

From: James Fleming
Sent: Friday, July 11, 2025 2:55 PM
To: Rachel Zsembery; Claire Ricker
Subject: public comment re: 126 Broadway SPR

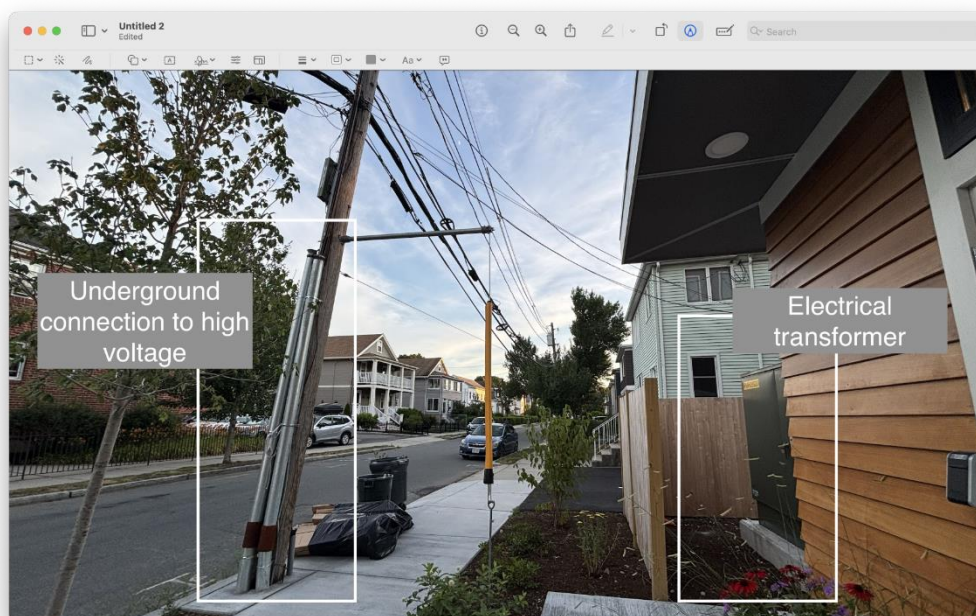
Hello! Please consider this as public comment for the yet-to-be-scheduled public hearing for 126 Broadway.

- James Fleming, 15 Melrose St

Looking at the plans for 126 Broadway I think there are two areas of regulation the ARB might want to think about filing future warrant articles for:

1) **Create Regulations for Transformer Placement** - Eversource does not allow direct hookup to 120/240V electrical lines if a lot is drawing more than 400 amperes of current; instead the property owner must connect to the higher voltage electrical lines through an underground connection and convert the voltage to 120/240 volts through an on-site transformer. An example is shown in the attached photo, of 80 Broadway. I don't see a mention of the electrical transformer in the plans for 126 Broadway -- this might be a question worth asking the architect.

Our zoning bylaw does not currently have any regulation regarding transformer placement. While the 80 Broadway lot made a reasonable decision (screening with a fence), I think it would be worth making a change to the bylaw to add some degree of requirements for transformers, for example either screening or a requirement that it be enclosed in the building. They are necessary devices, but I think it would be a reasonable requirement to hide them for the sake of beauty.



2) **Allow removal of the step-back requirement in some cases.** On the plans for 126 Broadway, the otherwise nice facade is interrupted by the step-back, most noticeably in window alignment between floors. Looking at the "SOUTH (EVERETT ST.) ELEVATION" sheet, the step back noticeably affects window fenestration as a result of the room locations changing.

I do not think the step back is a strictly necessary thing. I understand it is intended to address visual impact of building height, but I think there is a better way; A strong "base" to a building visually draws the eye downwards. An example of this can be seen in 659 Mass Ave (photo attached) which is 4 stories with no step back, yet my eye is drawn downwards by the strong base (quoining, commercial activity, and a beautifully elevated front entrance). The front facade is uninterrupted, allowing for a beautiful composition.

I think the ARB should consider opportunities to not require a step back, if such visual effects are used to draw the eye downwards. The step back simply seems like the wrong tool for the job -- it interrupts the primary facade partway up, drawing the eye upwards, wastes precious area that could be used for more productive purposes, and does not significantly improve shadows on neighboring properties. With no disrespect intended to the designers of 126 Mass Ave, the step-back's use as a "sedum roof" three stories up will not be very visible from the street.

