



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

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 ensure compliance with M.G.L c.40A, § 3A

To: Arlington Redevelopment Board
From: Claire V. Ricker, AICP Secretary Ex-Officio
Subject: Site Plan Review, 5-7 Belknap St., Arlington, MA, Docket #3816
Date: September 9, 2024

I. Docket Summary

This is an application by Michael Collins, 5-7 Belknap St. LLC, 8 Overlook Rd, Stoneham, MA 02180 to open Special Permit Docket #3816 in accordance with the provisions of the Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw Section 5.9.3 Site Plan Review.

The applicant proposed to demolish the existing two-family building and garage to construct a new four-unit multi-family development comprised of two front-to-back buildings separated by a courtyard, with each structure containing two town-house style units. In addition, the applicant proposes a driveway with four vehicle parking spaces each with its own EV charger, and a storage shed with parking for four bicycles.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application include:

- Application for Site Plan Review, dated August 7, 2024;
- Impact Statement, including LEED Checklist, stormwater management plan, and summary of Neighborhood Outreach, dated August 7, 2024;
- Drawings, Photographs, and Site Plan of existing conditions, dated March 18, 2024;
- Proposed Site Plan of Proposal August 5, 2024;
- Dimensional and Parking Information, dated August 7, 2024;
- Architectural Drawings and Renderings dated August 7, 2024;
- Shadow Study, dated August 7, 2024; and
- Product and materials list, dated Augst 7, 2024.

The subject property is located within the R-2 Residential Two-Family zoning district and the Neighborhood Multi-Family (NMF) Overlay District, which the applicant has elected to apply to this development.

Section 5.9, Multi-Family Housing Overlay Districts, provides a process for the Arlington Redevelopment Board to review and potentially impose reasonable conditions through Site Plan Review for As of Right Development proposals located within a Multi-Family Housing Overlay District. The ARB shall provide Site Plan Review for projects using the Environmental Design Review Standards set forth in Section 3.4.4. of the Zoning Bylaw.

II. Site Plan Review/ Environmental Design Standards (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Sections 5.9.3 and 3.4.4)

1. SPR/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.

The landscaped will be enhanced from its existing conditions through the addition of five native trees, and multiple shrubs and perennial plantings throughout the site. There will be no substantial changes to the existing grade.

2. SPR/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.

The subject property is zoned R-2 Residential Two-Family and is within the Neighborhood Multi-Family (NMF) Overlay District. The neighborhood includes a mix of two-, four-, and eight-family properties. The proposed development is consistent with the scale and density of the neighboring properties. The exterior facade materials and colors are similar to other buildings along the street.

The applicant has provided a Shadow Study to determine any shade that might be cast on neighboring properties throughout the year, following concerns raised by neighbors at a community outreach event. The building design has been modified to ensure no shadows will be cast on the roof of any neighboring property, which could impede their ability to the install solar panels.

3. SPR/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.

Units 1 and 2 are designed so that their landscaped open space areas fronts Belknap St., which will be enhanced with a porch, balconies, plantings, and brick pavers all to maximize visibility for passersby and encourage social interaction. Additionally, all four Townhouse units share a common courtyard/deck between the two buildings which serves as the main entrance to each of the units. This design is intended to encourage social interaction between the neighbors of the development.

Each unit will also include a roof deck for useable open space which will include

4. SPR/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.

The applicant is proposing to access to the property via foot, bicycle, and automobile. A walkway is proposed on the left side of the property for foot access to the common courtyard/deck and each units main entrance. The 18' wide driveway provides parallel parking for four vehicles, two compact and two full size parking spaces, each with their own electric vehicle charging station. The driveway provides adequate space to maneuver into and out of each parking spot without disturbing the other neighbors. There will be a bicycle parking shed located at the rear of the driveway which will include covered parking for four bicycles.

5. SPR/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.

The applicant will apply best practices and comply with the Town's Stormwater Management bylaw, during and after construction, as approved by the Town Engineer. If necessary, the applicant will develop an Operations and Management Plan for a stormwater management system to be submitted for approval by the Town Engineer and recorded with the Registry of Deeds. Future inspections and maintenance of said stormwater system will be funded with monthly condominium fees.

6. SPR/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.

All utilities will be located underground. The water and sewer connections are indicated on the proposed site plan.

7. SPR/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 proposes temporary marketing sign which will comply with the Town's temporary sign regulations.

The property will include an address sign for the rear units, as requested by the Arlington Fire Department, which will comply with the Town's sign ordinance.

8. SPR/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.

The applicant proposes a bicycle parking shed which will be located at the rear of the driveway as well as a 1'0" vegetated strip between the driveway and the neighboring property.

9. SPR/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.

The interior and exterior of the buildings have been designed to facilitate building evacuation including three forms of egress per unit (1 basement level egress and 2 egress from the first floor). The proposed property will provide access to the building for fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment from Belknap Street.

10. SPR/ 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 property at 5-7 Belknap St. is not listed on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington*.

11. SPR/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.

Equipment installed on site include 8 condensers, located on the roof of each building, which will emit 56 decibels each, which is described as similar to a residential refrigerator.

The total proposed impervious area will be less than existing site conditions, and the addition of new native plantings and trees will have a positive impact on the immediate environment.

12. SPR/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.

This applicant has completed a LEED checklist and provided a summary of the sustainable practices that will be incorporated into the design of the development. In addition, the development will comply with the Town's Specialized Stretch Energy Code and the Fossil Fuel-Free Bylaw which ensure a maximum level of energy efficiency is achieved.

III. Findings

1. The ARB finds that the nature and use of the property is consistent with the purpose and intent of Section 5.9, Multi-Family Overlay Districts.
2. The ARB finds that the project is consistent with Site Plan Review/Environmental Design Review standards per Section 3.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.

IV. Recommended Conditions

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.
3. Applicant will obtain the necessary building permits and work with the Town Engineer to ensure compliance with all applicable codes.