

From: Carla Gates <carlagates247@gmail.com>
To: jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: 07/15/2020 12:40 PM
Subject: Expressing opposition to proposed Mass Ave development across from high school

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Dear Sir / Madam on the ARB:

I am writing to express our family's opposition to the proposed commercial development across from the high school on Mass. Ave. I understand you are meeting on July 20 and I cannot attend.

https://www.yourarlington.com/arlington-archives/town-school/planning/17473-arb-071320.html?fbclid=IwAR0xupamai_NyfNDtpg74_6rpDAoTgyel9K_DIUGGtuh9XIEiWFn_BwS8r8

>> I thought you may also be interested in the comments of other town residents about this development. Screenshots are attached with all names redacted. These comments (and more are being added daily) were in response to the above article.

In our family's opinion, the proposed design is:

- truly unattractive - too dark and modern - non "local" materials and building methods
- out off step with the best of the "look and feel" of the neighborhood - there are lovely homes behind this building! - how visually disruptive this would be!
- too large for Arlington and the location - too many stories, too massive-looking
- has no "nod" to Arlington's past - either our colonial past or at the very least the era when most of the houses were built in Arlington (1910 - 1940)

It seems like the architect / developer didn't even take into account the local Arlington 'vibe' but just designed an ugly building - out of context - in their office far away from Arlington. We're already horrified that the ARB approved the multi-story building across the street which looks so out of place in that spot. Friends and family who visit us from out of town often remark on how non-cohesive Arlington's commercial architecture is. And this proposed building is amongst the worst plans we've seen to-date.

Please do not approve.

Towns which have done better job with recent "downtown" / village commercial architecture and development: Winchester, Belmont, Wellesley, Needham, Lexington. Can we look to those towns as models?

Thank you,
Carla Gates and family
(20-year+ residents)

12:00 Arlington, MA
Current Residents
1d · 📷

I miss Toraya 😞 2
3h Like Reply

What? I like development. I just cannot believe that anyone would want to see this built.
2h Like Reply

Perhaps somebody that would rather live in Arlington than in say Peabody? Maybe anybody who would seek to live there overall would like to see it built.

But lets level set - if they could tweak the facade, use some faux brick, a couple of columns, whatever makes this at least nondescript to you, Nanci. Is adding 20 or so one bedroom apartments something that you believe is a net positive for our town and to help people find housing?
1h Like Reply

Write a reply...

YOURARLINGTON.COM
Altered Mass. Ave. block proposal to return July 20
Drawing of proposal for 882-892 Mass. Ave. The de...

Sad Comment

Oh my god, that's ugly. What in the world were they thinking? This is a small town, not Manhattan.
1d Like Reply

James Fleming
What's ugly about it specifically?
1d Like Reply

James Fleming
What's ugly about it specifically? The design. The color. Its depressing. It just makes the whole block crowded cant we have something attractive?
23h Like Reply

Re: design - Would it be more

Write a comment... GIF

11:56 Arlington, MA
Current Residents
1d · 📷

attractive if it was made of red brick, like what's there now?
23h Like Reply

James Fleming
Yes. And two stories shorter with setbacks and open space -- which is required but the developers are trying to eliminate.
18h Like Reply

is open space is required via by-law?
15h Like Reply

I agree it is rather ugly, though much less so than some of the ugly 1970's 'pill boxes' in the East. But this ain't really no 'small town' anymore. Its an inner suburb of an extremely prospering city where new buildable land has run out.
1d Like Reply

It is not that prospering if you look at the tax rate. With almost no commercial property all the expenses of the town fall on home owners. Residential apartments

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of a Facebook post and its comments. The post is titled "Arlington, MA" and "Current Residents". The comments are circled in red.

Left Screenshot Comments:

- Comment 1: "Arlington is desirable to live in because we have a smaller town feel. This looks like a boutique hotel or a bank. It could be on any street in Manhattan. Do we really want to..."
- Comment 2: "That is a horrific looking building. Not enough retail space. I wouldn't want that in my neighborhood. I feel sorry for abutters. I hope the board votes it down"
- Comment 3: "You should zoom into the ARB meeting on July 20 to voice your opinion during public comment."
- Comment 4: "Not attractive."
- Comment 5: "They're destroying Toraya for THIS?!"
- Comment 6: "Ugh. With a residential area just behind it? How about a design that is more sympathetic to the immediate"

Right Screenshot Comments:

- Comment 1: "buildings do not pay in taxes what they cost the town. We need true commercial properties not phony mixed use that has a tiny space supposedly for commercial which will never be rented."
- Comment 2: "Serious question - where would we put these commercial properties? Like I said, there is no real buildable land. I'm not sure I understand the"
- Comment 3: "The Capitol Theater block vs this monstrosity? Absolutely, positively. Listen, these developers are coming in here and buy up property thinking they're going to make a fat profit because people want to live here. Why? Partly because everything *isn't* built up. But the developers aren't living here, forced to look at what they built every day like we are. That square is going to be ruined by all the new modern block buildings going up. The proposed building is better than a lot of things that are slapped up quickly, but this architecture has NOTHING to do with Arlington. There's not even a nod to the histori... See More"
- Comment 4: "I have no problem with modern buildings. These things are just plain fugly."



11:59

< [Profile Picture] > Arlington, MA
Current Residents
1d · [Image]

[Profile Picture] [Redacted]
I whole-heartedly support well-designed development.
13h Like Reply 2

[Profile Picture] [Redacted]
And this is not an example of well-designed anything
4h Like Reply

[Profile Picture] [Redacted]
Write a reply...

[Profile Picture] [Redacted]
There seems to always be big "But" whenever a development moves from a theoretical to a reality - the "I support the need for more housing, just not this housing."

I remember a recent post where the poster criticized the Thorndike Place, the new Mirak development, and this one in the same piece of text. That took some work.
12h Like Reply 2

[Profile Picture] [Redacted]
An esteemed TMM (John Worden) warned about the poorly worded bylaw
Write a comment... GIF [Smiley Face]

[Home] [Video] [Store] [People] [Bell] [Menu]