

Alexander Tee
2 Ryder Street
Arlington, MA 02476

Christian Klein, Chairperson
Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals
51 Grove Street
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Chairperson Klein,

The 1165 project proposal has been well considered on many dimensions, but it is my opinion that the burden of parking has not be sufficiently addressed and that more can be done by the applicant to ensure an equitable outcome.

The applicant's proposed approach to build 30+ fewer parking spaces than is required by code introduces risk. While the applicant's parking studies suggest that current utilization of similar developments falls below code, my concern is that these studies were conducted in the midst of a pandemic when commuting behaviors were disrupted, and that the applicant's development is multi-use, requiring a great deal of synchronization to treat a subset of parking spaces as double occupancy.

Reliably managing these patterns will come down to the details, and until a detailed parking management plan is provided, it is impossible to assess how this can be managed and mitigated. As a neighborhood, we requested visibility to a detailed traffic management and parking plan on April 1st, but have only heard vague suggestions that the property manager will be responsible for making it work.

Avoiding the details required to make this work only elevates our anxiety as neighbors as it will not be the developer who bears this burden but the abutters and property manager downstream.

In the interest of finding a way to make this work here are some considerations that seem both reasonable and measured based on the potential permanent impact that this development may have.

- **Parking Monitoring:** The developer has at several times stated that it will be the burden of the neighboring residents to report vehicles to the property manager. While this is certainly not ideal, it is the responsibility of the property to make this both easy to do and transparent in order to have accountability. We request that a web-based application to intake, process and close-the-loop on off-site parking violations be sourced in order to make this as easy to fulfill as possible. This database of complaints shall also be visible to the public so that violations can be monitored over time and intervention efficacy evaluated, establishing a chain of accountability.
- **Public Resources:** The suggested procedure of parking overnight on Mass Ave sets a dangerous precedent as a permanent solution. Relying on public resources to cover a deficiency in planning is something that needs to be considered at the town level. With the Lexington Hotel breaking ground soon, and likely developments of 40 units to the west and several hundred units to the east of the 1165 development, will this same affordance be offered to those residents as well? If the community is going to accept increased housing density, then the town must revisit policies such as this to ensure equitable usage of public land.

- **Penalties:** If parking overflow does become a chronic problem, placing the burden on residents, with soft eviction/no lease renewal language is unethical. It is the developer's decision to propose a design that falls short of town code, and they need to own the risk associated with that decision. As a result, it would be **more appropriate for the property manager** to incur a fine, in line with current market rates which today stand at \$100 per occurrence for non-resident parking tickets. This would create a healthy incentive for the property manager to better optimize their procedures, instead of passing the buck and blame onto residents. These funds could then be reinvested into appropriate community investments.
- **Systemic Recourse:** If parking spill-over does become a chronic problem for the neighborhood then an escalation plan needs to be in place. We would like clarity over what that threshold of burden is, and what constitute reasonable means to address it post construction. Specifically, we feel that all of the following solutions shall be on the table in the instance that the developers parking assumptions don't hold true:
 - **Extend 2nd Floor Parking:** While this suggestion was dismissed out of hand by Mr. St. Claire, it is also clear that it has not been explored. The architects involved have repeatedly stated that the industrial mélange of varying styles is a nod to the historic significance of the building, and I have full confidence in their ability to design an inviting and appropriate aesthetic. One could even imagine that the added structure could provide an opportunity for a semi-private rooftop garden above the second-floor parking benefitting the residents. In terms of the viability, the notion of proposing a 124 unit building that cannot support the required number of parking spaces feels tone deaf, especially when the developer is asking the abutters to take on the burden of that long lasting responsibility.
 - **Auxiliary Parking:** It is also possible that the operator could find ways to accommodate additional parking demand beyond the site itself, whether this is leasing spots from Arlington at the Ed Burns rink, acquiring parking spaces from the land locked parcel behind the building or providing a shuttle service to a nearby parking garage.
 - **Reduce Occupancy:** Should parking spill-over become a recurring problem, reducing the number of rentable units to achieve the proper ratio, and not reinstating those units until an effective parking plan has been successfully established.

Much like their efforts to document adjacent properties before and after construction to assess any damage, a detailed plan needs to be put forth so that we know how to respond as a community if things don't go according to plan as I am not comfortable with Mr. St. Claire's suggestion that "Things will sort themselves out", as that's just a way to pass the buck onto less fortunate community members.

In an era where new inequities are being exposed on a daily basis, we need to expect more than the bare minimum. While we support the mission of 40B and welcome sharing our neighborhood with new residents, we cannot use that as an excuse to skate by issues that may

be a new flash-point for friction in our community. ***We need to expect more from our developers and ask them to think more deeply than quick answers and flashy renderings.***

I would also like to make a few quick points regarding construction as those details are brand new and have not been discussed in as much depth to date:

- **Vibration:** Our concerns regarding the shaking and vibrations were brought up on multiple meetings (March 16, June 1), and to clarify our concern is not with the annoyance, which will be temporary in nature, but rather permanent physical damage to our property. Our house at 2 Ryder and 23 Forest Street are historical homes, with delicate loose stone foundations and the vibrations from heavy tracked machinery going down Ryder Street could compromise the structural integrity of our home. We need assurances that this will be monitored with installed devices on our foundations which is common procedure in other projects, and that tracked vehicles will not transit on Ryder Street.
- **Rodents:** Our neighborhood already has a well-documented pest problem with a clean source of drinking water from the Mill Stream and organic materials on the DPW and landscaping sites. Construction tends to displace rodents and we are very concerned that these pests will find new residences in our yards and homes. We request that the developer provide abutters pest monitoring and extermination services for the duration of the construction.
- **Traffic Management:** As our neighborhood has mentioned several times in the past, Ryder Street today is a street without controls. Mixing heavy machinery with distracted middle schoolers is a recipe for disaster. We request that a full-time traffic flag person is stationed at that intersection during active working hours in order to ensure the safe passage of pedestrians amongst the constant flow of construction vehicles.

To round out our list of concerns here are a few specifics regarding the design of Ryder Street that need to be addressed as they translate the general schematics into detailed plans:

- **Grade:** We would like to ensure that when Ryder Street gets resurfaced, that the grade slopes down from the 2 Ryder Street side to the 9 Ryder Street side as it does today, to avoid flooding our entry way. We also want to confirm that sufficient drainage will be installed and maintained to ensure that the speed hump does not create a backup, as a great deal of water flows down from Forest Street onto Ryder Street today.
- **Driveway Access:** As parking on Ryder may become a chronic problem we want to ensure that the speed hump is designed in a manner that enables our residence to access our backyard at current grade. This will enable us to convert our backyard into two parking spaces.
- **Speed Hump Details:** We also request that the steepness of the speed hump be as aggressive as legally permitted to have the maximum traffic calming effect. We have experienced gradual speed humps in the past which do not slow traffic and want to ensure that we are mitigating speed as much as possible.

I would like to share my appreciation for all of the work that you and the board have invested. It is not lost on me that this is a tremendous burden to bear and that the open inclusive forum you

have created generates more issues than it has the capacity to resolve, but it also stands out to me as a great example of how civil engagement can look and gives me a great deal of hope in an era that seems more divisive than ever.

Sincerely,

Alex