



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, 10 Sunnyside Avenue, Arlington, MA
Docket #3647

Date: February 25, 2021

I. Docket Summary

This is an application by MB Realty Group, LLC, 339 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA, to open Special Permit Docket #3647 in accordance with the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A § 11, and the Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw Section 3.4, Environmental Design Review. The applicant proposes to construct a mixed-use building containing general office space and five residential condominiums at 10 Sunnyside Avenue, Arlington, MA in the B4 Vehicular Oriented Business District.

The mixed-use structure is intended to be used by Column Health. Management employees will occupy the office space and the residences are intended for employees as well. Column Health also operates health care space at 339 Massachusetts Avenue, but those services are not intended to move to 10 Sunnyside Avenue.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application:

- Application for EDR Special Permit;
- Existing Conditions Plan, prepared by Coneco, dated November 9, 2020, updated for the hearing on February 25, 2021;

- Site Plans for Column Health Offices & Residences, prepared by EBI Consulting, dated December 7, 2020, updated for the hearing on February 25, 2021;
- Architectural Site Plans, Gross Floor Area Plans, Floor Plans, Elevations, Perspectives, and Renderings, prepared by Khalsa Design, dated December 8, 2020, updated for the hearing on February 25, 2021;
- Supplemental Traffic Impact Study, prepared by Nitsch Engineering, dated December 22, 2020;
- Stormwater Management Report, prepared by EBI Consulting, dated November 17, 2020; and
- LEED Checklist.

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.

A mixed-use building is allowed in the B4 Vehicular Oriented Business District. The Board can find this condition is met.

2. Section 3.3.3.B.

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

The Master Plan promotes mixed-use as a means to revitalize business districts, by bringing customers and street life to commercial zones. The Zoning Bylaw in Section 5.5.1 notes that all vehicular oriented businesses in this zoning district are encouraged to convert property to other retail, service, office, or residential use, especially as part of mixed-use developments. The office space will be used by Column Health for management employees and the residential space is for Column Health employees as a live-work arrangement. The redevelopment of this former automotive repair site is desirable for the site. The Board can find this condition is met.

3. Section 3.3.3.C.

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

Due to the live-work arrangement for Column Health employees, and the limited management staff who will utilize the office space, the proposed project will not create undue traffic congestion. The redevelopment of the site includes the establishment of a more formal sidewalk with a single entry and exit to the site improving pedestrian safety along Sunnyside Avenue. The Board can find 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.

The proposed mixed-use structure will not overload the public water, drainage, or sewer system. The redevelopment of the site includes upgrades to manage stormwater onsite, particularly runoff from portions of the roof, driveway, and landscaped area, as well as the inclusion of permeable pavers. 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 for this particular 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 or welfare.

The redevelopment of this former automotive-oriented site will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health and welfare. Mixed-use structures are encouraged to replace former automotive uses in this district. The Board can find 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 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 developed with extensive asphalt pavement and a garage structure. There is some landscaping inside the security fencing that has been previously maintained, and the remainder of the vegetation on site has never been maintained. As part of the redevelopment of the site, new landscaping will be installed

along the perimeter of the site and in other areas internal to the site. The Board can find this condition 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 architectural style of the building is contemporary. Incorporating the façade of the existing garage on the site creates some visual interest and speaks to the site history. The larger portion of the structure meets many of the recommendations of the Design Standards of the Town of Arlington. In particular, there is ground floor transparency and variation in the building facades. More description about and samples of the building materials may be necessary.

The building is in compliance with the floor area ratio allowed for the use in this zoning district. (Please note this update on the revised plans submitted February 25, 2021.)

The taller portion of the structure is a full four stories, and the fifth story is more than just a headhouse for the elevator. There are spaces used for human occupation on the fifth floor, which are not comparable to the maximum height exceptions included in Section 5.3.20. The Density and Dimensional Table in Section 5.5.2.A. shows two different maximum height and stories for this use, with a circular reference to Section 5.3.19, otherwise known as the reduced height buffer area. The application materials include an analysis of the reduced height buffer area, and a portion of the building does fall into the buffer area. As such, the applicant has requested the Redevelopment Board to make a determination that the building will not adversely affect the nearby R1 and R2 zoning districts due to the existing use or topographic conditions. The application materials indicate that this determination could be made due to the context of the neighborhood and the immediately adjacent business zoning districts. Renderings are provided.

Further, the upper story building stepback is not provided per Section 5.3.17; however, there is still variation in the building façade that the Redevelopment Board may consider this consistent with the intent of the Bylaw.

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.

The usable open space requirement is approximately 3,237 square feet. Approximately 1,780 square feet of open space is provided at grade. It should be noted that the area of usable open space meets the requirement to be no less than 25 feet in any horizontal direction. There is additional open space provided on roofs and balconies, including 645 square feet in the green house and 5,784 square feet is located on the residential balconies and roof decks, a portion of which can be counted toward the usable open space requirement per Section 5.3.18.

The ARB may want to see more detail about plantings and landscaping at grade and in other areas.

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 proposal includes 21 parking spaces. Section 6.1 requires 20 parking spaces. 18 of the proposed parking spaces will be located in a garage and the applicant proposes using car stackers to maximize the use of the garage space. An attendant will operate the car stacker. The remaining three parking spaces will be tandem along the rear of the residential portion of the building. No setback for these parking spaces or driveway space is required as the adjacent use is a business use, although there is a retaining wall between the rear of the property and the adjacent property and some landscaping.

All of the parking spaces are compliant with the dimensions required by Section 6.1.11.A. However, the drive aisle between the two portions of the building and the drive aisle in the parking garage, both of which support two-way traffic are only 20 feet wide, whereas the requirement is 24 feet.

A Traffic Impact Study was provided with the application materials. Because of the live-work arrangement for this Column Health building, the number of vehicular trips is projected to be very low. As such, the study notes that the redevelopment of this site would not negatively affect the intersections in the immediate area.

Bicycle parking is provided throughout the property. In total, 13 short-term bicycle parking spaces and 11 long-term bicycle parking spaces are provided. The updated plan set received February 25th includes a specification for an inverted U style bike rack. This

style bike rack is likely acceptable for the outdoor racks, but may be refined for the indoor bike racks.

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.

A Stormwater Report is included in the application materials. The current site conditions allow stormwater to leave the site untreated and flow into catch basins on Sunnyside Avenue. The proposed redevelopment stormwater plan will capture some stormwater onsite. Stormwater from the residential roof, a portion of the office roof, the driveway, and some landscaped areas will be collected by catch basins and directed to an underground infiltration trench. Permeable pavers will capture additional runoff. The remaining portion of the office roof and other portions of the site that are impracticable to direct to the infiltration trench will continue to leave the site and enter the municipal system in Sunnyside Avenue.

A Long Term Pollution Prevention Plan and an Operations and Maintenance Plan are included with the Stormwater Report.

The Board can find 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.

All new utility service will be underground. 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 application materials indicate that there will be new Column Health signage on the building and a street number above the residential entrance. In the updated plan set received February 25th, details on the Column Health signage is provided. The sign is 42 square feet and will have no internal illumination. The maximum size for a wall sign at this location is 40 square feet. There may be the opportunity to slightly shrink the signage to be compliant with Section 6.2. The Board may want to request additional information about the materials proposed for the sign.

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.

There are no such special features proposed for the site. The Board can find 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.

As noted in the application materials, the buildings have been designed to facilitate evacuation and accessibility. The Board can find 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. As such, the site contains no historic, traditional or significant uses, structures or architectural elements. The Board can find 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 that will impact the microclimate. 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 provided a LEED Checklist and the project would meet Gold Certification standards indicating that LEED performance standards will clearly be incorporated into the project. Additionally, the application materials indicate that solar will be used, geo-thermal heating and cooling, energy efficient windows, sustainable interior products, and other elements to promote passive heating and cooling. A large greenhouse is also proposed. 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 Section 3.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.
2. The ARB finds that the five-story building will not adversely affect the adjacent R1 and R2 zoning districts per Section 5.3.19.

V. Conditions

The following conditions are for the Board's consideration:

General

1. The final design, sign, exterior material, landscaping, and lighting plans shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board at the time when future operators are identified. 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. Upon installation of landscaping materials and other site improvements, the owner shall remain responsible for such materials and improvement and shall replace and repair as necessary to remain in compliance with the approved site plan.
7. 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.