



TOWN of BROOKLINE

Massachusetts

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333 WASHINGTON STREET
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02445

(617) 730-2200
FAX: (617) 730-2054
www.BrooklineMA.gov

August 15, 2023

Katy Lacy
Massachusetts Housing Partnership
160 Federal Street
Boston, MA 02110

Re: Project Eligibility Letter Application for 621-625 Hammond Street, Brookline

Dear Katy Lacy:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the application for Site Approval submitted by Charles River Realty to develop a residential project under General Law Chapter 40B at 621-625 Hammond Street and other parcels between Heath and Sheafe Street. The applicant is proposing to demolish 10 rental units and two commercial buildings, and build a five-and-a-half story building consisting of 96 residential units and 67 parking spaces.

Our municipal departments, boards and commissions will conduct a more intensive evaluation during the Comprehensive Permit process if a Project Eligibility Letter (PEL) is issued and the applicant submits a Comprehensive Permit application. In the meantime, as the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) works through the State's 40B Design Guidelines, the Select Board submits the following comments that may be helpful in your design review process during this preliminary phase:

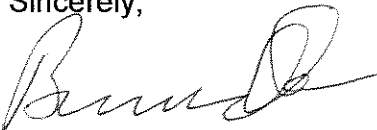
1. The proposal includes the demolition of a two-family at 18 Sheafe Street, a three-family at 8 Sheafe Street, a three-family at 615 Hammond Street, and a two-family at 545 Heath Street. We are interested to hear from the applicant and MHP how they will assist the households of these 10 rental units in relocation, and whether there is any opportunity for those residents to have first priority in moving back to units, especially if any are eligible for affordable units at this property or another Brookline 40B development. Town staff are available to assist in creative solutions and want to make sure that the current residents are a priority even in these early stages of planning.

2. The site is located on the edge of a commercial district, with one-story restaurant and retail buildings to the north and east, two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half-story multifamily buildings to the west and southwest, and a three to four story multifamily buildings to the south. The site currently contains a mix of commercial and residential buildings and is appropriate for residential use. The Select Board encourages the applicant to consider incorporating some non-residential space along Hammond Street.
3. Although massing options will be further discussed and likely adjusted during the permitting process, we encourage MHP to work with the developer towards a financially feasible project that transitions to the three-and-a-half story adjacent buildings to the west by stepping down the overall height, and/or by providing a significant landscaped buffer. The plans currently show the proposed building within five feet of the property lines to the west and southwest. According to our GIS and 2015 Assessors Atlas Book, the adjacent two and three-family buildings at 22 Sheafe Street and 555 Heath Street are on or very close to the property line (different from how 555 Heath Street is depicted on the current plans).
4. As noted in our 2017 Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan, this site and adjacent properties to the north is a hot spot. According to the 2021 Brookline Urban Forestry Climate Resiliency Master Plan, this area of town has a tree canopy goal of 51%. As part of the Project Eligibility Letter process, we strongly encourage MHP and the developer to look at the development patterns of nearby multifamily buildings at 629 Hammond Street, 630 Hammond Street, and 26 Holly Lane as examples of integrating significant tree canopy areas into the site plan. Similar to these properties, the developer has combined several parcels to create a lot with street frontage on three sides, presenting several options for site planning and areas for significant tree canopy.

If a PEL is issued, the Town looks forward to working with the developer, its architectural team, and the community to refine the proposal during the review.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bernard Greene
Chair

cc: Charles Carey, Town Administrator
Kara Brewton, Director of Planning & Community Development
Elias Patoucheas, Charles River Realty