

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY OF NEWTON

Massachusetts

DATE: April 30, 2021

TO: City Council

FROM: Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director of Planning and Development
Michael Gleba, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Petitions #319-20 & 320-20
1149-1151 Walnut Street

The Planning Department has analyzed the shadow studies submitted by the petitioner for the proposed 25-unit mixed-use building at 1149-1151 Walnut, as well as the shadow studies presented by the abutter. The two studies are very similar, with the primary difference being the petitioner's studies differentiate between existing shadows cast by current buildings and new shadows created by the proposed building.

The Mixed Use 4 (MU4) zone requires that when the City Council approves a building of up to 5 stories that there is a finding that the proposed structure is compatible in visual scale to its surroundings, does not adversely affect its surroundings by creating shadows or blocking views, and advances the purposes of the district. The proposed building is four stories and steps down to three stories adjacent to the northern property line.

The Planning Department does not find the incremental increase in shadows cast as a result of the proposed building to be adversely affecting surrounding properties. Shadows are primarily limited to morning hours beginning in October, except for the winter solstice where shadows on a portion of the abutting properties to the north extend to the early afternoon. Shadows are to be expected during this time of year when the sun is at a lower angle than other seasons and shadows are at their longest. With the exception of 9 a.m. on the winter solstice when shadows briefly extend to the eastern façade, shadows on the building abutting the project site to the north are primarily limited to the southeastern façade, which is already partially shaded year-round by mature trees. The remainder of the year shadows from the proposed building would have a limited effect on abutting properties.

The shadows from the proposed building were also mitigated somewhat by the removal of one unit from the fourth floor on the northwest facade of the proposed building resulting in a three-story building along the northern property line. This reduction in height abutting 1141 Walnut Street resulted in a reduction in shadows throughout the year.

cc: Planning Department Files
City Clerk Files