



January 23, 2023

Mr. Christian Klein, Chairman
Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals
23 Maple Street
Arlington, MA 02476

Re: 1021-1025 Massachusetts Avenue
Response to Peer Review

At the request of Maggiore Development, we have reviewed the peer reviews from multiple departments and commissions. We have responded to each review comment below organized by reviewer.

KZLA Responses to 11/27/22 Planning Department Comments to ZBA:

3. Conservation and Environmental Amenities

The Zoning Bylaw requires one public shade tree shall be provided every 25 linear feet of lot frontage along a public way. This should be required per Section 6.3.

Four trees are proposed along the Massachusetts Avenue frontage. These trees are located in all viable locations that avoid utility infrastructure, driveways and the building entries.

The applicant should provide a buffer between sidewalk and the curb for pedestrians. The redevelopment is an opportunity to reconsider the relationship between development and the street, including expansion of the public realm.

There is insufficient space to add a furnishings zone between the sidewalk and curb.

The applicant should consult with the Tree Warden on what trees should be saved and what trees (location, type, amount) need to be planted. The ZBA may wish to request a contribution to the Town's tree fund to be made as compensation for the reduction in trees on the rear of the parcels.

Trees that are proposed to be removed are shown on the civil plans. Applicant will consult with Tree Warden regarding what trees are proposed to be planted.

KZLA Responses to 10/31/22 Arlington Tree Committee:

The plan presented at the 10/18/22 ZBA meeting proposes removing most of the lot's trees (many of which are sizeable and a great loss to our canopy), building a five-story building, and creating a private woodland area in the rear of the new property, planted with a selection of native trees/shrubs/plants (over a buried artificial stormwater catchment area).

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A meadow is proposed over the stormwater infiltration system, the native trees/shrubs/plants are not over the infiltration system.

Although on private land, the wooded area on this property is a piece of Arlington's tree canopy; its loss would further contribute to the decline of Arlington's tree canopy.

In the longer term, establishing and sustaining a grove of native species will provide more benefit for the town and for the Mill Brook corridor than the existing canopy.

Much of the parcel's forest is of the Norway Maple species; although classified as invasive, that does not preclude their preservation. While the Town does not plant this species anymore, the Norway Maples currently in Arlington strongly contribute to the canopy's functions of carbon sequestration, oxygen generation, shade creation, and heat island minimization.

In the longer term, establishing and sustaining a grove of native species will provide more benefit for the town and for the Mill Brook corridor than the existing canopy.

The proposed project includes the removal of a healthy, significant (roughly 4 ft. in diameter and 70 ft. tall) London Plane tree. Replacing the canopy of this single, mature specimen would take over 30 years.

The removal of the London Plane tree cannot be avoided with the proposed development.

The requested waiver of the requirements and structures of the Article 16 Tree Preservation Bylaw is contrary to the interests of the Town. Article 16 mitigation fees should be calculated and expressed in waiver request so that everyone is aware of the value of the waiver being requested.

We will provide a calculation of the value of the waiver being sought.

The reduction of the setbacks is concerning especially along the front yard as this would limit the space available for introducing shade trees along Mass Ave, an area that is one of Arlington's known heat islands. Furthermore, there are no "tree planting strips" on this block (and therefore, no public street trees planted), AND there are overhead wires on this side of Mass. Ave. The ATC recommends the set-back be large enough to plant large caliper (2 in. diameter and up) deciduous canopy shade trees (not understory trees); current plan suggests less appropriate evergreen trees planted in front of the large building.

Sargent Cherries are proposed in the setback. These have been selected for a shape and mass that fits the space. Sargent Cherries are not small scale ornamental trees and will contribute to the urban tree canopy. No evergreen trees are proposed in front of the building.

The ATC is pleased that the applicant is working with a landscape architect (Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture), hopefully ensuring a sensitivity to tree issues. We ask that Article 16 mitigation fees be calculated and expressed within the project documentation. Our expectation is that mature tree loss will be minimized, and that expansion of the tree canopy will be encouraged

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through a thoughtful and forward-thinking design process.

Retaining the Norway Maple grove will introduce Norway Maple seeds and seedlings along the Mill Brook Corridor, which is a real concern. This monoculture of invasive species has limited benefit for the Mill Brook watershed. In the longer term, establishing and sustaining a grove of native species will provide more benefit for the town and for the Mill Brook corridor than the existing canopy.

Can the proposal Tree Plan be modified to retain some of the existing forest especially along the perimeters that abut the neighboring asphalt parking lots (heat islands)? If not, why not?

Retaining some of the Norway Maples which have shallow and dense root systems with allelopathic characteristics and would produce volumes of seeds and seedlings would negatively effect the establishment of the proposed native grove of plants.

Can the applicant provide a detailed list of tree species for removal on the Tree Plan)?

The majority of the trees proposed to be removed are Norway Maple.

Can Article 16 mitigation fees be calculated and expressed in waiver request.

We will provide a calculation of the value of the waiver being sought.

Has there been thought given to retaining any of the mature, high-value trees (i.e. leaving mature trees screening adjacent properties; leaving the mature London Plane trophy tree (mentioned above); leaving mature, healthy Norway Maple and other trees where possible, to help transition to the new tree canopy? Specific examples of suggested current tree retention are circled in red below.

Due to site grading and in the interest of establishing native species on site, the existing trees are not proposed to be retained.

Why is it believed that the proposed catchment area is superior to the existing natural catchment?

Mike Novak to respond

How can the artificial catchment area being proposed properly function if installed on the existing ledge?

Test pits and borings did not reveal the presence of ledge.

Could larger caliper trees be planted as part of the planting plan given the expected removal of such a large number of trees?

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A variety of tree sizes are proposed from seedlings to 3” caliper. We do not recommend installing larger caliper trees since they take longer to recover from transplant shock.

Is an irrigation system planned to sustain the proposed new landscape? If not, why not?

Yes, an irrigation system is proposed.

KZLA Responses to 11/2/22 Transportation Advisory Committee:

The Recreation and Open Space Amenities Plan shows shrubs/perennials planted within project’s plaza area. Street trees should also be provided along the project frontage.

Trees are proposed between the back of sidewalk and proposed building.

Will the tables, chairs, umbrellas, lawn, and furniture proposed within the plaza area be for project residents, or commercial patrons? Will it be open to the public?

The furnishings on the plaza will be available for residents, retail customers and the public.

Would the proposed pedestrian pathway on the west side of the building, to access the open spaces at the rear of the site, be open to the public?

That walkway is for the project residents only.

KZLA Responses to 5/18/22 Engineering Division:

Landscaping:

Project should provide properly placed screening to minimize impacts on abutting properties.

Screen planting is proposed for abutting properties.

If possible, street tree plantings should be provided along Mass Ave. to reduce heat island effects.

Trees are proposed between the building and the public sidewalk.

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Please feel free contact me with any comments or questions. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KZ', is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Kyle S. Zick, ASLA
Principal

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