



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
Department of Planning & 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: Jennifer Raitt, Secretary Ex-Officio

Subject: Environmental Design Review, 93 Broadway, Arlington, MA
Docket #3504

Date: January 28, 2020

I. Docket Summary

This is an application by Kevin Flynn for Springboard Schools, Inc., at 93 Broadway, Arlington, MA, 02476, to reopen Special Permit Docket #3504 in accordance with the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A § 11, and the Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw Section 3.4, Environmental Design Review. The reopening of the Special Permit is for the Board to review an addition to the school on the adjacent vacant lot, and a request to amend the parking reduction under Section 6.1.5.

Springboard Schools has operated the Learn To Grow early childhood learning center at 93 Broadway since 2017. The project was the subject of Environmental Design Review (EDR) Special Permit Docket #3504 for which the ARB issued a Decision dated June 20, 2016. Springboard Schools applied for and the Board approved an EDR Special Permit for a mixed-use building at 87-89 Broadway in 2017. The mixed-use building was never constructed, and at this time the Applicant proposes to expand the school into the vacant lot at 87-89 Broadway.

Although Learn To Grow received an EDR Special Permit in 2016 for the school, early childhood learning centers are protected under MGL c. 40A Section 3. As such, the use is allowed by-right and is only subject to reasonable regulation including the bulk and height of structures and in determining yard sizes, lot area, setbacks, open space,

parking, and building coverage requirements. While the bylaw has since been amended by Town Meeting to correctly address how protected uses must be treated by law and the Board subsequently adopted a rule regarding reviews of “Dover uses”, since this property has an existing Special Permit authorizing the use, the early childhood learning center is returning to the Redevelopment Board for review.

The existing Learn To Grow early childhood learning center has 6 existing classrooms. During the original review, the applicant requested and received a reduction of the number of required parking spaces to allow 3 parking spaces. A Transportation Demand Management Plan was approved and put into place for the school in exchange for the reduction.

The proposed addition is nearly a mirror image of the existing Learn To Grow structure. Five new classrooms will be housed in the expanded school. Three new parking spaces will be added. Once the expansion is completed, the school will have 11 classrooms and 6 parking spaces, one of which is accessible.

The following is a zoning analysis for the property:

	Requirement	Proposed	Notes
Minimum Lot Area	None	17,552 sf	Includes 93 Broadway and 87-89 Broadway
Minimum Lot Frontage	50 ft	284 ft	Entire frontage on Broadway and North Union Street
Front Yard	None	0.3 ft / 7.5 ft	
Side Yard	None	4.5 ft	Side Yard is designated opposite of Broadway
Rear Yard	10 + (L/10) or 18.08 ft	18.1 ft	Rear Yard is designated opposite of North Union Street
Landscaped Open Space	1,636.5 sf	5,197 sf	
Usable Open Space	None	None	Usable open space is calculated off of the residential floor area. There is no in this proposal.
Maximum Height in Feet	35 ft	34.5 ft	
Maximum Height in Stories	2.5 stories	2.5 stories	
Floor Area Ratio	1.00	0.93	

Materials submitted for consideration of this application:

- Application for EDR Special Permit;

- Narrative dated December 13, 2019;
- Transportation Demand Management Plan dated December 14, 2019;
- LEED Checklist;
- Plan of Land, dated December 8, 2019; and
- Plan Set dated January 7, 2020, including
 - Title Page, Drawing Index, and Zoning Notes,
 - Code Review, Egress,
 - Site Plan,
 - Proposed Plans - Basement,
 - Proposed Plans – First Floor,
 - Proposed Plans – Second Floor,
 - Proposed Plans – Attic,
 - Proposed Exterior Elevations.

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.

Educational facilities are allowed by-right in any zoning district per MGL c. 40A Section 3. Since this property has an existing Special Permit authorizing the use, the early childhood learning center returns to the Redevelopment Board for review. The Board can find that this condition is met.

2. Section 3.3.3.B.

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

The existing Learn To Grow facility provides a critical resource in the town. Childcare and early childhood learning are fundamental components of a livable community for many families. As noted in the application materials, being able to accommodate more students at the facility will be an attractive and much needed amenity to the town. While community planning and economic development initiatives often focus on housing, transportation, and employment; childcare is often the missing link. Learn to Grow is located in East Arlington where the center continues to make childcare and early childhood learning available to the community.

3. Section 3.3.3.C.

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

Learn To Grow has a single parking lot accessed from Broadway. The existing parking lot will be expanded to 6 parking spaces, including one accessible parking space. On a

highly trafficked portion of Broadway, the single curb cut reduces the number of potential conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians on the sidewalk.

The school also has an existing Transportation Demand Management Plan in place and its implementation has been successful. In the application materials, the applicant provides projected demand during drop-off and pick-up at the school. In most cases, the parking lot will be able to accommodate parents or guardians, and the available on-street parking on Broadway will be able to accommodate short-term parking during these periods. Outside of these periods, the parking lot can accommodate longer-term visits by families or other visitors to the school. As such, the expansion of the school will not create undue or exacerbate existing traffic congestion.

The Board can find that this condition is 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.

With the proposed addition, the school will expand onto the adjacent vacant lot at 87-89 Broadway, which is currently entirely impervious. Stormwater on this site generally flows toward the street and is not contained.

There will be an increase to pervious surfaces around the proposed addition due to the installation of lawn, landscaping, and play areas that will surround the proposed addition. Rather than sheet flow off of the site, stormwater will be reabsorbed on site. Additionally, the gutters and downspouts from the proposed addition will direct runoff to the existing on subsurface stormwater management system in order to further decrease stormwater runoff from the site.

No new utility connections are necessary, as the utilities will be connected through the existing building.

The Board can find that this condition is met.

5. Section 3.3.3.E.

Any special regulations for the use as may be provided in the Bylaw are fulfilled.

No special regulations are applicable to the proposal. The Board can find that this condition is 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 or welfare.

The use does not impair the integrity or character of the neighborhood. The property at 87-89 Broadway has been vacant for more than 2 years since the Redevelopment Board issued its prior Decision. The expansion of the school onto this property enhances the services Learn To Grow provides to the community and will improve the streetscape.

The proposed addition creates an attractive and welcoming building. The façade design improvements are consistent with the Design Standards for the Town of Arlington. The proposed design of the structure is consistent with the standards for building height, the public realm interface, façade and materials, and signage and wayfinding.

The proposed project will contain play spaces at the perimeter of the new building. The use will not increase in intensity or duration from what is currently occurring. The classrooms all operate on slightly different schedules and efforts will be made to stagger outside time so as not to disrupt the neighborhood.

The Board can find that this condition is 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.

The use will not be in excess or detrimental to the character of the neighborhood. The Board can find that this condition is 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 existing site condition is primarily impervious and there is no vegetation to preserve. Landscaped areas and buffers will be added around the addition, and be maintained by the Applicant regularly. The Board can find that 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.

This proposal does not detract from the district's business character or the adjacent residential uses. The proposed addition will mirror the existing building at 93 Broadway, and will provide a welcoming appearance to the school. The proposed addition utilizes a vacant lot.

The scale and architecture of the building is consistent with the surrounding area, where the first floor of the existing structure and the proposed addition have a commercial feel, while the upper story relates to the residential buildings. The long connector hallway between the two main structures will not be much longer than it is today. There may be an opportunity to continue the red accent of the canopies across the structure to enliven the appearance.

The Board can find that 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.

Exterior space around the addition will be used as an outdoor play area on the property. It will be surrounded by a buffer of evergreen plantings. A wood fence will also be installed around the rear, side, and partially along Broadway to provide some privacy for the play space. The Board can find that 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.

The application materials indicate that 3 additional parking spaces will be provided on the site, for a total of 6 parking spaces. The applicant has requested a parking reduction under Section 6.1.5:

Parking Requirement			
		Zoning Requirement	Total Parking Required
Classrooms	11 rooms	2 spaces per classroom	21 spaces
Section 6.1.5 Reduction			Up to 25% of the requirement, or 6 spaces
Total Parking Provided			6 spaces

Three parking spaces currently exist on the site, and 3 more will be added leading from the existing curb cut. This will result in the loss of some landscaped area, but overall, landscaped area will increase due to the new landscaped and lawn areas at 87-89 Broadway.

The proposed project is also in compliance with the recently adopted bicycle parking amendments. For the school in its entirety, 1.70 short-term spaces are required per classroom, or 19 spaces are required. There are currently 12 bicycle parking spaces under the canopy at the existing school and the applicant proposes to install another 12 spaces for a total of 24 short-term bicycle parking spaces. Per the regulations, 0.30 long-term bicycle parking spaces are required per classroom for a total of 4 long-term bicycle parking spaces. The school will create bicycle storage in the basement which is accessible by elevator. Additionally, per Section 6.1.12.H(1), the ARB may allow 4 short-term parking spaces to satisfy the long-term bicycle parking requirements. There are more than adequate short-term bicycle parking spaces to satisfy this allowance.

Learn To Grow also updated the Transportation Demand Management Plan per Section 6.1.5. of the Zoning Bylaw to account for the increase in the number of classrooms. Overall, Learn To Grow reports success in encouraging families and employees to choose alternative modes to arrive at the school, including the covered bicycle parking and general communication with the parents and guardians of the students. There are also incentives provided to families who choose not to drive. For those families that choose to or need to drive to the school, Learn To Grow has projected the number of vehicles that would be parked onsite, and determines that the 6 parking spaces will be able to accommodate the timed drop-offs and pick-ups. If there is an instance where the parking lot is full, on-street parking on Broadway is available. Learn To Grow also reports that since the school has been open, the 3 parking spaces have been adequate.

Learn to Grow will have 29 teachers at the expanded school. The school projects that 11 will drive, 8 will walk or use a bicycle, and 10 will use public transportation. Learn To Grow provides a 50% subsidy of transit passes for employees and covered bicycle parking as well as the ability to bring bicycles into the school.

Overall, it appears that the school is committed to encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation beyond a personal vehicle for staff and families. Learn to Grow has a specific plan in place to ensure that the 6 parking spaces will meet the needs of the school community and the surrounding neighborhood. The Board can find that this condition is met.

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 insure 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.

Learn To Grow will expand into the vacant and impervious lot at 87-89 Broadway. There are no stormwater controls on the vacant site, and stormwater sheet flows from the site into the road. With the proposed addition, some impervious areas will be removed from the property and replaced with lawn and landscaping where stormwater can be reabsorbed on site. Additionally, the gutters and downspouts on the addition will direct stormwater from the roof into the existing subsurface stormwater management system located under the parking area. The Board can find that this condition is met.

6. 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 new utility connections will be made, as the existing utility connections will be extended into the addition to the school. The Board can find that 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.

There are no changes to the existing signage as a result of the proposed addition. The Board can find that this condition is met.

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.

The existing service area is located off of North Union Street behind the existing Learn To Grow structure. This area will continue to serve the expanded school and will be screened from public view or access. The Board can find that this condition is 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.

Safety will be improved within the building and around the project site through the addition of an egress stair from the basement. While there is no information in the application materials regarding exterior lighting, it is understood that the entrances and walkways will be well-lit. The Board can find that this condition is 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.

The existing structure is not listed on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington* nor is it 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.

There are no proposed changes (new structures, hard surface, ground coverage, or machinery) that will impact the microclimate. The Board can find that 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.

A LEED Checklist is provided. The project will include Energy Star fixtures and will include high R-value insulation. The Board can find that this condition is met.

IV. Conditions

1. The final design, façade improvements, landscaping, fencing, and lighting plans shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board. 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. 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 the Town Bylaws.

6. The Applicant shall provide a statement from the Town Engineer that all proposed utility services have adequate capacity to serve the school. 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. Upon the issuance of the building permit the Applicant shall file with the Inspectional Services Department and the Police Department the names and telephone numbers of contact personnel who may be reached 24 hours each day during the construction period.