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May 2, 2022

Marzie Galazka  
Office of Community & Economic Development  
TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT  
22 Monument Avenue  
Swampscott, MA 01907

Re: Elm Place 40B  
Final Summary Architectural Peer Review

Dear Marzie:

Thanks for asking me to participate in the process of reviewing the proposed Elm Place 40B development on Essex Street, Pitman Road, and Elm Place in Swampscott. I believe the project has advanced very well, and it is clear that the Applicant has been very responsive to numerous suggestions from the Board, the public, and all of the peer reviewers that the Town retained. Only a few concerns remain, some of which may be candidates for conditions attached to the approval (or provide the basis for record drawing revisions/clarifications).

This letter is organized in a way that extracts concerns that I expressed in my original review letter dated February 14, 2022, and then provides comments that summarize the Applicant's response, and my reaction to their response. Also included are a handful of comments that came from other reviewers. I hope this approach makes sense to you, and of course, that you will contact me if you have any questions.

**1. From February 14, 2022 letter:** "There are several nearby neighbors who will be the most directly impacted by the proposed development. They are all of the homes on Pitman Road, the senior housing development on Doherty Circle, and the homes on Elm Place. There has been concern expressed by the neighbors on the south side of the tracks related to the potential for increased reflected train sound resulting from a taller building sited close to the tracks, as well as noise generated from use of the roof deck."

**Applicant response:** An reputable acoustical consultant was retained who determined that sound levels will not be significantly increased for the community on the opposite side of the train tracks (less than 3dB). It was determined that there are isolated areas on the same side of the tracks as the proposed development that would experience brief periods with a sound increase greater than 5dB. However, the report notes that there are other moments in the trains' travel on the tracks where the proposed structure would decrease the sound exposure to the same residence.

**Remaining concerns:** This reviewer suggested that the team should retain the acoustical consultant to study both vibration and sound impact for the residents of the proposed new structure. The study should be based on the analysis procedure outlined in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Noise Guidebook HUD-953-CPD(1), September 1991. At the conclusion of the study, the Applicant should be required to incorporate any elements into the project design to ensure that all acoustic and vibration impacts fall within the "Normally Acceptable" range.

**2. From February 14, 2022 letter:** "There is very little proposed usable outdoor space on the site. There is a small patch of green "park space" shown between the new structure and the tumbling facility (400 SF?). The programming of this space is not indicated on the Landscape Plan."

**Applicant response:** Commitment has been made to provide "unstructured tables and chairs" within the Park Space. In addition, the roof deck will be provided with gas grills for resident use, unstructured lounge seating, and a green turf area.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns, consider condition to permit to memorialize commitment.

3. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Where the building meets Essex, there is a triangular green area adjacent to the main entry where a "potential bus stop/shelter" is indicated on the plans..."

**Applicant response:** Commitment has been made to provide "standard bus shelter...5' wide by 9.6' long, covered, 3-sided, nice street sign with bus stop name, seating, area for service map. No advertisement area and no electronic realtime info."

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns, consider condition to permit to memorialize commitment.

4. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "The possibility of making a connection from the site (or adjacent to it) to the rail trail opens up considerable access to outdoor amenities."

**Applicant response:** Commitment has been made to adjust the building foundation to accommodate the potential future construction of an access ramp and tunnel under the railroad tracks.

**Remaining concerns:** While it may be the case that presently the MBTA prefers the idea of a bridge over the tracks (versus the tunnel), this reviewer believes that until it is definitively determined, the foundation modification should still be incorporated in the project design. A condition could be considered that the Applicant be required to participate in the process that will resolve the best approach to create the rail trail connection, as well as making a financial contribution to the project cost at least up to the value of the foundation modification (should the overhead approach be pursued).

5. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "A more detailed Landscape Plan should be provided that includes a planting schedule to facilitate a more in-depth review."

**Applicant response:** Landscape Plan with schedule has been provided.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

6. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "While street level perspectives have been provided to help understand the proposed streetscape, it is difficult to thoroughly analyze impact to the neighbors without additional documentation. Most important would be east-west street sections that include the neighbors across the street, as well as shadow studies."

**Applicant response:** Street sections and shadow studies were provided.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

7. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "A small, but potentially important view to study is from Essex Street to determine how well the northern-most elevator hoistway extension ties into the overall composition of the building."

**Applicant response:** SketchUp model was provided to this reviewer that facilitated review of perspectives from any angle.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

8. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Beyond the provision of outdoor bike racks, there does not appear to be other measures taken to encourage bicycle use. Most importantly, there does not seem to be secure, indoor bike storage within the parking garage or elsewhere."

**Applicant response:** A bike repair station and space for storing 15 bikes with access from Pitman Road is indicated in latest plans.

**Remaining concerns:** While moving in the right direction, this does not seem like a sufficient number of bike spaces for a 120-unit building. Board should consider a condition that requires review of the adequacy of this proposal within a year following occupation of the building. Perhaps a few parking spaces could be converted to bike parking if the situation needs to be addressed.

9. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Building elevations have not been annotated to indicate material selections. This is critical missing information that should be provided by the Applicant."

**Applicant response:** Current elevations include keys to proposed exterior envelope materials.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

10. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "A photometric plan is included in the materials, although it needs to be updated to reflect the revised site plan."

**Applicant response:** An updated photometric plan has been submitted.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

11. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Can a less prominent location for the transformer be found on the site?"

**Applicant response:** Developer has represented that the transformer cannot be relocated without reducing parking.

**Remaining concerns:** Applicant should consider placing transformer in a subterranean vault or diminish parking spaces in order to move the transformer to a less prominent location.

12. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Given the intensity of development on the site, a Construction Management Plan should be submitted. CMP should reflect any requirements imposed by MBTA given proximity to tracks."

**Applicant response:** A Construction Management Plan will be submitted by the General Contractor prior to construction.

**Remaining concerns:** Early engagement with the MBTA is critical, if for no other reason that to facilitate accurate pricing of the project.

13. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "The Applicant has committed to meeting Stretch Code level of Building Code mandated compliance. Additionally, there is a commitment to third-party (undesignated) inspections and commissioning. Solar panels are indicated on the roof plan."

**Applicant response:** In addition to meeting applicable code requirements, the developer has committed to meeting DHCD requirements, with the "intent to strive for a Passive House building under PHI."

**Remaining concerns:** Board may consider capturing commitments in a condition. Otherwise, no remaining concern.

14. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Project should provide information regarding proposed number and location of Group 2 fully accessible units, as well as a diagram that ensures that there is an accessible path between all amenities (including the proposed park spaces)."

**Applicant response:** Locations and diagram(s) will be provided for building permit.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

15. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Is a garage door proposed (this is a very visible element, and not clear what intention is)?"

**Applicant response:** March 8, 2022 letter from architect states that no garage door is proposed. Building elevations dated March 28 indicate that there is a garage door (although its material is not called out).

**Remaining concerns:** Board should consider conditioning approval with requirement to provide a parking garage door.

16. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Provide detailed floor plan for 16 stack of units (it appears that there may be inadequate access to exterior wall to accommodate a living room and a bedroom)."

**Applicant response:** Suitable detailed plan was provided.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

17. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "At Level 1, the southern elevator needs to open up at both the corridor level and the resident lounge level."

**Applicant response:** Corrected plan was issued.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

18. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** How are the Level 1 storage units allocated? Are they for management or resident use?

**Applicant response:** Storage units are for resident use, rented on a first come first serve basis.

**Remaining concerns:** For permitting purposes, drawings may need to indicate limitations on materials stored in spaces, door ratings, accessibility compliance, etc. All issues will presumably be resolved as design progresses.

19. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Balconies are missing on Level 3 plans, railroad track side of building. GSF of units should be noted on plans."

**Applicant response:** Plans corrected, GSF indicated in March 8, 2022 letter from architect.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

20. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Is another egress door required from the western end of the parking garage?"

**Applicant response:** Project team will retain a third-party code reviewer.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

21. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Central Laundry rooms appear to be very small."

**Applicant response:** Washers/dryers are provided in each unit.

**Remaining concerns:** DHCD may not allow individual washers/dryers, which would likely result in plan changes, potentially modifying unit mix.

22. From February 14, 2022 letter: "How many EV parking spaces are proposed?"

**Applicant response:** It is developer's goal to eventually add some EV spaces at Elm Place.

**Remaining concerns:** Board should consider condition that specifies minimum number of EV spaces that must be provided (beyond code minimum, which this reviewer believes is one).

23. From February 14, 2022 letter: "No elevator lobbies are indicated. How will code compliance be met?"

**Applicant response:** Elevator smoke curtains will be installed.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

24. From February 14, 2022 letter: If LIHTC funding is anticipated, are DHCD Design Requirements adhered to (for example, 2-bedroom units are typically limited to one bathroom)?

**Applicant response:** DHCD requirements are being met and will be reviewed by DHCD.

**Remaining concerns:** See remaining concern noted in #21 above.

25. From February 14, 2022 letter: "Is any screening of rooftop equipment required (none is shown in elevations or roof plan)?"

**Applicant response:** The development team will provide screening if necessary.

**Remaining concerns:** A condition requiring screening of mechanical equipment from any public way should be considered.

26. From February 14, 2022 letter: "What is status of discussions with Zipcar and MBTA?"

**Applicant response:** There is interest from Zipcar and the MBTA to potentially provide car sharing services adjacent to the project site, and the MBTA to potentially locate two spaces on an MBTA parking parcel near the commuter rail stop. Project team will continue discussions as project design evolves.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

27. From February 14, 2022 letter: "Has a full geo-technical report been generated? If so, this should be made available."

**Applicant response:** A full geotechnical report was provided prepared by a reputable firm.

**Remaining concerns:** While significant prefoundation-construction soil preparation is necessary on the site, presumably all measures outlined in the report will be followed and included in the construction documents. No remaining concerns.

28. From February 14, 2022 letter: "Will the development require impactresistant glazing on windows given proximity to open water?"

**Developer response:** Same as #20 above.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

29. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "It is unclear if current plans satisfy Fire Department request for access to roof from all stairways."

**Applicant response:** Roof access has been provided at all stairs.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

30. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Is the Applicant still looking at creating a gated access to Doherty Circle?"

**Applicant response:** Gate access is not being provided to Doherty Circle.

**Remaining concerns:** As long as plans are approved by the Fire Department, no remaining concerns.

31. **From February 14, 2022 letter:** "Developer should finalize and commit to a detailed Transportation Demand Management Plan that describes measures to encourage alternative modes of transportation."

**Applicant response:** TDM was included in Vanasse Transportation Impact Analysis.

**Remaining concerns:** No remaining concerns.

As noted above, I hope you will get in touch with me if you need any clarifications. I'm looking forward to seeing this project continue to develop!

Sincerely,  
DAVIS SQUARE ARCHITECTS, INC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Boehmer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Clifford Boehmer AIA  
Principal