

From: <ARB@HaroldHelson.us>

To: "Jenny_Raitt" <jrait@town.arlington.ma.us>, "Erin_Zwirko" <EZwirko@town.arlington.ma.us>, "Joe_Andrews" <heartsmoon@aol.com>, "Bunnell" <ABunnell@town.arlington.ma.us>, "David_Watson" <DWatson@town.arlington.ma.us>, <KLau@town.arlington.ma.us>, "Eugene_Benson" <EBenson@town.arlington.ma.us>, <rzsembery@town.arlington.ma.us>

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Subject: [ARB] Please do not allow zoning exceptions to build ugly

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Dear esteemed ARB members & staff:

In reference to tonight's meeting...

I am troubled by the modern trend of replacing attractive old buildings with extremely ugly new ones. Here in Arlington, the one next to Mystic Wine Shoppe should never have been built. (I have been told there were special factors involved, namely the acceptance of the builder to cope with environmental pollution that made the property undesirable to develop. I don't know about that.)

The ARB should not make exceptions to zoning laws to allow "ugly" buildings to replace stately old ones. The 882 Mass Ave case is one. The loss of the small businesses there I patronized and relied upon is painful, but moreover we *do not want a nonconforming replacement*. It should not be 4 stories tall regardless of the zoning laws. It should have full setbacks. And to the extent this can be dictated objectively, it should be beautiful. What you allow to be built will endure for a hundred years. You want to be careful. We don't want ugly. Maintain aesthetic standards, please.

The reason we live in Arlington is *not* to be surrounded by buildings like the one earlier cited. The reason we live here is *not* because we have crowded in a lot of people, which makes parking and traffic terrible. We do *not* have to increase housing or population in Arlington. The trend we are on will make housing much less affordable, under the pretense of doing the opposite.

The path I fear you are on will destroy the Arlington we love, bit by bit.

I do not mind building or development per se. I strongly mind ugly buildings and increases in population density. If you think that ugly buildings are necessary because pretty buildings are too expensive to build, and building must occur, I take exception. Building does not have to occur at that cost; don't tear down the old building at all.

So please do not grant exceptions to our zoning laws.

Please forgive me for taking up so much of your time, and especially, if I do not have an accurate view of your intentions or reasoning. I'm quite an amateur...but my visceral reaction to the decay of our corridor is well founded I think.

Respectfully yours,
Harold Helson
Bartlett Ave

<mailto:ARB@HaroldHelson.us>