



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

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, 1207-1211 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA Docket #3602

Date: January 21, 2020

Since the initial public hearing on July 22, 2019, the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) staff and members of the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) have provided feedback to the applicant, Jim Doherty, in relation to the above-noted Docket in different formats, including at the public hearing session, emails, and in-person meetings. This memo documents how the materials submitted by the applicant are responsive. Attached to this memo is correspondence that Attorney Winstanley-O'Connor responds to in her letter dated January 21, 2020.

1. Conduct a traffic study, with a focus on Mass Ave, Lowell, Appleton, Forest, and the neighborhood adjacent to the project site, determine how the use may impact circulation in the area, and complete the study when school is in session.

An overview of traffic information prepared by BSC Group was submitted by the applicant. This overview provides a good basis for understanding the potential trip generation of the mixed-use structure; however, it does not include an analysis of area circulation. It also does not provide an analysis of area intersections and does not provide any recommendations on how the trips generated by the proposal may be mitigated.

The overview by BSC Group notes that right turns onto Clark Street from the parking area will not occur as the parking will be controlled by the valet staff.

2. Show parking onsite and document any offsite parking for employees and tour buses.

The materials provided on January 21, 2020, indicate some adjustments were made to the garage parking and the surface parking to the rear of the building to accommodate moving the dumpster away from Clark Street. In the garage, four spaces were gained by adjusting the size of the parking spaces which are complaint with the Zoning Bylaw and slighting oversized. Five spaces were reduced in surface parking to provide an adequate size drive aisle for two-way traffic and access to the dumpster. At its narrowest, the two-way drive aisle does not comply with the required 24 feet, but it is noted that access is only available to valet and other delivery services in order to minimize vehicular conflicts.

No additional information has been provided regarding employee parking and tour bus parking. A reference to the Mill Brook Animal Clinic offering to provide additional off-site parking was made, but no formal documentation of a shared parking agreement has been provided.

3. Identify where and how passenger and delivery loading and unloading will occur, and determine whether delivery vehicles have the adequate turning radius onto Clark Street from the project site.

As noted above, the surface parking at the rear of the site was adjusted to provide more adequate space for loading and unloading of deliveries. The materials submitted on January 21, 2020, indicate that single-unit box trucks and smaller vehicles will be making deliveries to the site at the rear of the building. Additionally the dumpster was moved from Clark Street frontage to the interior of the site. However, no documentation is provided to illustrate the turning radii of the types of vehicles that would typically enter and exit the project site to make deliveries, so the feasibility of this could not be assessed.

The addition of the circular driveway off of Mass Ave will facilitate passenger loading and unloading outside of the public right-of-way limiting conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles, and other vehicles on Mass Ave. This is a better solution than the cut out of the sidewalk originally proposed. Outside of business hours, the circular driveway could be used for deliveries as well.

4. Provide information on the valet parking plan.

The information provided by BSC Group indicates that all parking onsite will be controlled by valet staff and there is no self-parking. There is no information about offsite parking provided.

5. Calculate the floor area ratio (FAR) for the building and the bonus and open space.

Exhibit A to Attorney Winstanley-O'Connor's memo is an accounting of the FAR for the building and how the bonus provisions of Section 5.3.6 apply to the proposal. Exhibit B to Attorney Winstanley-O'Connor's memo is an accounting of open space calculations.

6. Share a marketing study of similar hotels, including hotel operators, customer base, rack rates, and amenities.

The applicant has indicated that this information is proprietary and is not relevant to the relief being sought.

7. Re-evaluate the shadow study previously submitted to consider the existing shadows and provide a comparison and determine any impact to solar arrays in the neighborhood.

The plan set includes an updated shadow study based on the new building. The plan set also includes a shadow study documenting the existing conditions of the building and shows trees at the rear of the site.

Two properties with solar panels have been identified as 18 Pierce Street and 24 Clark Street. The property at 24 Clark Street is beyond the reach of the proposal's shadows, but it appears that the early afternoon shadow on the Winter Solstice will affect 18 Pierce Street.

8. Submit a revised LEED Checklist and make some assumptions to bring the credits up.

An updated LEED Checklist has been provided. The score has increased from 21 points to 52 points.

9. Show ADA accommodations in parking lot and along the Mass Ave frontage.

One accessible parking space has been designated in the rear surface parking lot. The reference to ADA accommodations along the frontage refers to the original version of the proposal which included a cut out in the sidewalk to provide a wider shoulder for loading and unloading.

10. Show any plans for sidewalk enhancement on Clark Street.

The plan set illustrates how the at-grade open space on the lot will be improved and activated and that a concrete sidewalk will be extended around the hotel on Clark Street. Further detail was not provided.

11. Improve the design of roof top mechanicals and kitchen venting.

The rendering shows more roof top mechanical equipment, but no roof plan was submitted or specifications for the roof top mechanical equipment or kitchen venting. The memo from Attorney Winstanley-O'Connor indicates that the final locations will be determined at a later stage.

12. Revisit the quantity and placement of louvers on the main façade of the building.

The louvers proposed on the façade have been eliminated.

13. Show additional bike parking at the front of the hotel.

Parking racks are proposed on Mass Ave rather than off of Clark Street in the current plan set. Relocating the bicycle parking to the main frontage is an improvement.

14. Re-evaluate the façade elevations including the materials proposed for the façade, the hierarchy between the restaurant and hotel entrances, the sliding doors on the fourth floor of the building, windows on the Clark Street elevation, and screening for the rear deck.

The materials proposed for the façade have been updated to reflect comments made by two members of the ARB who provided detailed feedback. The materials proposed now include brick, masonry, and clapboard panels, and the use of such materials is specified on the elevations.

The plan set has been revised to make the hotel entrance more prominent than the restaurant entrance.

Sliding doors are still proposed for the fourth floor hotel units.

The Clark Street elevation has been revised.

The rear deck has been eliminated from the proposal.

15. Re-evaluate the restaurant space planning and the location of the hotel gym.

The plan set has been revised to show no seating or space usage in the restaurant in response to a question regarding the accuracy of the seat count. Note that while the parking requirement for restaurants is based on the seat count, in mixed-use structures such as this one, the first 3,000 square feet of space is exempt from meeting the parking requirement. The restaurant is proposed at 2,816 square feet.

In the original proposal, the location of the gym required hotel guests to leave the interior of the building and then reenter the building elsewhere to access the gym. In this submission, the gym has been eliminated from the proposal.

16. Re-evaluate the secondary signage on Clark Street.

A wall sign remains on the Clark Street elevation for the restaurant.

17. Provide more details on the proposed lighting.

Attorney Winstanley-O'Connor's memo notes that the lighting will be energy efficient LED low profile lighting. Deflectors and other technology will be utilized, and a photometric study will be prepared prior to installation. The ARB may desire to see that photometric plan as well as lighting specifications to understand the type of fixtures to be used for the proposal and how it may or may not impact abutters.

Attachment:

1. Memo to Jim Doherty dated January 7, 2020.



TOWN OF ARLINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TOWN HALL, 730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476
TELEPHONE 781-316-3090

MEMORANDUM

To: Jim Doherty, Trustee, 1211 Mass Ave Realty Trust

From: Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development

cc: Mary Winstanley-O'Connor, Esq.

Date: January 7, 2020

Re: Docket #3602, 1207-1211 Massachusetts Avenue supplemental materials and follow-up

Thank you for your submission of materials to my office on January 2, 2020 per my most recent memo and requests. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) staff reviewed the materials received, dated December 12, 2019, and note that they are an updated plan set that illustrates changes made to the site and the building in the intervening time since the public hearing in the summer 2019 based on feedback from staff and ARB members. This memo documents how the submitted materials respond to items outlined and annotated in two emails sent to you following the initial public hearing on this project on July 22, 2019.

In an email from Erin Zwirko, Assistant Director, to you dated July 24, 2019, the staff enumerated the items that were requested by the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) members during the initial public hearing session:

1. Traffic Study, with a strong focus on Mass Ave, Lowell, Appleton, Forest, and the neighborhood behind the project site and circulation in the area, and completed when school is back in session;

DPCD has not yet received a traffic study.

2. Parking onsite, and any offsite parking for employees and tour buses;

The materials provided on January 2, 2020, indicate some adjustments were made to the garage parking and the surface parking to the rear of the building to accommodate moving the dumpster away from Clark Street. In the garage, four spaces were gained by adjusting the size of the parking spaces; however, no dimensions are provided making compliance with the Zoning Bylaw difficult to determine. Five spaces were reduced in surface parking, presumably to provide an adequate size drive aisle for two-way traffic and access to the dumpster, but no dimensions are provided to document compliance with the Zoning Bylaw. Overall, moving the dumpster away from Clark Street is an improvement.

No additional information has been provided regarding employee parking and tour bus parking. There was reference to the Mill Brook Animal Clinic offering to provide additional off-site parking, but no formal documentation of a shared parking agreement has been provided.

3. Loading and unloading and deliveries, where and how will it happen and determining if vehicles have the ability to turn onto Clark Street and into the project site;

As noted above in what we have received relative to item 1 (Traffic Study), the surface parking at the rear of the site was adjusted to presumably provide more adequate space for loading and unloading of deliveries.

The addition of the circular driveway off of Mass Ave will facilitate passenger loading and unloading outside of the public right-of-way limiting conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles, and other vehicles on Mass Ave. This is a better solution than the cut out of the sidewalk originally proposed. Outside of business hours, the circular driveway could be used for deliveries as well.

4. Accounting of the FAR for the building and the bonus;

DPCD has not received an updated accounting of the FAR for the building and how the bonus provisions of Section 5.3.6 apply to the proposal.

5. Open space calculations;

DPCD has not received updated open space calculations.

6. Marketing study of similar hotels you've identified, including who operates these hotels, their customers, rack rates, amenities, etc.;

DPCD has not received a marketing study for similar hotels in the greater Boston area.

7. Take another look at your shadow study, consider the existing shadows and provide a comparison and determine any impact to solar arrays in the neighborhood;

The plan set includes an updated shadow study based on the new building. The plan set also includes a shadow study documenting the existing conditions of the building and shows trees at the rear of the site. The updated materials do not identify if any of the adjacent buildings have solar arrays installed.

8. Reconsider the LEED Checklist and make some assumptions to bring the credits up;

DPCD has not received an updated LEED Checklist.

9. ADA accommodations in parking lot and along frontage; and

One accessible parking space has been designated in the rear surface parking lot. The reference to ADA accommodations along the frontage refers to the original version of the proposal which included a cut out in the sidewalk to provide a wider shoulder for loading and unloading.

10. Better understanding of roof top mechanicals and kitchen venting.

The rendering shows more roof top mechanical equipment, but no roof plan was submitted or specifications for the roof top mechanical equipment or kitchen venting.

In an email forwarded from Erin Zwirko to you dated July 29, 2019, an ARB member provided comments on the proposal including:

1. Prepare a full transportation plan to understand the impact on the intersection with Appleton/Mass Ave and the adjacent secondary streets. Consider the public recommendation of restricting right turns onto Clark;

DPCD has not yet received a transportation plan.

2. What are the plans for sidewalk enhancement on Clark around the hotel?

The plan set illustrates how the at-grade open space on the lot will be improved and activated; however, there is not information regarding sidewalk enhancements on Clark Street.

3. Currently no bike parking is shown at the front of the hotel for restaurant guests. What dayparts is the restaurant open for? Only dinner? Or breakfast and lunch? Think about public need for bike parking for the dining space based on daypart.

Parking racks are proposed on Mass Ave rather than off of Clark Street in the current plan set. Relocating the bicycle parking to the main frontage is an improvement.

4. What is the plan for deliveries and loading/unloading of buses? Restricted hours?

DPCD has not received detailed information about deliveries and loading or unloading of buses. The circular driveway and adjustments to the rear surface parking lot might accommodate these functions better, but there is not documentation or dimensions to determine compliance with the Zoning Bylaw.

5. Please detail the hotel valet parking plan proposed to include offsite parking to mitigate the differential between number of hotel rooms, staff, restaurant patrons, and parking spaces.

DPCD has not received a detailed hotel valet parking plan.

6. Please take another look at the materials proposed for the facade. The stucco and metal panel proposed are not materials that are found in the neighborhood of businesses in the Heights or Arlington Center and are not contextually appropriate nor are they appropriate for the level of Boutique Hotel that has been expressed as the operational/marketing intent. I would suggest that you take another look at the precedents that were cited in the application and come back with a more contextually appropriate facade design. Think about masonry, clapboard, and other more appropriate materials.

The materials proposed for the façade have been updated to reflect comments made by two members of the ARB who provided detailed feedback. The materials proposed now include brick, masonry, and clapboard panels. However, detailed information regarding the materials is not provided.

7. The quantity and placement of louvers on the main facade of the building are concerning and should be revisited.

The louvers proposed on the façade have been eliminated.

8. Think about the hierarchy between the Restaurant and Hotel entrances. Currently they are both rendered identically, when they have the opportunity to more individually present themselves.

The plan set has been revised to make the hotel entrance more prominent than the restaurant entrance.

9. The sliding doors on the front facade of the building on the 4th floor are not appropriate for the context of the neighborhood. If doors are proposed, consider swing doors. Similarly, the horizontal windows on the Clark St elevation are not contextually appropriate.

Sliding doors are still proposed for the fourth floor hotel units. The Clark Street elevation has been revised.

10. Restaurant planning - You are showing more seating than is achievable and you should accurately identify your potential seat count for the parking study. A good rule of thumb for a restaurant this size is dedicating 1/3 of the space to kitchen/BOH. As an example, currently there is no walk in shown cooler for the restaurant or enough dry storage. This will help mitigate some of the public concern about the number of seats.

The plan set has been revised to show no seating or space usage in the restaurant space. Without knowing the number of seats proposed for the restaurant, DPCD cannot confirm the parking required per the Zoning Bylaw for the proposal.

11. What are you planning for the deck on the rear of the building? is this seating? For the restaurant or the hotel lounge? Think about noise impact on the neighbors. Think also about whether they should look down onto the parking area. Should screening be incorporated? Wood? Vegetated?

The rear deck has been eliminated from the proposal.

12. It appears that the only access to the gym is to leave the interior of the building, walk across the parking area and into the gym under the restaurant. This does not seem like an ideal solution for your guests.

The gym has been eliminated from the proposal.

13. Reconsider the lit secondary signage on Clark St, especially if the parking is expected to be Valet and solely for the hotel staff and guests. If additional signage is proposed, perhaps a vertical banner or blade sign on the front facade to speak to approaching drivers on MA Ave would be more appropriate.

A wall sign remains on the Clark Street elevation for the restaurant.

14. Come back with more details on the proposed lighting under the overhang on Mass Ave (above outdoor seating) and in the parking garage under the building as this will spill over into the neighborhood.

DPCD has not received information on the proposed lighting or how it may or may not impact abutters.

Please provide us with a response to the above-noted items that we have not yet received by January 20th.

Should you have any questions regarding this feedback, please contact my office at 781-316-3092 or by email.

Thank you.