

BOYLSTON STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES (Cypress Street to Washington Street)

The following guidelines supplement the standards outlined in the Zoning By-Law under Section 5.09(4), Community and Environmental Impact and Design Standards.

Relationship to Adjacent Residential Neighborhoods:

- Landscape screening shall be provided and maintained by the developer between new commercial development and adjacent residential uses.
- Buildings shall not exceed three stories (45') within 50' of an adjacent residential property line.
- All above grade buildings shall be set back a minimum of 20' from the rear property line.
- Any new building on Red Cab property shall be designed so as to minimize the effect of shadows on residential properties on White Place by locating the highest mass toward the Boylston Street frontage. Reductions in shadows on White Place residences shall be considered a public benefit in conjunction with any request for building height above 45 feet proposed for the Boylston Street frontage. Substantial additional shadows on adjacent residences shall be unacceptable.
- At the rear of the existing Volkswagen dealership, where the commercial lot is surrounded on three sides by residential uses, every effort shall be made to minimize the height of any future building on this portion of the lot. Heights shall not exceed 25' in this area. If building heights above 45 ft. are proposed for the Boylston Street frontage of the property under the public benefit incentive provision of the Zoning By-law, these shall only be granted on condition that building heights at the rear of the property do not exceed 25'.
- Facades facing residential neighborhoods shall be sensitive to the character of nearby houses; for example, large expanses of blank wall shall be avoided, when appropriate, and building materials shall include masonry, wood, and/or other materials which respect the character of nearby residential buildings.
- Special attention shall be given to any visual impacts on the Pill Hill Historic District and the White Place National Register District from new development. Where public benefit incentives are required for increased height or floor area, design review by the Preservation Commission related to visual impacts on these historic districts shall be part of the approval process.
- Shadow and wind impacts shall be evaluated through appropriate studies and minimized and shall not unreasonably affect adjacent properties.

Parking:

- Parking impacts on nearby residential streets shall be minimized.
- Parking should be accommodated behind buildings away from the street edge but should minimize any impacts on abutting residences.
- Landscape the edges of any parking areas facing a public street.

Site Vehicular Access:

- Minimize any increase in traffic on nearby residential streets.
- Access to new commercial development shall not be provided from streets such as Walnut Street or any other predominantly residential streets.
- Minimize access from Cypress Street and Cameron Street. As much as possible, access shall be from Boylston Street and Boylston Place.
- Nonresidential properties that abut Cameron Street but are accessible from Boylston Street and/or Boylston Place shall have no curb cut on Cameron Street.
- Nonresidential properties that are accessible only from Cameron Street shall have no increase in the number of curb cuts on Cameron Street.
- The existing Volkswagen property shall have no curb cut on East Milton Road.

Boylston Street Frontage:

Height:

- Maximum height of five stories (70') at the Boylston Street frontage (in many instances provisions of the Zoning By-Law with regard to buffers and setback requirements result in lower allowable building heights).
- Minimum building heights of three stories in G-2.0 districts shall be encouraged, except in circumstances where it isn't warranted.

Street Level Uses and Design

- Locate active retail and office uses along the frontage of buildings facing Boylston Street and Cypress Street; each separately leased ground floor space should be directly accessible from the sidewalk.
- Provide generous transparent glazed storefront type windows along the building façade in a manner consistent with existing attractive retail businesses in the immediate area.

Front Yard Setbacks:

- Use of a 20' setback is encouraged along parts of the Boylston Street frontage to permit the creation of an enhanced pedestrian environment along the street for new development between the Lincoln School and Cypress Street on the south side of the street, and between Smythe Street and Cypress Street on the north side of the street.
- For property with frontage on Cypress Street, the setback from Cypress Street should be considered in the context of and transition to other buildings on Cypress Street, both on the same side of the street and on the opposite side. A canyon affect shall be avoided. As required in Section 5.32(b)(2), any additional height above that permitted by right shall be set back from the street lot line one-half the width of the street right-of-way, up to a maximum of 50 feet.
- Street trees and an expanded and improved sidewalk area should be accommodated within the setback area. The setback area shall not be used to provide off-street parking.

Side Yard Setbacks:

- Where a side lot line abuts an S, SC, T, or M district, the side yard requirement of the applicable district shall apply. (See Section 5.64 of the Zoning By-Law.)

Rear Yard Setbacks:

- Where a rear lot line in an L, G, or I District abuts an S, SC, T, or M District, the rear yard requirements as specified in Section 5.00 shall be increased by 10 feet, but need be no greater than 20 feet. (See Section 5.73 of the Zoning By-Law.)

Streetscape Character:

- Enhance the character of the pedestrian environment.

- Provide additional large street trees along Boylston Street; where front yard setbacks are provided, trees shall be accommodated in the setback area.
- Provide other streetscape improvements such as expanded sidewalk areas, benches, lighting, improved sidewalk materials, etc. as deemed appropriate by the Town.

Façade and Sign Character:

- Use masonry and other materials which respect the character of older adjacent neighborhood buildings, adjoining historic districts, and Brookline Village.