Harvard Street. Even before residents moved in these three properties, the street is congested. During the rush hour, it often takes more than 10 minutes to get from Kenwood Street to Beacon Street (a distance of just 0.6 miles) and 20 minutes to Mass Turnpike (a distance of 1.5 miles). Even without the proposed 500 Harvard Street building, adding traffic from the upcoming three projects would further increase congestion on Harvard Street. Vehicles that would service residents of 500 Harvard Street and residents' cars would further add to the congestion.
5. **Lowering Values of Houses in Brookline:** The developers suggested that they want to build the building for renters. Most houses in our section of Brookline are owner-occupied. That is why all houses are meticulously maintained and the streets are clean. Our neighbors and we do not wait for the garbage day to pick trash up on the streets. But as the saying goes, "Nobody washes a rented car." During more than 15 years that we lived in Allston in a building mostly with a mix of young professionals and students, while we were saving for buying a condo in Brookline, we observed that the renters' care for the neighborhood was on average much lower than that by owners. For example, the renters dropped cigarette butts and other garbage out of their windows on our and other vehicles parked below, kicked vehicles parked in front of the building causing serious damage, organized huge parties when the whole building shook from music and noise without much regard to common areas and other people in the building. As us, many people saved for years and still took huge loans to afford their move to Brookline, a town that provides tranquility and a good school system in the middle of a bustling metropolis. The massive inflow of young renters that the proposed construction of a huge building at 500 Harvard Street would entail, would also undoubtedly bring some "bad apples" among the young renters and would reduce prices of the existing buildings in our neighborhood in Brookline.
6. **Noise from the Building:** The proposed building is similar to the Dexter Park complex, another building focusing on rentals for young professionals and students, a development that is known in Brookline for its noise and partying. Unlike the Dexter Park, which has an attendant on duty, 500 Harvard Street does not plan to have one. Since there would be nobody to complain to in cases of loud partying, we would have to call police further straining their limited resources. Before houses on Verndale Street were purchased by

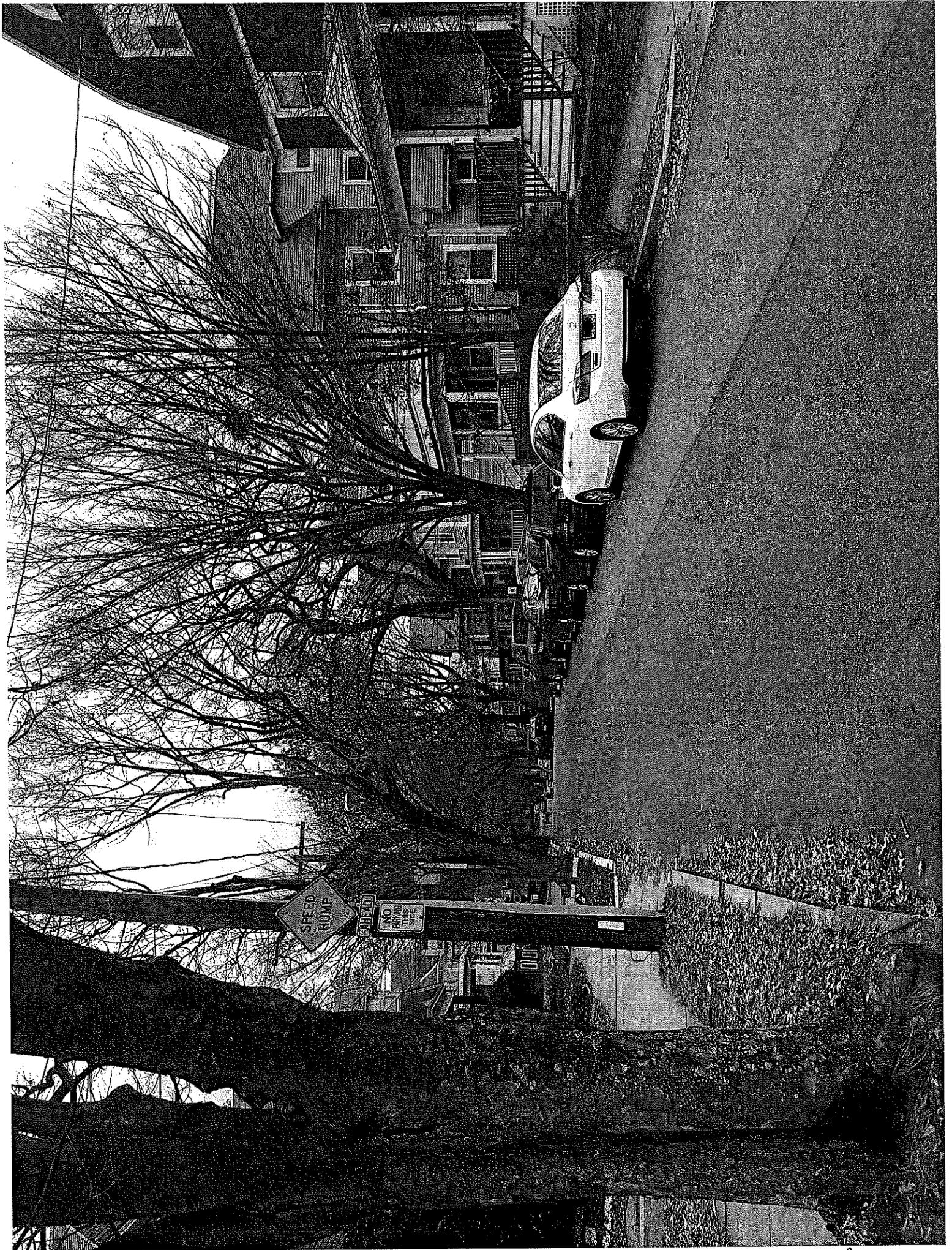
families that renovated them, a number of them were rented out to students and young professionals, who organized parties that could be heard in Allston. We simply do not want this noisy environment, especially, with music blaring from the top floors of the proposed building all over the neighborhood.

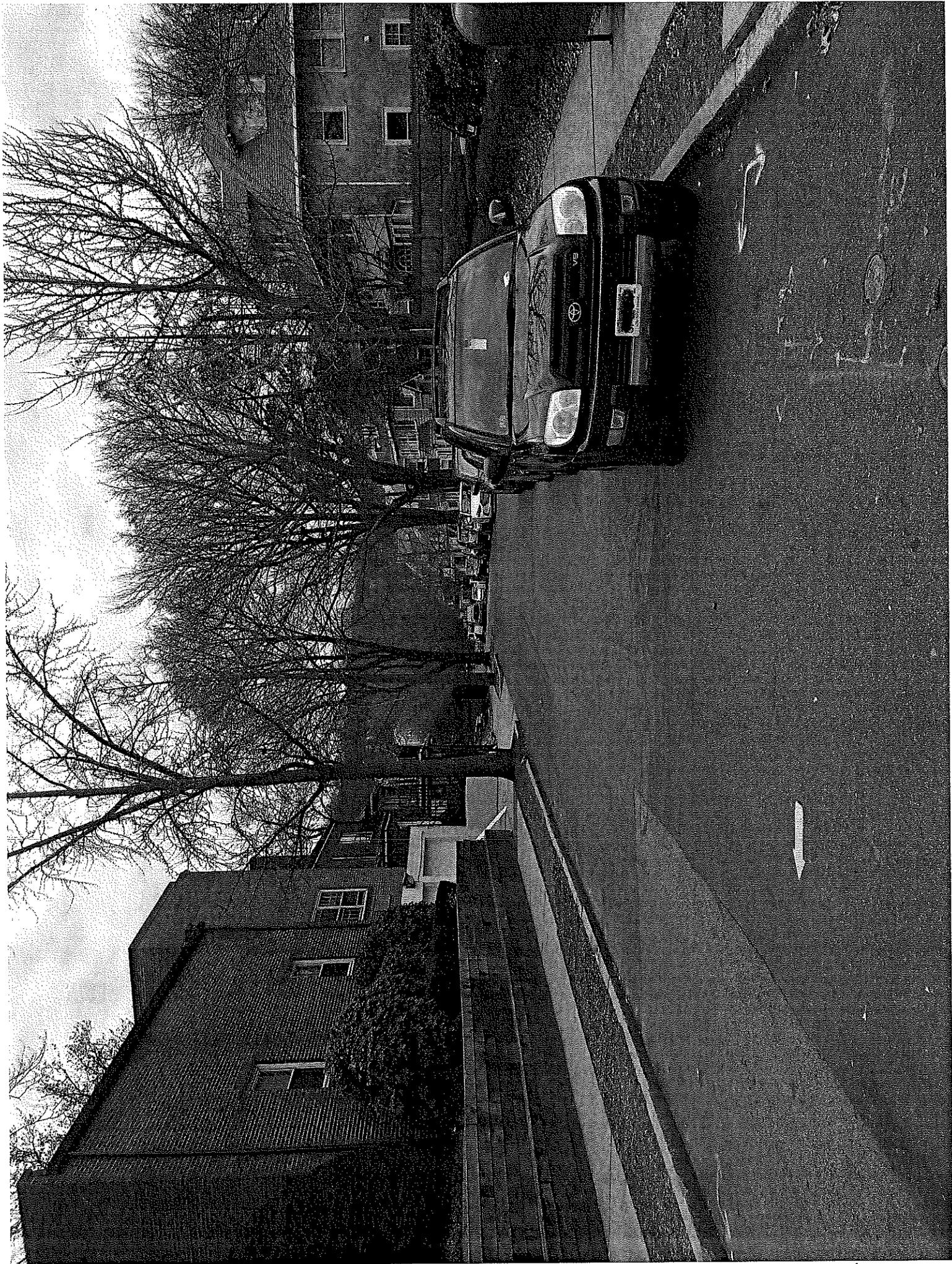
7. **Shade and No Privacy:** Several of the houses closest to the proposed 500 Harvard Street Building would be in its shade and would have to have their blinds closed for privacy protection all the time.

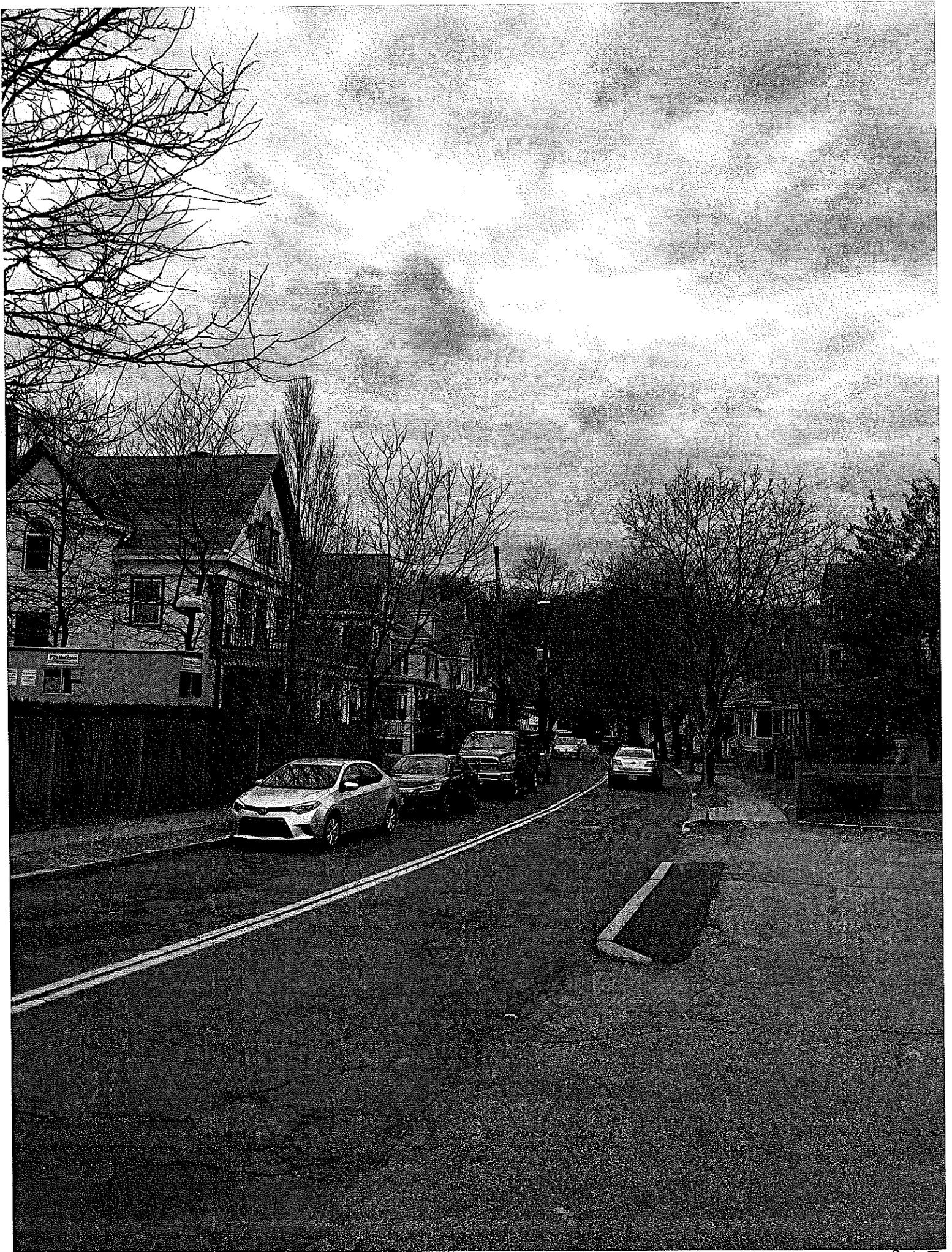
8. **Disregard for the Neighbors:** During the meeting, we were shocked by the fact that the developers blatantly disregarded interests of people living at 514/516 Harvard Street. It was heartbreaking to hear comments of an old lady who lives at 514 Harvard Street and who would lose the only source of sunshine through the window in her apartment after the developers would build 500 Harvard Street building with a solid wall just inches from her window. The developers' willingness to do this shows that their motivation in building the building is purely financial with no regard to their neighbors. The developers' behavior is opposite to the behavior of an old painter in O. Henry's "The Last Leaf" story. There he sacrificed his life to encourage his neighbor to gather her forces and fight against a deadly disease. The 500 Harvard Street developers propose a project that would rid people from 514 Harvard Street of natural light and sunshine, which was shown in multiple studies to improve people's mood and be a source of hope. According to the Free Dictionary, a ray of sunshine is "someone or something that makes others feel happy and positive, often during a difficult time." We understand that we all need to make living, but there are different ways about it.

Conclusion: We ask the Select Board not to pursue a project at 500 Harvard Street, at least not in its current form. Under the guise of providing six units at affordable prices, the developers are trying to make the Town of Brookline waive its zoning regulations, which were developed and religiously applied across Brookline for decades. During a recent yard renovation project, for example, our neighbor and we were not able to widen our driveway by less than a foot because it would be too close to the border of our property. In the meantime, the developers of 500 Harvard Street are proposing to build the biggest and the tallest building on Harvard Street north of Beacon Street, a building that is simply too big for the footprint. It would be good if these developers or other developers would build a building that would fit Brookline's (rather than Allston's or Brighton's) population density and the neighborhood's low-rise nature. If this or another development group decides to renovate the existing restaurant, it would also be a great solution for the neighborhood.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.







Alison Steinfeld

From: Polly Selkoe
Sent: Thursday, December 13, 2018 10:26 AM
To: Alison Steinfeld
Subject: FW: Concerns regarding proposed 40B at 500 Harvard Street

From: Joanna Gallimore [<mailto:jolougal@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, December 13, 2018 10:06 AM
To: Polly Selkoe
Subject: Concerns regarding proposed 40B at 500 Harvard Street

Dear Select Board,

I am writing in response to the proposed 40B building at 500 Harvard Street. I cannot say I am surprised to learn of this proposal as the owner of this property is also the developer of the 40B currently being built two blocks down at 455 Harvard St. I attended those meetings and am not looking forward to listening again to the lack of forthrightness on the part of developers and those who speak for them. Will we watch again as the developers, or those who represent them cynically run down the clock on the meeting timeline and furnish requested information past deadline on the day of the meetings so the community, or peer reviewers cannot make adequate comments. Will we watch as the deceptive visuals of the proposed building presented by the architects reduce the size of the building in relation to the abutters, or never accurately include the abutters and the surrounding community? Will we be presented with shadow studies that are misleading and not accurate? Will we be told of the Mass Housing 40B design guidelines which advise that a building should be .."modulated in perceived height,bulk,scale to create an appropriate transition to adjoining sights" only to have a building that overwhelms and shows no consideration for the neighborhood. Will the abutters lose all their sunlight and enjoyment of their property, abutters who may qualify as moderate income themselves, in order to provide views of abundant sunlight to those who now live in the luxury high-rise. Will pedestrians that now enjoy the sunlit walk along Harvard street, which provides a respite from the surrounding city, where people sit out at cafe tables, be confronted by a hard towering wall of a building, the third such 40b project being developed in a three block distance, with no setbacks to mitigate its height or mass, which will cast its shadow over Harvard St diminishing the character of a historic neighborhood? If this site is to be developed surely it could be developed to fit into the neighborhood and allow sunlight to reach the abutters. Surely it could be developed in a way that does not degrade the community's public open space. As I reviewed the public comments on Brookline's website regarding another proposed 40B at 445 Harvard street, directly across from this developers 40B at 455 Harvard currently under construction, I found a letter from this developer to the ZBA in opposition of having a towering 40b (445 Harvard JFK Place) built opposite his very own towering 40b! In the letter the developer argues that the building will ..."reduce light by creating shadows, overwhelm the streetscape and reduce the quality and value of all the homes nearby" and notes "The developer can reduce the size and total units to lower the building by at least 2 stories". He also states that the .."retail must have its own designated parking. customers will take up all the parking in the area and residential streets. This is a huge disservice to neighboring properties." He also writes: "This proposed development has not taken into consideration its neighbors or context whatsoever..." Hopefully the developer can see the incredible irony of using many of the same arguments the neighbors voiced in opposing the size of his 40B at 455 Harvard street to oppose another one across from his own. He should now own his words, and propose a smaller building at this site.

Sincerely,

Joanna Gallimore
11 Russell Street

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