

From:Joanna Gallimore <email redacted>
Sent:Wednesday, January 20, 2021 6:32 PM
To:Maria Morelli <mmorelli@brooklinema.gov>
Subject:Concerns regarding 500 Harvard Street

Dear Zoning Board of Appeals,

As we will be shown the revised design for 500 Harvard next week, I wanted to convey in writing some of my thoughts and concerns related to this project. I would like to request that there be time allowed to show to-scale architectural drawings of the project in relation to all the abutters, with all dimensions such as setbacks included. I also request that we are provided adequate shadow studies of the new design. We have not been able to see any drawings that accurately represent the proposed project as it would relate to the abutters and neighborhood, which has been very frustrating as this is the 2nd to last hearing.

Another concern that I have is that the architectural peer reviewer is a principle of a firm which designs 40b projects. While I am sure he is a good architect, and it may not be intentional, it seems to me there is an inherent conflict of interest when he is reviewing other 40b projects. This could explain why it seems to me there often is an inconsistency between the reviewer's original critique and his subsequent critiques of design changes made by the developer. At the very least, there should be full disclosure of this potential conflict of interest at the beginning of the hearings.

As we have had three 40bs approved by the ZBA and two built so far I would like to address some items that have impacted this neighborhood and hopefully will be addressed in this project. The trash for 420 Harvard was originally supposed to be kept in the garage. However due to Tatte becoming a tenant the Health Department requested that the commercial trash be separate from the residential. The commercial trash is now taking up space in their loading zone and is often overflowing. This does not seem desirable for an abutter or those wishing to use the loading zone. Although this development does not currently have commercial use if it could be converted to it in the future this should be addressed in their trash plan.

The mechanical box on top of 455 Harvard reflects the sun in an extreme way and blocks a driver's vision coming up Harvard Street from Allston at rush hour in the summer. Position and material or screening for these boxes and their impacts on Harvard Street should be reviewed. Also where the outside electrical box is placed should be reviewed as they seem to end up very close to the residential abutter rather than impacting the developer's property. Exterior lighting should minimize the size of the project and not overwhelm the abutters or street scape as it does on 455 Harvard. Garages should be designed to consider the safety of the abutters and neighborhood. It saddens me that the abutter of 420 Harvard has to live next to an open underground garage that is permanently lit due to the safety issues it presents.

I would also ask the developer to consider using the amenity space as another apartment. This would help reduce the height and mass and help keep an apartment. It seems to me that amenity space often goes unused.

While it won't change things now, I would like to mention that this developer stated in his notice to DHCD on 10/18/18 that "...500 Harvard creates affordable housing where there currently is none." This statement is misleading as there were already two approved 40b's and one in the approval process a few blocks away, one of which was his own.

Despite how this process has played out so far I hope the developer will work with the abutters and neighbors and listen to their concerns and propose a building that would be acceptable to all.

Sincerely,
Joanna Gallimore

