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Barney Heath
Director

DATE: June 23, 2021
TO: Neil Cronin, Chief Planner
FROM: Urban Design Commission
RE: 1114 Beacon Street
CC: Land Use Committee of the City Council
Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Community Development
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director
Petitioner

Section 22-80 of the Newton City Ordinances authorizes the Urban Design Commission to act in an advisory capacity on matters of urban design and beautification. At their regular meeting on June 9, 2021, the Newton Urban Design Commission reviewed the proposed project at 1114 Beacon Street for design. The Urban Design Commission had the following comments and recommendations:

The UDC commented this is a big improvement since last time UDC reviewed this project. The UDC also commented that the design has come a long way. It has advanced very nicely on many fronts.

Building Massing, Height and Architecture

- The large archway is only to access 5 parking spaces, it seems a little grand for what it is serving. It seems to be announcing something bigger than parking. The UDC recommended to tone it down, make it less grand.

Landscape, Streetscape and Public Open Space

- The UDC recommended to provide landscaping in front of the building. One of the members commented to make it look like the dentist office down the street. The UDC asked if there will be enough space to make it look somewhat like the dentist office down the street? The applicant responded that they have a landscape architect and plan to make this a beautiful building. The UDC asked about a site plan showing landscape area. The applicant commented that there are a few trees in the front. The UDC commented it's important to know if there is enough space to have trees in the front. The two buildings down the street are very different in character with landscaped green spaces in front of the buildings, sidewalks, and tree lawns.

This building should be in keeping with those two buildings which are pedestrian-oriented and not the adjacent single-story commercial buildings with parking instead of green space in front.

- The applicant commented that there is a 10 feet setback from the back of the sidewalk to the edge of the projecting bay windows which project about 3-4 feet. The remainder of the building is setback another 3-4 feet so there is some substantial green space between the edge of the sidewalk and the building. The applicant commented that there will be a lawn and landscaped area, it will be a rich, soft landscaped area.
- The UDC recommended to make the landscaping for the main pedestrian entrance different than the residential units on the right. It will be helpful to provide more trees and may be no fence in that area, so the entrance is distinctive from the units to the right of it.
- The UDC commented that the front entrance and the community room in that location is a very good solution, it presents itself well to the street. The large arch shouldn't compete with the main entrance. Grand arch for visitor parking spaces is very confusing.