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To: jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us

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Subject: Environmental Design Review Docket 3625, 882-892 Massachusetts Avenue

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Dear Ms. Raitt,

I'm writing to comment on the plans for the design of the proposed building at 882-892 Mass Ave. I'm a resident of the neighborhood and in favor of additional housing, but have concerns about specifics of the design at the ground level.

From what I can tell from the plans, the sidewalk between the new building and the Mass Ave curb will be narrowed by 4 or more feet. Just from this point of view this will make Mass Ave less inviting to walk as well as lead to bunching of students going to and from the high school. In front of this building there is an existing bus stop that should remain on this block for convenient access to the local businesses for those without cars. With the bus stop present people will be forced to funnel through a narrow pinch point while out in public which is poor street and pedestrian design. Especially in a post-Covid-19 scenario.

There appears to be an ample parking space in the back, perhaps the building can be moved back the same distance on the property or be made nominally smaller in the north to south dimension by using some of the space of the lot at back. It does not seem right to occupy what is now public space in a heavily trafficked corridor with this new design.

Regarding the new business space, as the landlord is not asking for permits for fumes etc it appears that a restaurant or coffee shop will not be able to occupy this space.

This is a pity as we are losing two good restaurants in our neighborhood with this project. In addition, what mitigation is there that the embedded office space will not be converted to apartments in the future, can something be put in writing to have the landlords recognize this conversion is not possible?

Maintaining a streetscape with first floor businesses and inviting pedestrian travel makes Arlington a more attractive place to live.

Sincerely,

Mustafa Varoglu  
26 Shawnee Rd.  
Arlington