



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, 259 Broadway, Docket #3849
Date: May 29, 2025; [revised May 30, 2025](#)

I. Docket Summary

This is an application by Steve Bouboulis, 259 Broadway Realty Trust, 131 Johnson Road, Winchester, MA 01890, to open Site Plan Review Docket #3849 in accordance with the provisions of the Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw Section 5.9.3 Site Plan Review.

The applicant proposes to renovate the interior of an existing, nonconforming multi-family building, construct a second egress, and add one additional unit for a total of 5 units. Under the proposal, a new stockade fence, 2 EV chargers, and new landscaping, including 3 street trees, would be installed. The detached garage would be demolished. The applicant has also requested a reduction from the required number of parking spaces (5 spaces) under Section 6.1.5 and will continue to provide 4 spaces in the driveway, including one compact car space.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application include:

- Architectural Plans and Drawings, various dates;
- Application for Site Plan Review, dated 4/22/25;
- Dimensional and Parking Information, dated 5/20/25;
- Impact Statement, dated 4/14/25;
- LEED Checklist, no date;
- Letter – Structural Inspection and Analysis of Roof, dated 4/11/25;
- Existing Conditions Photographs, dated 4/14/25; and
- Transportation Demand Management Plan, dated 5/20/25.

The subject property is located within the Residential Two-Family (R2) zoning district and the Massachusetts Avenue/Broadway Multi-Family Housing (MBMF) 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 (ARB, or the 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. Multi-Family Housing Overlay Districts (Arlington Zoning Bylaw Section 5.9.2)

All site plan reviews applicable to developments under Section 5.9 shall be consistent with the purposes of Section 5.9 and with M.G.L. c. 40A, § 3A, and any Compliance Guidelines issued thereunder, as amended. The purposes of the Multi-Family Housing Overlay Districts are:

- A. To respond to the local and regional need for housing by enabling development of a variety of housing types,
- B. To respond to the local and regional need for affordable housing by allowing for a variety of housing types with affordable housing requirements,
- C. To promote multi-family housing near retail services, offices, civic, and personal service uses, thus helping to ensure pedestrian-friendly development by allowing higher density housing in areas that are walkable to shopping and local services,
- D. To reduce dependency on automobiles by providing opportunities for upper-story and multi-family housing near public transportation,
- E. To encourage environmental and climate protection sensitive development,
- F. To encourage economic investment in the redevelopment of properties,
- G. To encourage residential uses to provide a customer base for local businesses, and
- H. To ensure compliance with M.G.L. c. 40A, § 3A.

III. 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 applicant is proposing to add an exterior staircase in the side yard, where the driveway is located, on a corner lot. New lawn area is proposed by the applicant, which will result in a slight increase in overall open space. The existing landscaping and walkways will be preserved, with additional shrubs and 3 new street trees added to the property. There is no landscape minimum under the MBMF Overlay District and there will be no changes to the existing grade. The Board can find this condition is met.

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 Residential Two-Family (R2) and is within the Mass Ave/Broadway Multi-Family Housing (MBMF) Overlay District. As this is an interior renovation of an existing building adding a second means of egress, the project will continue to relate to the neighborhood harmoniously. No changes to the building height or footprint are proposed. The Board can find this condition is met.

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.

Proposed changes to open space include 70 square feet of new lawn area that will replace impervious surface in the front yard on Palmer Street. The chain-link fence will be removed from the property and replaced with a stockade fence along the shared rear and side property lines. 4 of the 5 units have direct access to a porch or balcony, although there is no usable open space on the property. The Board can find this condition is met.

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 access to the property via foot, bicycle, and automobile. Driveway access is on Palmer Street. The driveway can accommodate 4 vehicles parked tandem.

| Vehicle Parking Requirements | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Required parking spaces | 5 | |
| Proposed parking spaces | 4 * | |
| Bicycle Parking Requirements | | |
| Use | Long-Term Parking | Short-Term Parking |
| Required Bicycle Parking | 8 | 1 |
| Proposed Bicycle Parking | 8 | 4 |

*The applicant proposes one compact car space and 3 full-sized vehicle spaces.

Under the proposal, the number of parking spaces provided will not change. The garage will be demolished with that area continuing to be used for parking. Two EV chargers will be installed, although the locations are not shown on the site plan.

Existing walkways on the site are adequate. Bicycle racks able to accommodate at least one cargo bike will be installed at the rear of the driveway. Long-term bicycle parking will be located down a short flight of stairs in the basement. The applicant should clarify whether a ramp is proposed for the basement stairs and show the location of the proposed racks and 8 long-term spaces on the site plan.

The applicant has submitted a Transportation Demand Management plan and requests a parking reduction from the ARB.

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.

No changes are proposed to surface water run-off on site. The drainage impact of the proposed exterior changes to the building will be minimal. The Board can find this condition is met.

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.

No changes are proposed to the location of existing utilities on the site. Water and electrical connections will be upgraded. The Board can find this condition is met.

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.

No advertising features are proposed. The Board can find this condition is met.

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.

A trash and recycling enclosure will be located at the rear of the driveway adjacent to bicycle parking as shown in the plans and drawings. Outdoor condensers for each unit's HVAC system will be installed behind the building. The Board can find this condition is met.

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 building is designed to facilitate building evacuation including two forms of egress per unit. The property provides access to the building for fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment from both Broadway and Palmer Street. The applicant has proposed downlighting fixtures at the main entrances with timer features. The new unit will have access to an upper-story porch with newly installed railings. The Board can find this condition is met.

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 259 Broadway is listed on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington* and is under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historical Commission. The Historical Commission may need to review the proposal; if so, this permit shall be conditioned on their approval.

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.

The total proposed impervious area will be less than existing site conditions, and the addition of new plantings and trees will have a positive impact on the immediate environment. The applicant should confirm all plantings shall consist of native, non-invasive species. The Board can find this condition is met.

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 an evaluation of rooftop solar capacity. The project will utilize sustainable building practices and include energy-efficient systems. In addition, the applicant will comply with the Town's [Specialized Stretch Energy Code and the](#) Fossil Fuel-Free Bylaw, which [will help](#) ensure a maximum level of energy efficiency is achieved. The Board can find this condition is met.

IV. Findings

The following findings are for the Board's consideration:

1. The nature and use of the property is consistent with the purpose and intent of Section 5.9, Multi-Family Overlay Districts.
2. The project is consistent with Site Plan Review/Environmental Design Review standards per Sections 5.9 and 3.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.
3. The project will not result in changes that are substantially more detrimental than the existing nonconforming structure or use to the neighborhood.
4. The proximity to bus stops and Transportation Demand Management methods to be employed, which include cargo bike parking, transit pass subsidies for tenants without vehicles, and unbundled on-site parking, justify a parking reduction per Section 6.1.5 of the Zoning Bylaw.
5. Up to 25% of on-site parking spaces, or 1 space, may be sized for compact cars per Section 5.9.4.F(1)(a) of the Zoning Bylaw.

V. 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.