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Maria Morelli, Senior Planner
BROOKLINE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

RE: 108 Centre Street 40B Development
Pre-hearing notes

Dear Maria:

As a brief follow up on the five working sessions we have had for this project (September 23, September 30, October 7, and October 14, October 27), and to help focus my thoughts for tonight's ZBA hearing, I'm writing this brief summary of what I consider to be some of the outstanding "issues/questions" related to the project's design. I'm drawing from your 10/27/21 Working Group summary email, my previous memo dated 10.18.21, as well as going back to my preliminary review letter dated September 13, 2021.

Looking forward to tonight's discussion!

ZBA CHARGES

Lack of open space:

The developer has continued to develop a "campus-wide" approach to providing usable outdoor space for the residents of 108, as well as those living at 100 and 112. While a number of details remain unresolved regarding connectivity of the various spaces dispersed across the campus, as well as precise nature of "off-108-site" improvements that will be included in the project scope, this approach makes good sense.

As of the time of writing this memo, it is not known if it is the Applicant's intent to remove at least two more parking spaces to supplement the scale of available programmable space.

Choreography of all site functions:

A number of exhibits have been provided in response to this request. As of the last working session, there remained a question about trash receptacles interfering with the bike lane. Two "options to consider" remain from my 10.18.21 memo:

- Rework trash shed and 112 driveway parapet wall to create a more generous storage/holding area for dumpsters (pulling shed further back from street to open up view angle down sidewalk).
- Increase number of pickups to cut down on street impact.

Architectural style; Relationship to 100 and 112 makes more sense:

While the massing of the building has minimally changed, the overall look of the building has advanced in a positive direction through adoption of a more contemporary approach more in line with its neighbors at 100 and 112. Patterning has been simplified, and more emphasis has been placed on the street level across most of the eastern and southern facades.

Remaining points from my 10.18.21 memo that in this reviewer's opinion would further advance the design:

- Consideration should be given to increasing the floor to ceiling height of the entry level, which would strengthen the expression of its importance.

- The applicant was encouraged to recognize that while not the most prominent elevation, the north side is very visible from Centre Street and should be as thoughtfully designed as the other facades. As is the case with the comment re: floor-to-floor height at the entry level, this reviewer believes that the best approach would be to re-work the stairwells to fully or mostly embed the stairs within the primary volume of the building.

Setback and step-backs of upper floors (articulation):

At this point, as mentioned above, modifying the north elevations to fully or partially embed the stairs could help to improve the massing of the building.

Should a taller building be considered?

The Applicant has made the case that there would be considerable expense associated with increasing the height of the building, as well as increased solar impact on the neighbors across Centre Street.

NOTES FROM 10/27/21 WORKING SESSION PROVIDED BY MARIA M.:

- Cliff recommends a retaining between parking spaces and Danesh lawn for safety reasons (and to increase programmable area).
- Provide enhanced campus-wide landscape plans.
- Juliet balconies are nice feature on front façade: adds small scale articulation and texture (can similar scale elements be incorporated in other areas of the building?).
- Any requests for data/materials from DPW outstanding?
- Bike racks on site?

NOTES FROM PRELIMINARY REPORT DATED SEPTEMBER 13, 2021 (WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS):

- How many bikes can be stored in area indicated in the building?
- Submitted materials do not include a lighting plan.
- The Applicant has stated that they intend to comply with Brookline's zero emission initiative, with the possible exception of domestic hot water production (note that a gas line is indicated on the utility plan). What is the current thinking?
- The project may pursue Passive House certification. Is this the case?
- Status of geotechnical report that includes recommendations for foundation types for the new structure, water table levels, etc.?
- Provide a preliminary Building Code review. Provide detailed information regarding areas of the building with zero setback, as well as areas of encroachment (for example, ramp from rear of building towards Senior Center).
- Submit a roof plan with mechanical equipment screening dimensions, nature of materials, etc.
- Provide annotated building elevations that include dimensional strings, coordinated with proposed grades around building.
- Provide building elevations with detailed material callouts.
- Draft a site-specific preliminary Construction Management Plan that includes intentions regarding use of site, neighboring sites, and street for mobilization/laydown space, and accommodations that must be made to protect neighboring properties, material deliveries, street closures, construction durations, etc.

Hope this helps Maria. Please let me know if you need anything else.

Sincerely,



Clifford Boehmer, AIA