

From:Thomas Marton <emailed redaced>
Sent:Wednesday, March 4, 2020 5:49 PM
To:Maria Morelli <mmorelli@brooklinema.gov>
Cc:Danit Ben-Ari <danitben.ari@icloud.com>
Subject:Re: 455 Harvard St. & 500 Harvard St

Ms. Morelli –

I am told that you are a good point person to whom we might address concerns about the developments along Harvard Street in Brookline, particularly at 455 Harvard and 500 Harvard St.

First, thank you for the work you do in this regard!

Second, to let you know, my family and I have lived at 32 Russell Street for the past 25 years or so, so this has long been our home neighborhood, which we love, and care deeply about. (I have cc'd my wife, Danit, on this email.)

As for our concerns:

1. Re: the new building at 455 Harvard Street, although it reasonably occupies the lot site, it looks like it was constructed with the cheapest of materials, and thus tends to degrade, rather than maintain or uplift, the neighborhood, which is a shame. (The poor look and feel may also explain why they have not yet been able to rent the primary street level space.) It is too late to do much about this, but there are 2 points that I hope you can require the owners/developers to address:
 - a. First, when they re-did the sidewalk in front of the building, they did not bother to put in the brick edging component that runs all up and down the Harvard Street sidewalk, on both sides, from the Allston border to Coolidge Corner. I do not understand how the Town would allow this, but I respectfully request that this be corrected ASAP and that they be required to put in the brick edging. (Some tree planting might also be considered.) Note that the developers of the new building at 420 Harvard, just up the street, are putting in this brick edging, along with some potted greenery. This is a minimum standard and look that should be maintained.
 - b. Second, in the overhang entry canopy for the residential apartment doorway, the developers have used lights (4, I believe) that are so harsh and bright they make it look like the building is in an industrial zone. Moreover, the excessive light completely overwhelms the softer streetlights that run up and down both sides of the street (and that were put in years ago at the time the brick edging was also done, all to help beautify and dignify this “gateway to Brookline”). I hope that you can have them change these lights in favor of ones that are less harsh. This should not be very burdensome, and will help restore a more residential look.
2. Re: the proposed development of 500 Harvard Street: I am told this development is to be done by the same developers of 455 Harvard. That causes us great concern, given the poor job done at 455, as noted above. In addition, a building with more than 4 or 5 stories, especially without graceful setback or stepback, would overwhelm and darken the space and neighborhood, not to mention add to the further overburdening of traffic, public school and other infrastructure. And these drawbacks/concerns would of course all be made that much worse be if this building also

is permitted to be done with cheap material and without appropriate neighborhood aesthetic consideration.

We appreciate your review of these matters, and hope that you can lead the Town to address them. And if we can be of further assistance in that effort, please do let us know.

With regards,

Tom Marton & Danit Ben-Ari (and Sonia and Clara) 32 Russell Street

Thomas Marton, Esq.

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