



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 assist with the regulatory decision-making process.

To: Arlington Redevelopment Board
From: Claire V. Ricker, AICP Secretary Ex-Officio
Subject: Environmental Design Review, 15 Ryder St, Arlington, MA, Docket #3838
Date: February 20, 2025 & [revised March 20, 2025](#)

I. Docket Summary

This is an application by Thomas Allen, ABC Beer Inc, dba Arlington Brewing Company, 251 Lowell St, Arlington, MA 02474, to open Special Permit Docket #3838 in accordance with the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A § 11, and the Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw Sections 3.3, Special Permits, and 3.4, Environmental Design Review.

The Applicant proposes to construct an approximately 1,000-square foot addition and to renovate the interior of a two-story, vacant commercial building with off-street parking located at 15 Ryder Street, Arlington, MA, in the I Industrial District. The proposal would establish a single-story, mixed-use building with a brewery, including a taproom, and an approximately 3,900-square foot restaurant. The opening of the Docket is to allow the Board to review and approve the application under Section 3.3, Special Permits and Section 3.4, Environmental Design Review.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application include:

- EDR application for Special Permit
- Photos of existing conditions
- Architectural plans and drawings (Existing and Proposed)
- Site plan
- Solar evaluation
- LEED checklist
- Erosion & Sediment Control Plan
- [Memorandum with updated project narrative](#)
- [Updated dimensional and parking information](#)
- [Updated site plan, dated March 17, 2025](#)
- [Updated vehicular traffic plan, dated March 17, 2025](#)
- [Updated elevations, dated March 17, 2025](#)
- [Lighting plan, dated March 13, 2025](#)
- [Rooftop equipment plan](#)
- [Signage plan](#)
- [Bicycle parking specifications](#)
- [Updated LEED checklist, dated March 14, 2025](#)

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.

As per Section 5.6.3, Use Regulations for MU, PUD, I, T and OS Districts, a mixed-use brewery and a restaurant greater than 2,000 square feet in size is allowed in the Industrial District by Special Permit. The Board can find this condition met.

2. Section 3.3.3.B.

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

The Master Plan recommends incorporating new uses, such as restaurants, in mixed-use redevelopment in the Industrial district to help attract new businesses and jobs in growth industries and serve local employees, as well as residents throughout the region. Additionally, the proposed redevelopment is in close proximity to local attractions, the Ed Burns Arena and the Minuteman Bikeway. The Board can find this condition met.

3. Section 3.3.3.C.

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

The Applicant has proposed to remove the parking spaces directly in front of the building and convert that area to pedestrian walkways with short-term bike parking and landscaping. ~~Existing, non-conforming parking partially located in the front yard setback will continue to be provided on site.~~ The proposed brewery and restaurant uses will not create undue traffic congestion or impair pedestrian safety. The Board can find this condition 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.

Most recently, the building was used as a contractor office, shop and warehouse that generated significant large-vehicle traffic. Water usage of the brewery operation is comparable to that of other businesses of similar size and includes reuse where feasible to minimize consumption. 2,700 square feet of impervious surface will be converted into a permeable, landscaped outdoor beer garden located in the rear yard. The Project will not overload any public water, drainage, sewer system or other municipal system. 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 provided in the Bylaw for the proposed 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, morals, or welfare.

The use does not impair the integrity or character of the I district or adjacent residential districts and will not be detrimental to health or welfare. The surrounding uses are made up of residential, commercial, and industrial properties. The Board can find this condition 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.

There will be no excess of mixed-use in the neighborhood as a result of this development; rather the Applicant's proposal will comport with the objectives of the Master Plan to re-use underutilized industrial property and encourage mixed-use redevelopment with new commercial uses and employment opportunities in the I district. The Board can find this condition 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.

The proposed renovation is an interior fit-out with the construction of a cold storage room in the rear of the building. Site improvements will include new landscaping in the front, rear and right side yards to create pedestrian walkways and a beer garden. An existing conifer tree in the right side yard shall be preserved. The Board can find 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.

The proposed renovation is an interior fit-out of an existing building. Changes to the building's exterior will include a 960-square foot rear addition, updating façade materials, replacing doors and windows, and constructing a covered main entrance in front of the building. The Board can find 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 is minimal landscaping currently on the site. While no landscaped or usable open space is required in the I district, the proposed site improvements will increase overall open space on the parcel through the conversion of 2,700 square feet of surface parking behind the building to an outdoor drinking and dining space with a new deck, landscaping (including 3 shade trees), and permeable pavers. Additionally, parking in front of the building will be converted to a landscaped area (including 5 shade trees) with a new pedestrian walkway along Ryder Street. The Board can find 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.

Restriping and other minor improvements are proposed for the parking area. The lot is accessed via Ryder Street with both right and left turn accessibility when exiting the site. The portion of the site leased for the brewery and restaurant will be fenced off from the rest of the parcel [with gate access provided to delivery vehicles only](#). ~~Eleven-Fourteen (14) non-conforming~~ vehicle parking spaces [located in the front yard in front of the building](#) will be removed, as will the existing chain-link fence along Ryder Street. The table below shows the parking calculations for the Project using the exemption for mixed-use development provided in Section 6.1.10(C) of the Zoning Bylaw.

Vehicle Parking Requirements for Restaurant & Brewery		
Required parking spaces	17*	
Proposed parking spaces	20 17	
Proposed compact spaces	3	
Loading Requirements		
Required loading spaces	0*	
Proposed loading spaces	0	
<i>*Includes exemption for 3,000 square of non-residential space per Section 6.1.10(C)</i>		
Bicycle Parking Requirements		
Use	Long-Term Parking	Short-Term Parking
Brewery	3	2
Restaurant	1	4
Total Required Bicycle Parking	4	6
Total Proposed Bicycle Parking	4	22

The Applicant has requested relief to continue the existing, non-conforming loading/delivery access in the parking lot located on the side of the building [although the vehicle unloading will occur behind the leased premises](#). ~~The Board also may want to consider granting relief for the two existing parking spaces in the required front yard area.~~ The property owner has agreed to allow delivery

vehicles to enter through the gate at the rear of the parking lot, unload in the secure yard behind the leased premises, and exit via the access drive for the Artemis Apartments. Loading/delivery hours will be restricted to the hours of 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday during non-peak tap room hours. The existing building contains a loading bay with roll-up door for forklift access for deliveries. Trash and recycling is contained in a fenced enclosure located at the rear of the lot for weekly pick-up between 8:00 – 11:00 am.

A designated zone for rideshare pick-up on Ryder Street has been identified. New pedestrian walkways as proposed are adequate, although it is unclear from the submitted materials whether any curbing will also be constructed along the front or side lot lines adjacent to Ryder Street and the access drive for the Artemis Apartments. Short-term bicycle parking will be located in the front yard (22 spaces provided; 6 required). An outdoor bike shed with four (4) long-term spaces is proposed within a fenced area in the side yard.

Additionally, DPCD staff note:

- ~~Staff was unable to confirm the proposed bike shed for long-term parking will provide an enclosed, limited access area as is typical for such amenities.~~
- ~~Staff was unable to confirm whether any of the parking spaces will be EV ready, as required by the Stretch Code.~~
- The Project may be required to provide 20%, or 3, EV-ready parking spaces to comply with the Stretch Code. Only 2 EV-ready spaces are identified on the updated site plan.
- The Project is required to comply with all applicable AAB regulations for accessible parking, as confirmed by the Town's Director of Inspectional Services.

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.

The Applicant proposes to increase overall drainage capacity by converting 2,700 square feet of parking to a landscaped beer garden with permeable surfaces, while providing minimal treatment of stormwater generated on-site and reducing the amount of runoff from the property. The current drainage infrastructure will be adequate for the Project, as stated in the application, but it is unclear whether existing stormwater facilities are located on site. The Board can find this condition is met.

6. EDR-6 Utility 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.

The building will utilize existing utility services. No changes are proposed to pole-mounted utilities located on Ryder Street. The building is served by underground sanitary sewage disposal. Organic and compostable materials leftover from food service and brewing operations will be diverted from the waste stream to minimize the amount of trash sent to landfill or incineration. The Board can find 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 with three signs proposed:

- One externally illuminated painted wall sign centered above the roll-up door for delivery access measuring 40 square feet. The sign is to be installed at a sign height of approximately 25 feet.
- One internally illuminated wall sign next to the main entrance measuring 4 square feet. The sign is to be installed at a sign height of approximately 7 feet.
- One non-illuminated window sign next to the main entrance measuring 2 square feet.

Two wall signs and a window sign are proposed for the Project, which may require relief from the Board. The total number of signs exceeds the maximum allowable by right. ~~The total wall sign area reflects a 10% increase in the allowable area for a painted wall sign per §6.2.5.D(10) of the Zoning Bylaw. The total proposed wall sign area (44 square feet) exceeds the allowable square footage for wall signs. The Applicant should submit a representative to-scale drawing of the proposed window signage for the Board to assess.~~ Any signage and advertising will be in accordance with the provisions of Section 6.2 of the Zoning By-Law, compliant with the Industrial District requirements. Final signage will need to be submitted, reviewed, and approved administratively by the Department of Planning and Community Development or reviewed by the Board for a sign permit.

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.

A structure for long-term bicycle parking and a transformer will be located in the right side yard, which is to be fenced. The Board can find this condition 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.

~~Roof and building~~ Wall-mounted downlight fixtures are proposed for exterior illumination of the building with additional patio lighting. The property provides access to the building for fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment from Ryder Street. The Board can find this condition 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.

This property is not listed on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington* and is not under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historical Commission. The Board can find that 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.

This project will have no adverse impacts on light, air and water resources or on noise and temperature levels of the immediately environment. The outdoor beer garden will not play live music past 8:00 9:00 p.m. The maximum noise level of equipment used in the brewing process is 65 dBA at 10 feet. Kitchen vents are located at the rear of the building and the heat stream for brewery equipment will be vented out of the top of the building. The Board can find 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.

The Applicant has provided the required LEED checklist and an evaluation of rooftop solar capacity. The project will utilize sustainable building practices and include energy-efficient systems. The Board can find this condition is met.

IV. Findings

The following findings are for the Board's consideration:

1. The ARB finds that the project is consistent with Environmental Design Review per §3.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.
2. The ARB finds that the project is consistent with §3.3, Special Permits of the Zoning Bylaw.
3. The ARB finds that the pre-existing, non-conforming use of loading in the side yard is an acceptable alternative to providing loading/delivery access at the rear of the building per §6.1.10.F(2) of the Zoning Bylaw.
4. The ARB finds that up to 20% of the parking spaces in the lot, or a total of three (3) spaces, may be sized for compact cars per §6.1.11.C(11) of the Zoning Bylaw.
- ~~4. The ARB finds that the continued pre-existing non-conforming use of parking in the front yard is necessary and convenient to the public interest per §6.1.10.B of the Zoning Bylaw.~~
5. The ARB finds that the nature of the use being made of the building is such that allowing an additional sign for a total of 3 signs (2 wall signs and 1 window sign), ~~and a total wall sign area that exceeds 40 square feet in size~~ is in the public interest consistent with §6.2, Signs of the Zoning Bylaw.

V. Conditions

A. General

1. The final design, sign, exterior material, landscaping, and lighting plans shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board or administratively approved by the Department of Planning and Community Development.
2. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
3. 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.
4. Snow removal from all parts of the site, as well as from any abutting public sidewalks, shall be the responsibility of the owner and shall be accomplished in accordance with Town Bylaws.
5. Trash shall be picked up only on Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm. All exterior trash and storage areas on the property, if any, shall be properly screened and maintained in accordance with Article 30 of Town Bylaws.
6. The Applicant shall provide a statement from the Town Engineer that all proposed utility services have adequate capacity to serve the development. The Applicant shall provide evidence that a final plan for drainage and surface water removal has been reviewed and approved by the Town Engineer.
7. Upon installation of landscaping materials and other site improvements, the Applicant shall remain responsible for such materials and improvement and shall replace and repair as necessary to remain in compliance with the approved site plan.
8. All utilities serving or traversing the site (including electric, telephone, cable, and other such lines and equipment) shall be underground.
9. Upon the issuance of the building permit, the Applicant shall file with the Building Inspector and the Department of Community Safety the names and telephone numbers of contact personnel who may be reached 24 hours each day during the construction period.
10. Building signage shall be filed with and reviewed and approved by the Department of Planning and Community Development and Inspectional Services.
11. The Applicant must comply with the conditions set forth herein, with the State Building Code, including the Town of Arlington requirements, and, where applicable, with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board regulations.
12. The Applicant must obtain the necessary building permits and work with the Town Engineer to ensure compliance with all applicable codes.