



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

PLANNING BOARD

Town Hall, 3rd Floor
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445-6899
(617) 730-2130 Fax (617) 730-2442

Linda Hamlin, Chairman
Steven Heikin, Clerk
Robert Cook
Sergio Modigliani
Jonathan Simpson
Mark J. Zarrillo

To: Brookline Board of Appeals

From: Brookline Planning Board

Date: February 12, 2015

Subject: Demolish two buildings and construct one new commercial building with approximately 15,868 s.f. of office and retail space, including a bank drive-through window

Location: 1234 Boylston Street

Atlas Sheet: 122B

Block: 426

Lots: 04-05, 04-06,
04-03, 04, 01-03

Case #: 2015-0001

Zoning: G-2.0

Lot Area (s.f.): ±82,999 (combined)

Board of Appeals Hearing: April 2, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.

BACKGROUND

December 17, 2012 – Certificate of Non-Significance issued for 1234 Boylston Street by the Preservation Commission, allowing it to be demolished. On December 16, 2014, the developer requested the Certificate be renewed.

September 17, 2013 – Certificate of Non-Significance issued for 1240 Boylston Street by the Preservation Commission, allowing it to be demolished.

December 16, 2014 – A community meeting was held at 1240 Boylston Street (above Finagle-a-Bagel) to review the proposed plans with the neighborhood.

SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD

1234 and 1240 Boylston Street are two commercial buildings on the south side of Boylston Street (Route 9) in the Chestnut Hill business district, previously occupied by restaurant (Finagle-a-Bagel) and office uses for a combined total of 15,010 s.f. Behind these buildings is a large parking lot. The subject property is a collection of lots and also includes the buildings at 1244 and 1262 Boylston Street, which are also commercial, and a multi-story parking garage; these other buildings will not be altered with this proposal.

All of the buildings are located directly across from the recent development known as The Street, including a grocery store and other retail and restaurant businesses. Other surrounding properties are also commercial in nature, with a mix of office, medical office and retail uses. To the rear of the subject property is a residential neighborhood, with both single-family and multi-family buildings.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant, Plaza Nominee Trust, is proposing to demolish the two buildings at 1234 and 1240 Boylston Street and construct one new two-story building with 15,868 s.f. of office and retail space. The first floor of the building will have both retail space and a bank, and a new drive-through teller window would be constructed on the east side of the building. The circulation plan would allow for a two-way vehicular entrance and egress on the west side of the building, new handicap accessible spaces immediately behind the building, and the rest of the parking lot remaining largely unchanged.

The building's exterior would be brick with a stone base, and a partial metal or fiber cement rain screen at the upper levels. The street level front façade would have an aluminum store front system.

FINDINGS

Section 4.07 – Table of Use Regulations, Use #39: Any drive-in use, other than those classified as vehicular uses, requires a special permit.

Section 5.09.2.a – Design Review: Any demolition of an existing building, or construction of a new building, on Boylston Street requires a special permit subject to the design review standards listed under *Section 5.09.4(a-m)*. All the conditions have been met, and the most relevant sections of the design review standards are described below:

- a. **Preservation of Trees and Landscape** – There is very little landscaping on site now. The landscaping that is on site is along the parking lot edges and within parking lot islands. This is not expected to be significantly changed with the proposal.
- b. **Relation of Buildings to Environment** – There are very few “natural” features on site currently. This proposal will be located entirely where there is already impervious surface.
- c. **Relation of Buildings to the Form of the Streetscape and Neighborhood** – The proposed building will be very similar in massing and design to the existing commercial buildings along this stretch of Boylston Street. The building is located along the front lot line, similar to neighboring buildings, with all parking at the rear.
- d. **Open Space** – Not applicable.
- e. **Circulation** – The property would continue to have two access points to Route 9, however only one would be two-way; the other drive would be egress only and serve the new drive-through teller window. The plans do not indicate any bicycle parking or alternative transportation facilities. The majority of the parking lot would remain unchanged with this proposal.

f. Stormwater Drainage – The applicant has not indicated there are any special drainage considerations for this property.

g. Utility Service – All electric, telephone, and other wiring to the site shall be underground. The dumpster for the site will continue to be located in the far rear corner of the property. The Board would like to ensure the trash location area is sufficient enough to accommodate new commercial recycling requirements as well as the proper disposal of waste. Screening of this dumpster needs to be indicated on the plans.

h. Advertising Features – The submitted plans show signage that is likely too large and too high (i.e. over 25 feet) than what would be allowed under the Zoning By-law. The Planning Board expects the applicant to submit detailed signage plans for review and approval prior to installation at a later date.

i. Special Features – The plans do not indicate where loading facilities will be located. This information will need to be provided prior to the Board of Appeals hearing, or appropriate relief should be requested and reviewed with the applicable Town departments.

j. Safety and Security – The applicant will need to review all new building plans with public safety officials to ensure adequate accessibility for emergency personnel. The Planning Board does not foresee any problems with safety and security for the subject property.

k. Heritage – Not applicable. The developer has obtained certificates of non-significance for both buildings that are to be demolished with this application.

l. Microclimate – No adverse impacts on light, air and water resources are expected with this application.

m. Energy Efficiency – The applicant has not indicated any energy efficiency measures for the property. The applicant may want to consider taking advantage of high-efficiency systems and/or renewable energy facilities such as solar PV panels on the building's roof.

Section 6.06.4, 6.06.7 and/or 6.07.3 – Off-Street Loading Regulations; Design and Layout of Off-Street Loading Facilities: The new building requires two loading spaces. The applicant has not yet indicated how loading facilities will be provided for the new building. Should the applicant wish to not provide loading facilities for this building, or provide a reduced number of spaces and/or with alternate dimensions than specified in the By-law, then special permit relief under these sections is required.

	Required/Max	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Floor Area Ratio	165,998 s.f. 2.0	72,552 s.f. 0.9	73,410 s.f. 0.9	Complies
Height	45 ft.	36 ft.	32 ft.	Complies
Parking Spaces	244	254	245	Complies

Loading Spaces	2	0	0	Special Permit*
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*Under Sections 6.06.4 and 6.06.7, the Board of Appeals may allow for a reduced number of loading bays by special permit, following recommendations by the Director of Engineering/Transportation and the Director of Planning & Community Development.

Section 8.02.1 – Alteration or Extension (parking lot)

A special permit is required to alter a pre-existing non-conforming structure or use.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

The Planning Board is supportive of this proposal to construct a new commercial building at 1234 Boylston Street. The building will relate well with neighboring properties, and the site is still significantly below the allowed FAR for the zoning district. The building meets all dimensional requirements for a new structure.

Since the property is in a neighborhood that experiences heavy traffic, and this project will establish a new drive-through use with the bank, the proposal should incorporate bicycle parking facilities for both visitors and employees. Additionally, a pedestrian warning light should be installed at the front of the building near the drive-through egress since pedestrian visibility will be limited. The Transportation Department strongly encourages the developer to implement a parking and transportation demand management program to limit the drive-to-work mode share for the new building.

Additionally, the proposal needs to consider and plan for safe loading facilities for the new building, particularly if it will have retail tenants. These facilities are not currently shown on the submitted plans, and they need to be provided before proceeding.

Therefore, the Planning Board recommends approval of the plans by ADD Inc., dated 12/12/2015, and the zoning plan prepared by Stantec dated 2/12/2015, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit final building plans and elevations, including details regarding exterior building materials, subject to the review and approval of the Planning Board.
2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a final site plan indicating all parking, bicycle parking, loading facilities, dumpster location, lighting, and landscaping, subject to the review and approval of the Director of Engineering/Transportation and the Planning Board.
3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a parking and transportation demand management (P&TDM) plan, subject to the review and approval of the Director of Engineering/Transportation and the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.
4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a construction management plan, including details regarding dumpster locations, parking for construction vehicles and rodent control methods, shall be submitted to the Building Commissioner for review and approval.

5. Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall install a pedestrian warning light at the Boylston Street egress for the drive-through window, subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.
6. Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the installation of any signage, the applicant shall submit plans for such signage to the Planning Board for review and approval.
7. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit to the Building Commissioner for review and approval for conformance to the Board of Appeals decision: 1) a final site plan stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor; 2) final building elevations stamped and signed by a registered architect; and 3) evidence that the Board of Appeals decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

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