



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
Department of Planning & Community Development  
730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

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## **Public Hearing Memorandum**

*The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Arlington Redevelopment Board and public with technical information and a planning analysis to assist with the regulatory decision-making process.*

**To:** Arlington Redevelopment Board

**From:** Jennifer Raitt, Secretary Ex Officio

**Subject:** Environmental Design Review, 476 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA  
Docket #3637

**Date:** October 14, 2020

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### **I. Docket Summary**

This is an application by Marco Realty Corp to improve the façade of 476 Massachusetts Avenue. The proposal is to remove the curved brick wall that limits views into the storefront and replace it with a conventional storefront. The project is reviewable under Section 3.4 Environmental Design Review because of its location along Massachusetts Avenue and significant alterations to the façade. At this time, a tenant has not been identified for the space.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application:

Application for EDR Special Permit

Base Building Improvements Permit set, dated December 16, 2019

LEED Checklist, dated September 21, 2020

II. Application of Special Permit Criteria (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 3.3)

1. Section 3.3.3.A.

**The use requested is listed as a Special Permit in the use regulations for the applicable district or is so designated elsewhere in this Bylaw.**

The commercial use is allowed in the B-5 zone. The Board can find that this condition is met.

2. Section 3.3.3.B.

**The requested use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare.**

The location of this storefront is located in the Arlington Center Business District. It is essential and desirable to improve the condition of the façade to identify a tenant. The Board can find that this condition is met.

3. Section 3.3.3.C.

**The requested use will not create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety.**

The improved storefront will not create undue traffic congestion at this location which has existed in the Arlington Center business district. Pedestrian safety may be improved due to the improved visibility out of the storefront. The Board can find that this condition is met.

4. Section 3.3.3.D.

**The requested use will not overload any public water, drainage or sewer system or any other municipal system to such an extent that the requested use or any developed use in the immediate area or in any other area of the Town will be unduly subjected to hazards affecting health, safety, or the general welfare.**

The Board can find that this condition is met.

5. Section 3.3.3.E.

**Any special regulations for the use as may be provided in the Bylaw are fulfilled.**

No special regulations are applicable to the proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

6. Section 3.3.3.F.

**The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health or welfare.**

The commercial use does not impair the integrity or character of the neighborhood. The façade improvement will enhance the overall integrity and character of the district. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**7. Section 3.3.3.G.**

**The requested use will not, by its addition to a neighborhood, cause an excess of the use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood.**

The commercial use will not be in excess or detrimental to the character of the neighborhood. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**III. Environmental Design Review Standards (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 3.4)**

**1. EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape**

**The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.**

There are no changes proposed that would impact the natural landscape. It is an urban business district. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**2. EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment**

**Proposed development shall be related harmoniously to the terrain and to the use, scale and architecture of the existing buildings in the vicinity that have functional or visible relationship to the proposed buildings. The Arlington Redevelopment Board may require a modification in massing so as to reduce the effect of shadows on the abutting property in an R-1 or R-2 district or on public open space.**

The façade improvements will mirror the façade at 478 Massachusetts Avenue and is consistent with the scale and architecture of the overall building. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**3. EDR-3 Open Space**

**All open space (landscaped and usable) shall be so designed as to add to the visual amenities of the vicinity by maximizing its visibility for persons passing by the site or overlooking it from nearby properties. The location and configuration of usable open space shall be so designed as to encourage social interaction, maximize its utility and facilitate maintenance.**

There are no changes to open space. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**4. EDR-4 Circulation**

**With respect to vehicular and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including entrances, ramps, walkways, drives, and parking, special attention shall be given to**

**location and number of access points to the public streets (especially in relation to existing traffic controls and mass transit facilities), width of interior drives and access points, general interior circulation, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, access to community facilities, and arrangement of vehicle parking and bicycle parking areas, including bicycle parking spaces required by Section 8.13 that are safe and convenient and, insofar as practicable, do not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the neighboring properties.**

The existing circulation does not change. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**5. EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage**

**Special attention shall be given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Available Best Management Practices for the site should be employed, and include site planning to minimize impervious surface and reduce clearing and re-grading. Best Management Practices may include erosion control and stormwater treatment by means of swales, filters, plantings, roof gardens, native vegetation, and leaching catchbasins. Stormwater should be treated at least minimally on the development site; that which cannot be handled on site shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, paved and pooling areas and carried away in an underground drainage system. Surface water in all paved areas shall be collected in intervals so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved areas.**

**In accordance with Section 10.11,b, the Board may require from any applicant, after consultation with the Director of Public Works, security satisfactory to the Board to insure the maintenance of all stormwater facilities such as catch basins, leaching catch basins, detention basins, swales, etc. within the site. The Board may use funds provided by such security to conduct maintenance that the applicant fails to do.**

**The Board may adjust in its sole discretion the amount and type of financial security such that it is satisfied that the amount is sufficient to provide for any future maintenance needs.**

There will be no changes to surface water run-off as a result of this proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**6. EDR-6 Utilities Service**

**Electric, telephone, cable, TV, and other such lines of equipment shall be underground. The proposed method of sanitary sewage disposal and solid waste disposal from all buildings shall be indicated.**

There will be no changes to the utility service as a result of this proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**7. EDR-7 Advertising Features**

**The size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the surrounding properties.**

As the petitioner does not have a tenant for the space yet, a general placeholder of the signage is shown on the plan. For reference, the total square footage of a wall sign that is allowed at this location is 40 square feet. The Board may want to retain jurisdiction over signage for a future tenant.

Goose neck lamps will be installed above the sign band.

**8. EDR-8 Special Features**

**Exposed storage areas, exposed machinery installations, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures, and similar accessory areas and structures shall be subject to such setbacks, screen plantings or other screening methods as shall reasonably be required to prevent their being incongruous with the existing or contemplated environment and the surrounding properties.**

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**9. EDR-9 Safety**

**With respect to personal safety, all open and enclosed spaces shall be designed to facilitate building evacuation and maximize accessibility by fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment. Insofar as practicable, all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be so designed to minimize the fear and probability of personal harm or injury by increasing the potential surveillance by neighboring residents and passersby of any accident or attempted criminal act.**

The removal of the curved brick wall and replacement with a conventional storefront may improve the overall feeling of safety along Massachusetts Avenue. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**10. EDR-10 Heritage**

**With respect to Arlington's heritage, removal or disruption of historic, traditional, or significant uses, structures or architectural elements shall be minimized insofar as practical whether these exist on the site or on adjacent properties.**

The property is part of the Arlington Center National Register Historic District, and the petitioner has already received approval from the Arlington Historical Commission.

**11. EDR-11 Microclimate**

**With respect to the localized climatic characteristics of a given area, any development which proposes new structures, new hard surface, ground coverage or the installation of machinery which emits heat, vapor or fumes shall endeavor to minimize insofar as practicable, any adverse impacts on light, air and water resources or on noise and temperature levels of the immediate environment.**

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**12. EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design**

**Projects are encouraged to incorporate best practices related to sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Applicants must submit a current Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) checklist, appropriate to the type of development, annotated with narrative description that indicates how the LEED performance objectives will be incorporated into the project.**

The LEED Checklist indicates that renovation of the building will be an improvement over the existing condition, but does not score very high. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**IV. Conditions**

**A. General**

1. The final specifications for signs and exterior lighting shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
2. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate in order to protect the public interest and welfare.