

**Proposed 40B at 21 Crowninshield Road
Brookline Planning Board Design Team Meeting
July 8, 2015**

ATTENDEES

Design Team

Linda Hamlin, Steve Heikin, Mark Zarrillo (Planning Board); Elton Elperin (Preservation Commission); Dave Jack, Barbara Sherman (Crowninshield neighborhood representatives)

Project Team

Robert Basile, Robert W. Basile (proponents), Robert Allen, Adam Barnosky (attorneys); Geoff Engler (40b consultant); Andy Zalewski (architect); Phil Pryor (landscape architect)

Planning Department Staff

Polly Selkoe, Maria Morelli

Members of the Public

See sign in sheet.

INTRODUCTION

Polly Selkoe, Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning, noted that design review on a 40B proposal prior to submission of the application to the ZBA is not required by statute or typical of 40B cases. The developer is participating on a voluntary basis. She emphasized that subsidizing agency MassHousing urged in its project eligibility determination letter that the proponent address the Town's concerns in a public process.

Planner Maria Morelli provided an overview of Town's criteria for the design revision, as summarized below:

- 1 – 21 Crowninshield parcel is a cornerstone property and must retain a residential rather than commercial character
 - Largest parcel in the single-family neighborhood
 - Located at the gateway of the single-family neighborhood
 - Prominent sight lines lead to the parcel: location where Crowninshield Road bends to reveal a two-point perspective of the structure; Adams Street runs perpendicular to the property
- 2 – Characteristics qualities of the Crowninshield neighborhood: smaller, residential scale; open space and landscaping balances built-up environment; strong architectural coherence
- 3 – Factors to address in assessing the project design:
 - Parking access and configuration
 - Building scale and articulation; transition between multifamily and single-family abutters
 - Architectural details and proportions
 - Open space/streetscape, buffering

Maria Morelli also briefly summarized characteristics of first two iterations of the plan to serve as a baseline for reviewing the third iteration:

Draft 1 Plan

- 20 units in a 50 foot high four-story building within a 5600 sf footprint;
- Parcel bisected with surface parking on the left; compressed footprint on the right affords little space for landscaping and vegetative screening. Lends a commercial quality to the streetscape, and is inconsistent with the development pattern in the neighborhood.
- Driveway width, asphalt-material, and alignment appears to extend the Adams Street Road.
- Box-like structure with strong verticals (steep roof pitch and gable roof form) that emphasize height
- Architectural style incongruous with that of the neighborhood, in particular balconies on front façade

Draft 2 Plan

- 20 units in a 50 foot high four-story building within a 7700 sf footprint
- Parking on first floor; four surface parking spaces (20 parking spaces total)
- No porches on front façade (retained on side and rear)
- Same roof form
- Bulk is concentrated near single-family neighborhood
- Driveway still aligned with Adams Street
- Reliance on street trees to provide vegetative screening

Design Principles To Apply

1 – Reduce massing at key vantage points; transition more gradually between multifamily and single-family

- Vary height of ridge and roof lines
- Lower the pitch by changing the roof forms, using a hip roof, hipped gables
- Break up large planes, especially on the front/side façade

2 – Introduce more open space and buffering, especially a landscaping pattern that is more consistent with that of the neighborhood.

3 – Revisit design of the driveway.

4 – Borrow architectural elements and proportions from surrounding neighborhood.

PRESENTATION OF DRAFT 3 OF THE PLANS

Architect Andy Zalewski presented a third version of the plan. The changes featured in Mr. Zalewski's presentation are copied below:

“1. PARKING:

- a. Parking is provided inside the building.
- b. [Also: Four surface parking spaces have been reduced to two. 18 parking spaces total.]

2. MASSING:

- a. Roofline has been dropped by 3'-6".
- b. Eave Line has been extended and dropped to more closely follow the proportions of neighboring homes.
- c. Entire structure has been flipped to bring the lower portion of the roof closer to the neighboring homes.
- d. Hipped roofs on the gables visually lower the edges of the roof and are in keeping with the style of dormers seen on several homes on the block.

- e. Front elevation has been broken into two elements to scale the structure better.
- f. Center has been pushed back as far as practical and an open porch has replaced the enclosed vestibule at the front door.
- g. A grander eave overhang brings the gutter line down.
- h. The overhang also reduces the space above the window heads.
- i. Siding line has been lowered, reducing the height of the ground floor brickwork.

3. LANDSCAPING AND DRIVEWAY:

- a. Driveway has been gently curved and moved off-axis from Adams Street.
- b. Driveway has been reduced to 18 feet wide, further differentiating it from the town streets.
- c. Specialty paving materials will be used at the driveway apron to augment visual separation.
- d. Both existing street trees will be maintained.
- e. Two additional street trees are proposed, if approved by Tom Brady, Town Arborist.
- f. Raised planting beds will further reduce the height of the brickwork and feature foundation plantings.
- g. Larger trees are proposed along the back property line to screen the view toward the Arbour Hospital building.
- h. Fencing will be increased to 7 feet high on the side lines and 8 feet on the back.
- i. Two outdoor parking spaces have been removed and replaced by some usable open space.
- j. The two remaining service parking spaces have been pulled farther away from the edge of the property.
- k. The re-configured footprint has added some more open space to the southern sideyard.”

DESIGN TEAM DISCUSSION

- Switching the lower roof line from the right to the left so that massing near single-family neighborhood is reduced is good. Structure reads more like a manor house.
- Jerkinhead roof form reduces the height perception more effectively than the gables.
- Three bays on the front façade reflect architectural elements in district.
- Lowered siding at garage level reduces the appearance of a full story.
- Curved driveway and increased landscaping, pavers are good changes.

Proposed changes:

- Competing elements on front façade; beef up front entrance, which seems diminished and not in proportion with dimensions of building.
- The use of different material pattern (shingles) down a center column, along with strong trim, emphasizes verticality.
- Garage door on the side could be made to look more like a carriage house door.
- Extend driveway pavers beyond the bicycle storage area not just at the apron.
- Consider a limestone shelf at the foundation around entire building. Consider another material instead of the brick at the garage level.
- White trim emphasizes height; consider another palette.
- Darker sash on the windows would make them look larger and create more depth.
- On the left façade consider Juliet balconies with sliding doors to address potential noise issues.
- Use taller trees in front yard
- Why not stucco? What other materials would be used?
- Any way to create an appearance of attached rowhouses to address massing?

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Lowered roof line on left is good, as is increased landscaping.
- Six foot setback in the rear would create an unsafe alleyway.
- Move driveway to the right side so that it does not feed track onto Adams Street. Traffic safety is still a concern.
- Eliminate balconies on the left side because potential noise is a negative impact.
- Scale is still too large.
- Parking should be in rear or below building.
- Parking is still underserved.
- Still box-like and massive
- Use pavers on entire driveway
- Setback not deep enough
- A manor house does not fit into this context.
- Use materials consistent with those used in district. No plastic fence.
- Where will HVAC be stored?
- What about rubbish storage?
- Use Enterprise lot instead?

PROPONENT RESPONSE

Materials:

- Stucco leaks, decays, and cracks; it is not practical for this building size.
- Plastic fence that looks like wood would be an option.
- Hardie boards are a possible option for siding.

Rubbish: No dumpster on premises; all trash would be stored in basement utility area. Trash would be picked up six days a week by pick-up truck.

HVAC: Mechanicals would be located in closets. Could be accommodated on flat portion of roof as an alternative. Do not want to locate them on the ground.

Balconies: This element is a strong selling feature that must be retained.

Alley and safety: Would install surveillance cameras, lighting, and 8-foot fence at the rear

NEXT STEPS

The next design team meeting with the public is scheduled for **Wednesday, July 22, at 7:30 pm** in Room 103.

Submitted,

Maria Morelli, Planner
July 10, 2015