



TOWN OF BROOKLINE

Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Alison C. Steinfeld
Planning Director

To: Design Review Team and Members of the Crowninshield Neighborhood
From: Maria Morelli, Planner
Date: August 26, 2015
Case: 21 Crowninshield 40B Proposal
Re: September 3 Design Review Team Meeting

The next Design Review Team meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 3, at 7:30 pm in Room 111. This meeting is open to the public. The purpose of the meeting is to review the latest revisions, a 3D model of the proposal in context with proposed grading and abutting properties, and any samples of proposed materials. The public will be invited to speak after the design team's discussion. We suggest that comments be focused on specific design issues and how their impact on the surrounding community can be improved or mitigated.

Revised plans dated August 28 (received August 25) are attached in preparation of the meeting. The electronic 3D model, prepared in SketchUp, will be available by September 1.

Planning Department's July 24 Letter

As you know, staff has met with the project team regularly to reiterate the Town's objectives for better integrating the multi-family into the historically significant single-family neighborhood. As a reminder, subsidizing agency MassHousing supported these objectives in its April 9 determination letter.

On July 24, the Planning Department submitted a letter to Bob and Robert Basile summarizing the Town's ongoing priorities for revisions to the design. This letter is attached for your reference with key priorities listed below:

- Reduce the overall height of the building
- Simplify the roof form
- Establish a hierarchy, especially at the front entrance and among the windows
- Improve the segmentation on the left façade
- Consider modern yet historically compatible building materials and palette
- Provide an electronic 3D model and consistent elevations, plans, and renderings

Summary of the Changes on August 28 Plans

Although not all the issues raised in the July 24 letter are resolved, we are pleased to say that the project team has lowered the first-floor parking by 3.25 feet in response to Planning's recommendation.

Since the proposal was submitted to MassHousing, the building height has been reduced from 50 feet to 44.6 feet. Below is a brief description of the overall height changes.

Keep in mind that the Planning Department will present an overview of new or outstanding design issues at the public meeting. Those comments are not provided in this cover letter.

Building Height: The building height, measured from the grade of the front yard (including the landscaping berm) to the ridge line on the fourth floor, has been reduced to 44.6 from the 48 feet indicated on the July 7 plans. The height to the ridge line of the front left segment of the building closest to 25 Crowninshield, has been reduced to 41 feet from 44.5 feet. The height to the eave line has been reduced to about 25.5 feet from 29 feet.

In comparison, the height to the ridge line of 25 Crowninshield is about 35.5 feet, and the height to its eave line about 23.5 feet, as rendered by the project architect.

In terms of setback, the horizontal distance between the right façade of 25 Crowninshield and the left façade of the proposed building remains 47 feet. (The distance between the existing dwellings is about 27 feet.) *See Sheet A-15.*

The number of units (20) and parking spaces (18) and the square footage of the living area excluding the garage (about 21,400 sf) proposed on the August 28 plans remain the same as those numbers specified on earlier drafts.

Grading / Retaining Walls: As a result of the depressed parking level, the grading of the left side yard declines about 3.5 feet as it slopes from the proposed driveway entrance to the rear lot line. An L-shaped retaining wall runs parallel to the left lot line and rear lot line until it abuts the rear left corner of the building. It is set back about 6 feet from both left and rear lot lines, and about 15 feet from the front lot line. The height of the wall begins at 0 feet (flush with grade) in the front side yard and reaches four feet at its maximum height. *See the topographic plan on Sheet A-2.*

Because of the lowered grading on the left, the height of the left façade exposed above the newly lowered grade measures 47.5 feet. Keep in mind that a new landscaping plan should address the exposed garage level and re-grading. *See Sheet A-10.*

Vestibule and Portico: As of result of the lowered parking and re-grading, the vestibule and portico now further extend into the front yard. *See Sheet A-4.*

Elevation Drawings: We have asked that all profiles be shown on the elevations. As a result, elevations for the left façade have been corrected to show the profiles of any projections on the front façade and on the roof that would be visible on the left façade. Similarly, the elevation for the rear façade has been corrected, as well. These profiles should have been illustrated on the July 7 elevations and are not new changes on the August 28 plans.

Requirements for the 3D Model

The electronic model must be consistent with the elevations and plans; any discrepancies will be noted (if not corrected) before the design meeting. Stills from the model will be available before the meeting for those who do not have SketchUp software.

The model must show the surrounding context; that is, it must include at least the building at 25 Crowninshield and the abutting hospital and administrative building. The sight lines from Crowninshield Road and Adams Street are especially important to view. Landscaping, grading, fences and retaining walls, mechanicals, the proposed palette, and shadows must also be included in the model.

It was recommended by members of the design review team that the architect use warm beige colors similar in tone and value to the stucco homes nearby and that the contrast in value between trim and clapboards/shingles be reduced. The project team responded very positively to this suggestion.

Upon viewing the model, we can better assess the proposed streetscape and massing, especially of the roof form, which despite some improvements remains relatively complex.

Thank you for your valued participation in the process. We look forward to hearing your comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions about the plans or this process.

Sincerely,
Maria Morelli
Planner

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Attachments

- September 3, 2015 design team agenda
- August 28, 2015 plans
- July 24, 2015 letter to project team