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Barney Heath
Director

DATE: August 17, 2021
TO: Neil Cronin, Chief Planner
FROM: Urban Design Commission
RE: 967 Washington Street
CC: Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Community Development
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director
Land Use Committee of the City Council
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 967 Washington Street for design. The Urban Design Commission had the following comments and recommendations:

The UDC commented that the project has come a long way, it is a tremendous improvement since UDC last reviewed this project. It will be a nice addition to the neighborhood.

- The UDC asked how the revised proposal compares to Washington Street Vision Plan. The applicant responded that this site is shown as 3 stories in the Plan, the dimensional requirements of the Vision Plan have been met.
- It will help to provide balconies, more articulation on the façade facing the house on Walker Street.
- Provide windows on the first floor, it will help to light up the garage but be careful to provide appropriate interior lighting for the garage, so it doesn't appear to be too harsh through the windows.
- Split the garage door in to two, it will be better visually and physically too. A large garage door going up and down will be very loud, especially for the unit above the garage door. If the doors are smaller, they will be less noisy. The applicant responded that they have space to provide it and it will also look better.
- The main entrance on Walker Street feels like a suburban office building. It appears that the doors are very deep into the building. It will be more welcoming if the main entrance doors can

move closer to the street. The applicant responded that there are two issues with it, one is the ramp length, and the other one is lot coverage. The UDC commented that maybe a porch could come forward.

- It is disappointing that there is no main entrance to this building from Washington Street, all the precedents shown in the neighborhood have doors on Washington Street. The applicant responded that there are three private unit entrances on Washington Street. The UDC responded that it is better to have public entrance into the building on Washington Street.
- The Washington Street elevation is done beautifully. The second story step down is good.
- The UDC also appreciates the scale reference drawings, they are very informative. Renderings really help to understand the project better.
- Washington Street façade
- The UDC recommended to look at the fenestration at the main entrance on Walker Street and make it more residential, make it more friendly from the street. There could also be some landscape elements that could come out to the street, so if a pedestrian is on Washington Street, it will be easier to see the entrance. Also, the windows above could look more like other windows. There is a pattern on the top floor that could be replicated around the corner.
- The flatness of the roof is bothersome, it doesn't relate to the other buildings on Washington Street.
- The parapet as shown in the rendering is taller and brighter than anticipated and the UDC recommended it should be softened by making it shorter, and / or there could be a pattern in it, so it is less of a block top. It will also help to make that element a darker color with lighter trim.