



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

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**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, 117 Broadway, Arlington, MA  
Docket #3520

**Date:** December 22, 2021

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**I. Docket Summary**

This is an application by Arlington EATS, 58 Medford Street, Arlington, Massachusetts, 02474, for 117 Broadway, Arlington, MA, 02474 to install new signage in a B4 Vehicular Oriented Business District and Business Sign District. The reopening of the Special Permit is to allow the Board to review and approve signage under Section 3.4, Environmental Design Review, and Section 6.2, Signs.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application:

- Application for EDR Special Permit;
- Impact Statement;
- Sign Submittal Package, prepared by 96pt., dated December 6, 2021;
- Material samples.

The property at 117 Broadway was granted a Special Permit under Environmental Design Review from the Redevelopment Board on November 21, 2016 for a mixed-use development containing 14 units of affordable rental housing and 5,089 square feet of ground-floor commercial space, which is allowed by Special Permit in the B4 Vehicular Oriented Business District according to Section 5.5.3 (Use Regulations for Business Districts) of the Zoning Bylaw. The tenant, Arlington EATS, has leased the property from the Housing

Corporation of Arlington, and wishes to install new signage at the entry to Arlington EATS, a vinyl message displaying hours of business and contact information on the front door, and window graphics for privacy and equipment screening along Broadway and Everett Street. Section 6.2, Signs, directs the Redevelopment Board to review any requests for sign special permits via Environmental Design Review.

II. Application of Special Permit Criteria (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 3.3)

1. Section 3.3.3.A.

**The use requested is listed as a Special Permit in the use regulations for the applicable district or is so designated elsewhere in this Bylaw.**

A mixed-used development in the B4 District requires a Special Permit, which was granted by the Board on November 21, 2016. The Board can find that this condition is met.

2. Section 3.3.3.B.

**The requested use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare.**

Mixed use development provides residents and customers, and the commercial area on the ground floor will bring life to the streetscape on Broadway. As described in the Decision issued in 2016, the uses in this building will serve as an important anchor in the revitalization of Broadway. The Board can find this condition is met.

3. Section 3.3.3.C.

**The requested use will not create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety.**

Only the signage is subject to review. The Board can find this condition is met.

4. Section 3.3.3.D.

**The requested use will not overload any public water, drainage or sewer system or any other municipal system to such an extent that the requested use or any developed use in the immediate area or in any other area of the Town will be unduly subjected to hazards affecting health, safety, or the general welfare.**

The area is adequately supplied with water and sewer systems, and drainage has been reviewed by the Town Engineer during construction. The Board can find this condition met.

5. Section 3.3.3.E.

**Any special regulations for the use as may be provided in the Bylaw are fulfilled.**

There are no special regulations for this particular use. The Board can find this condition met.

**6. Section 3.3.3.F.**

**The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health or welfare.**

An active ground floor use will contribute to the vitality of the street life on Broadway and was approved by the Board in 2016. It will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor will it be detrimental to the health and welfare. The Board can find this condition is met.

**7. Section 3.3.3.G.**

**The requested use will not, by its addition to a neighborhood, cause an excess of the use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood.**

The use will not be in excess or detrimental to the character of the neighborhood. The Board can find this condition is met.

**III. Environmental Design Review Standards (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 3.4)**

**1. EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape**

**The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.**

There are no changes to the landscape as there are no proposed exterior alterations other than the proposed new signage. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**2. EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment**

**Proposed development shall be related harmoniously to the terrain and to the use, scale, and architecture of the existing buildings in the vicinity that have functional or visible relationship to the proposed buildings. The Arlington Redevelopment Board may require a modification in massing so as to reduce the effect of shadows on the abutting property in an R0, R1 or R2 district or on public open space.**

There are no changes to the exterior of the building other than the proposed new signage. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**3. EDR-3 Open Space**

**All open space (landscaped and usable) shall be so designed as to add to the visual amenities of the vicinity by maximizing its visibility for persons passing by the site or overlooking it from nearby properties. The location and configuration of usable open**

**space shall be so designed as to encourage social interaction, maximize its utility and facilitate maintenance.**

There are no changes to open space as a result of the sign proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**4. EDR-4 Circulation**

**With respect to vehicular and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including entrances, ramps, walkways, drives, and parking, special attention shall be given to location and number of access points to the public streets (especially in relation to existing traffic controls and mass transit facilities), width of interior drives and access points, general interior circulation, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, access to community facilities, and arrangement of vehicle parking and bicycle parking areas, including bicycle parking spaces required by Section 6.1.12 that are safe and convenient and, insofar as practicable, do not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the neighboring properties.**

There are no changes to any circulation patterns. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**5. EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage**

**Special attention shall be given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Available Best Management Practices for the site should be employed, and include site planning to minimize impervious surface and reduce clearing and re-grading. Best Management Practices may include erosion control and stormwater treatment by means of swales, filters, plantings, roof gardens, native vegetation, and leaching catch basins. Stormwater should be treated at least minimally on the development site; that which cannot be handled on site shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, paved and pooling areas and carried away in an underground drainage system. Surface water in all paved areas shall be collected in intervals so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved areas. In accordance with Section 3.3.4., the Board may require from any Applicant, after consultation with the Director of Public Works, security satisfactory to the Board to ensure the maintenance of all stormwater facilities such as catch basins, leaching catch basins, detention basins, swales, etc. within the site. The Board may use funds provided by such security to conduct maintenance that the Applicant fails to do. The Board may adjust in its sole discretion the amount and type of financial security such that it is satisfied that the amount is sufficient to provide for any future maintenance needs.**

There will be no changes to the exterior of the building or surface water run-off because of this proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**6. EDR-6 Utilities Service**

**Electric, telephone, cable TV, and other such lines of equipment shall be underground. The proposed method of sanitary sewage disposal and solid waste disposal from all buildings shall be indicated.**

There will be no changes to the utility service as a result of this proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**7. EDR-7 Advertising Features**

**The size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the surrounding properties.**

The applicant submitted a sign package that includes a proposal for a wall sign and vinyl signage at the entry of the building, along with two options for vinyl window treatments for the Board's consideration. Arlington EATS will be the first tenant for this commercial space, therefore no signs are currently installed at the location. The proposed signs for are as follows:

Both Options (signs below are the same for each option)

1. One wall sign at the entry to the commercial space (11.25 square feet). The sign will be installed via blind stud mounts.
2. Vinyl signage on the entry door (square footage not provided).

Option 1

1. Window graphic A: Perforated vinyl window application over six windows on the corner of the building where Everett Street and Broadway intersect (13.5 square feet each, 81 square feet total, or covering 75% of each window).
2. Window graphic B: Vinyl window application over lower third of four windows on the Broadway façade (8.94 square feet each, 35.78 square feet total, or covering 29% of each window).
3. Window graphic C: Vinyl window application over lower third of four windows on the Everett Street façade (8.94 square feet each, 35.78 square feet total, or covering 29% of each window).

Option 2

1. Window graphic A: Perforated vinyl window application over six windows on the corner of the building where Everett Street and Broadway intersect (13.5 square feet each, 81 square feet total, or covering 75% of each window).
2. Window graphic B: Die-cut vinyl window application over lower third of four windows on the Broadway façade (8.94 square feet each, 35.78 square feet total, or covering 29% of each window).
3. Window graphic C: Die-cut vinyl window application over lower third of four windows on the Everett Street façade (8.94 square feet each, 35.78 square feet total, or covering 29% of each window).

The difference between Option 1 and Option 2 is that the graphics for Option 1 are rectangular, while the graphics in Option 2 are die cut to outline the produce depicted on the graphic. Both options include signage that exceeds what is allowable in the Business Sign District.

The applicant has requested additional window vinyl graphics to provide privacy for their customers, as well as to hide refrigeration equipment and low shelving that will be installed along the Everett Street and Broadway interior of the space. Per Section 6.2.2(C), the ARB may grant a Special Permit to allow additional signage or a greater number of signs, “provided the architecture of the building, the location of the building relative to the street, or the nature of the use being made of the building is such that an additional sign or signs of a larger size should be allowed in the public interest.”

The items below require clarification, or are in excess of the allowed size and number of signs for the property:

- The applicant should provide the dimensions of the façade, particularly the width, where the wall sign will be installed to assure compliance with Section 6.2.5(D)(10), which requires that signs be placed at least 12 inches or 20% of the width of the building element on which they are mounted, whichever is less, from the sides of the building element;
- The width of the vinyl signage on the entry door is provided, but the height and dimensions of the window area of the door must also be provided to assure compliance with Section 6.2.1(E)(3).
- Under both options, window graphic A covers 75% of each window, which exceeds the 25% allowance in Section 6.2.5(D)(11).
- Under both options, window graphics B and C cover 29% of each window, which exceeds the 25% allowance in Section 6.2.5(D)(11).

#### **8. EDR-8 Special Features**

**Exposed storage areas, exposed machinery installations, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures, and similar accessory areas and structures shall be subject to such setbacks, screen plantings or other screening methods as shall reasonably be required to prevent their being incongruous with the existing or contemplated environment and the surrounding properties.**

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

#### **9. EDR-9 Safety**

**With respect to personal safety, all open and enclosed spaces shall be designed to facilitate building evacuation and maximize accessibility by fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment. Insofar as practicable, all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be so designed to minimize the fear and**

**probability of personal harm or injury by increasing the potential surveillance by neighboring residents and passersby of any accident or attempted criminal act.**

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**10. EDR-10 Heritage**

**With respect to Arlington's heritage, removal or disruption of historic, traditional or significant uses, structures or architectural elements shall be minimized insofar as practical whether these exist on the site or on adjacent properties.**

The existing structure is not listed on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington* nor is it under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historical Commission. As such, the site contains no historic, traditional, or significant uses, structures, or architectural elements. The Board can find this condition is met.

**11. EDR-11 Microclimate**

**With respect to the localized climatic characteristics of a given area, any development which proposes new structures, new hard surface, ground coverage or the installation of machinery which emits heat, vapor or fumes shall endeavor to minimize insofar as practicable, any adverse impacts on light, air and water resources or on noise and temperature levels of the immediate environment.**

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**12. EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design**

**Projects are encouraged to incorporate best practices related to sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Applicants must submit a current Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) checklist, appropriate to the type of development, annotated with narrative description that indicates how the LEED performance objectives will be incorporated into the project.**

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

**IV. Findings**

1. The ARB finds that the nature of the use being made of the building is such that allowing the replacement of the existing signs is in the public interest consistent with Section 6.2 of the Zoning Bylaw.
2. The ARB finds that the project is consistent with Environmental Design Review per Section 3.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.

V. Conditions

**General**

1. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
2. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate in order to protect the public interest and welfare.