



# CITY OF MELROSE

## OFFICE OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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*Director & City Planner*

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Melrose Planning Board

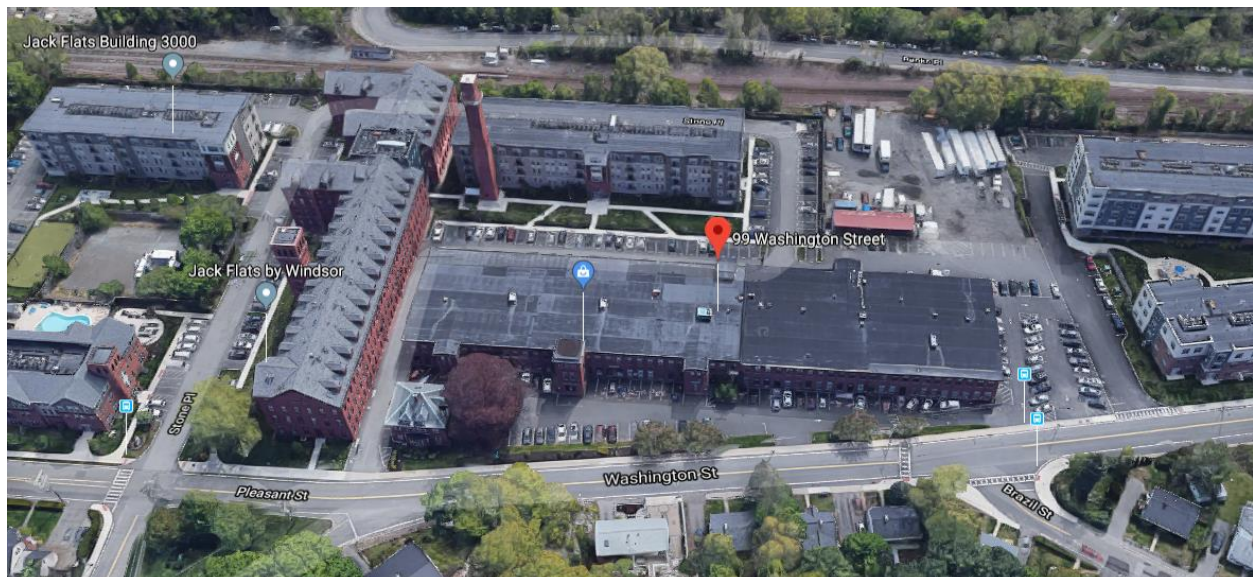
**FROM:** Denise Gaffey, Director & City Planner

**DATE:** January 24, 2020

**RE:** Staff Report for 99 Washington Street

#### OVERVIEW

On December 12, 2019, Oak Grove Mill, LLC submitted an application for Site Plan Review pursuant to Chapter 235, §16.1 and §71.1 of the Melrose Zoning Ordinance (MZO) for the property at 99 Washington Street. The proposed project is a multifamily building with 141 residential units, including 19 affordable units, and 172 off-street parking spaces. The existing two-story mill building that houses Marty's Furniture and the 2.5-story gatehouse building on the site will be connected, renovated, and expanded into one, three-story structure. In conjunction with the Site Plan Review application, the Applicant has also submitted an application for an Affordable Housing Incentive Program Special Permit because developments with five or more residential units trigger the Special Permit requirements under MZO §235-73.1.





The property is approximately 138,434 square feet and is located on Washington Street between Stone Place and Brazil Street. The project site is located in the Smart Growth Overlay District (SGD) where multifamily residential uses are allowed as of right, and the Industrial (I-A) District serves as the underlying zoning district. Located directly to the north and east of 99 Washington Street are four multifamily buildings within the Jack Flats complex (formerly Alta Stone Place) that together contain 212 units. Two multifamily buildings at 37 and 47 Washington Street are located to the south of the subject property and contain 88 units; they are a part of The Washingtons complex that also includes the 94-unit mixed use structure across the street at 2 Washington Street.

This block of Washington Street contains a number of multistory buildings that have been permitted as SGD projects since the overlay district was established in 2008. The multifamily buildings located on the Jacks Flats and The Washingtons properties all range from three stories to five stories, with four floors of residential over a floor of podium parking for the two new buildings that are situated furthest from Washington Street and along the railroad tracks. Single and two-family homes are located directly across from the subject property on Washington Street.

Both the mill and gatehouse buildings at 99 Washington Street have been designated as “SGD landmark buildings” that cannot be demolished. According to MZO §235-71.1.G(2), no alterations or additions can be made to a SGD landmark building that modify its architectural features in ways that impair or detract from the structure’s historic character. The other two SGD landmark buildings at 78 Stone Place and 111 Washington Street/Stone Place were both preserved and updated as a part of the Alta Stone Place development, which first opened for tenant occupancy in 2013.

Variations from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will be required for this project. The Applicant will need density relief because the proposed project has more than 35 units per acre, which is the maximum density allowed for sites within the Smart Growth Overlay District (MZO §235-71.1.E). Relief for height will be needed because, according to MZO §235-71.1.E(6), no part of a building that is less than 40 feet from a front lot line can exceed a height of 50 feet. At 56.3 feet, the height of the proposed 99 Washington building exceeds what the SGD allows due in part to the angle of the lot. In terms of parking relief, the Applicant will need Variations from the required minimum parking spaces, minimum parking space size, minimum aisle width for one-way travel, and minimum setback requirements for surface parking from a public street, structure, and rear yard line abutting an SGD property (MZO §235-41 and §235-71.1.F).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant is proposing to connect the existing two-story mill building that houses Marty’s Furniture and the 2.5-story gatehouse building via a two-story glass connector building and add a third story with pop-up duplex elements on top of the mill building. The small accessory building currently at the back of the site will be demolished. Within the gatehouse building will be a maintenance office in the basement, library/co-working space with a restroom on the first floor, and a game room on the second floor. The connector building will contain a lounge/great room that opens up to an outdoor lounge with grills and a fire pit. All the residential units will be located in the renovated mill building along with the lobby, gym, bike room, mailbox and package rooms, rentable storage space, dog wash area, management offices, and trash compactor. A dog park with steel fencing and gates will be installed along the southern property line.

On all three stories of the mill building will be 141 units consisting of 18 studios, 72 one-bedroom units, 30 two-bedroom units, and 21 two-bedroom units with dens. Twelve of the two-bedroom units are located on the third floor and will contain pop-up duplex elements. The studios range from 532 to 557 net square feet, the one-bedrooms range from 667 to 892 net square feet, and the two-bedrooms range from 833 to 1,133 square feet. In accordance with MZO §235-73.1, 19 units of all sizes will be designated as affordable. Of the affordable units, there will be two studios, ten one-bedroom units, and seven two-bedroom units.

There will be 172 parking spaces, all of which are at grade. Of this number, 158 will be dedicated to residential parking and 14 will be designated to visitor parking. There will be six ADA-accessible spaces. The overall parking ratio will be 1.22 spaces per unit which is just below the SGD requirement of 1.25 spaces per unit.

## DEPARTMENT REVIEW

As required, Planning Staff distributed copies of the Site Plan Review application to the City Engineer, Board of Health, and Building Commissioner. In addition, the Fire Chief, Police Chief, Mayor, Conservation Agent, School Superintendent, and City Solicitor were made aware of the application and provided the opportunity to comment. OPCD scheduled a meeting in which the aforementioned department heads were invited to attend in order to facilitate the coordinated review of this proposal. This meeting occurred on January 8, 2020 and was attended by the City Planner, Senior Planner, City Engineer, Fire Prevention Officer, Conservation Agent, and the Applicant and representatives. The following is a summary of the issues raised at the meeting and other comments received from department heads:

- **Stormwater Management:** According to the Applicant's engineer, the Jack Flats and 37/47 Washington projects were designed to manage stormwater from 99 Washington Street. As a part of this proposal, roof leaders, catch basins, and underdrains will direct stormwater from the property to stormwater management systems on those abutting properties. Drainage should improve because landscaped islands, permeable pavers, and porous pavement will replace almost 30,000 square feet of impervious surface area. The existing catch basins used by the 37/47 Washington construction, which contain hydrodynamic separators, will be maintained. The City Engineer encouraged the Applicant to consider additional water quality measures and best management practices (BMPs) for the site.
- **Fire Safety:** There is currently a fire hydrant on the site that will be relocated to a landscaped island about 50 feet from its current location behind the mill building. A Fire Department connection will be installed about 50 feet from the hydrant. There will be adequate driveway width (at least 20 feet) for a fire truck to access both the front and back of the building. A new sprinkler and fire alarm system will be installed.
- **Parking:** The standard parking spaces included in this proposal are all 8.5-feet wide, which is a half-foot short of the City's requirement. The City Engineer had no problem with the width and acknowledged that there are various precedents for this space width in Melrose. Most residents will likely enter the building from the back because that is where the parking is. Though the SGD zoning gives the Planning Board flexibility to waive requirements around parking, that provision does not apply in this case since the project technically involves new construction.
- **Utilities:** All the utilities will be moved underground. The transformer will be installed within the landscape strip along Washington Street and screened with ornamental trees. The Applicant hopes to reuse the existing natural gas service. The City Engineer pointed out that the City would want the service updated if it is cast iron and not already plastic. Likely the new service can be sleeved into the old service.

The existing structure is currently connected to the ten-inch diameter looped water main behind the building. The old connections will be abandoned and there will be a new connection to the back of the building that has a separate domestic and fire services. The

City Engineer explained that if the Applicant decides to use water serving the existing building during construction, a meter will need to be installed on the hydrant since the City meters water use during construction. Alternatively, they can install a temporary hydrant.

Existing sewer service connections will be abandoned and replaced with two six-inch PVC sewer lines, one from the mill building and the other from the gatehouse building, which will connect to the eight-inch clay line at a newly-installed manhole. The eight-inch line will be video inspected and relined with PVC. The flow from 99 Washington will go into the sewer main on Washington Street, as it does now, and will proceed to flow downstream to the intersection with Stone Place. There, it takes a turn to the east and heads under the MBTA tracks, and into the MWRA interceptor. The City Engineer asked the Applicant's engineer to provide an analysis confirming that the pipes downstream both on Washington Street and through Stone Place have adequate capacity to handle the additional flow from the proposed development. The properties on Brazil Street, Goodyear Avenue, and Washington Street from Shadow Road to Pleasant Street all connect to the same sewer that crosses Stone Place. The City Engineer noted that any issues on Brazil Street were upstream from 99 Washington Street and were in no way impacted by the flow on Washington Street.

- **Trash & Recycling:** The project will have an internal compactor system and no exterior dumpsters. The Senior Planner spoke with the Health Director following the meeting with department heads who suggested that trash chutes in the building be avoided because they are very difficult to keep clean. More information will be needed about the method and frequency of collection.
- **Fiscal Impacts and Mixed Use Consideration:** The Director & City Planner suggested that the Applicant prepare a Fiscal Impact Study for this project. In addition, she explained that the Planning Board and the community at large are likely going to want to see a commercial component to this project. According to the Applicant, his brokerage firm has spoken with at least 50 retail tenants who have explained that the demographic counts do not work in this area to support their operations. An analysis of the viability of a commercial/retail component of the development should be included in the Fiscal Impact Study.
- **Density and Affordable Housing:** Planning Staff asked about density and the request to seek a variance for the number of units allowed which is 128. The Applicant explained that the existing mill building contains a lot of inefficient space which creates a hardship when preserving and rehabilitating the building is a goal. The additional units also work well programmatically with the design of the building. The 13 additional units will include 2 affordable units and increase the overall contribution of affordable units to 19. At 19 and because of incentive nature of the affordable housing zoning the overall percentage of affordable units calculates to 13.5% (which is the case without the added density also), so Staff inquired if the Applicant would consider providing more than the minimum, or 4 affordable units out of the additional 13 requested to compensate for the added density. The Applicant expressed concern about the fiscal impact of any additional

affordable units given that their development will contain a much greater percentage of affordable units compared to comparable developments in the area and the high costs associated with the development already make the project challenging.

- **Schedule:** The Applicant indicated that they intend to close on the property in March and hope to have permitting completed in time to commence construction in the summer. Construction is anticipated to take roughly 18 months. Many tenants have already begun to vacate the building and Marty's Furniture is expected to close their business by the end of June.

### WAIVER OF APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Applicant is not requesting waivers from the application requirements.

### SMART GROWTH OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN STANDARDS

Section 235-71.1.G specifies that all SGD projects shall comply with the following design standards, unless the Planning Board finds, through Site Plan Review, any standard to be inappropriate for the proposed use. This section of the report details how the project at 99 Washington Street meets the standards.

#### *1. Building Design*

- a) In addition to preserving two SGD landmark buildings and connecting them into one building, the proposed design brings in modern elements that enhance what exists on site today. New construction components like the added third story with pop-up lofts that will be sided with corrugated aluminum and wood-look panels as well as the glass connector building work very well to complement the historic appearance of the existing structures. The results should be beautiful and one-of-a-kind development that fits in the City of Melrose and in the Smart Growth Overlay District.
- b) Both the mill and gatehouse are masonry buildings that were constructed with brick and the gatehouse features a slate roof and copper flashing. The existing materials will be preserved and repaired where needed. The proposed building materials for the new construction are a mix of glass infill structures, corrugated aluminum siding, aluminum windows, and wood-look panels. They are of high-quality, not associated with domestic residential buildings, and not on the list of discouraged material.
- c) Where the roof line of the mill building currently is, there will be a strong cornice with the existing decorative brackets between the second floor and the added third floor. Since the interior of the glass connector building will be visible from the exterior, the walkway on the second floor should articulate the line between the two stories.
- d) All of the building façades reflect a high level of detail refinement, in large part because the two existing buildings on site are masonry structures from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that sport a variety of detailed, Victorian-era elements. There will be two main entrances

along Washington Street, one to the gatehouse via the connector building and the other to the mill building. The mill building entrance will be a new glass vestibule that is accented with steel beams and the wood-look panel utilized on the third story. The connector building entrance will be surrounded by glass infill structures so the interior details should be visible.

- e) The building façade is divided into shorter segments by varying rooflines and as a result of the existing towers at the front of the mill building.
- f) The building systems for the common areas along with the residential sized condensers will be located on the third floor roof. This equipment will have screen walls and be kept out of sight lines.
- g) Further information about sustainability will be needed. The adaptive reuse of the buildings on this site is a green building practice, especially because it is within an urban, formerly industrial area that is close to public transportation. Given the age of the two existing buildings, it may be difficult for the Applicant to achieve LEED Certification. Nevertheless, sustainable practices as governed by the Energy Star and WaterSense Programs should be utilized for interior rehabilitations and for the new construction portion of the project. Since the Applicant is already planning on installing a new roof over the mill building, steps should be taken to assess if the project is a good candidate for a rooftop solar array.
- h) The design standard requiring that at least 60% of the street-facing building façade be comprised of clear windows is not applicable as the project is entirely residential. There are no commercial uses proposed.
- i) The building has not been designed with themes or architectural styles associated with a corporate chain or franchise.

## 2. *Historic Preservation*

a-d) This proposal preserves the two SGD landmark buildings at 99 and 99B Washington Street. The alterations and additions proposed for the landmark buildings are not expected to impair or detract from the building's historic character. Rather, the new modern elements should complement the historic features and create a contemporary and unique development.

## 3. *Landscaping*

- a) The landscape materials appear to be hardy and mostly native to the area. The landscaping should require minimal maintenance.
- b) The Applicant is proposing to preserve the existing street trees along Washington Street by erecting tree protection fences and planting additional deciduous shade trees so they are approximately 40 feet from one another. A considerable number of ornamental trees

will also be planted. Approximately two dozen trees will be planted behind the building and within internal ways, though there are larger gaps between trees because of site constraints and the desire to maximize the number of parking spaces. The deciduous trees that will be planted are Red Maple, Black Tupelo, Swamp White Oak, and Red Oak and the ornamental trees are Yellow Birch, Serviceberry, and Heritage River Birch. These species are all common to the area and, with the exception of the Serviceberry, grow to at least 30 feet at maturity. The SGD requires that the trees are at least 2.5 inches in caliper at four feet above grade; a condition of approval would ensure that this standard is met for the street trees along Washington Street. The Applicant should modify the Overall Landscape Plan so it specifies where each species will be planted.

- c) The proposed transformer location will be screened mostly by ornamental shade trees. No dumpsters or other utility/service areas will be located outside of the building.
- d) The property is across the street from the UR-A District on Washington Street. A substantial buffered landscape strip has been proposed in front of the building along Washington Street that is 15 feet wide in the narrowest location.

#### 4. *General Site Design*

- a/b) The proposal creates a number of new access ways within the site, including a 22-foot wide one-way driveway with adjacent parking in front of the mill building. The pedestrian experience in this location should improve as two curb cuts on the southwest portion of the site along Washington Street will be removed and the parking lot behind the building will be reconfigured so that is accessed via reciprocal easements with Jack Flats at the north of the site and 37/47 Washington at the south. There will be raised sidewalks across the two driveways in front of the building. The aisles within the parking lot are each 24 feet wide. Sidewalks will be constructed out of cementitious concrete.

The only roads that lack the required width are the two-way aisles directly north of the building and between the parking spaces directly behind the building and the parking spaces belonging to Jack Flats.

- c) There will be a large landscape strip next to the Washington Street sidewalk. In addition, there will be a substantial courtyard area constructed with permeable pavers that will connect the Washington Street sidewalk with the main building entrances. The courtyard is designed to be an outdoor lounge space that contains amenities like seating, grills, and a fire pit. A number of trees, shrubs, and perennials will be planted in the beds surrounding the courtyard.
- d) The electric, telephone, and data service for the building will come from an existing pole along Washington Street. Those lines will be placed underground and will connect to the existing pole via risers. All other utilizes will be placed underground. The existing natural gas service to the building will be reused if it is already a plastic service. If there is a cast iron pipe, it should be switched to plastic as to avoid problems down the line. The new service can likely be sleeved into the old service.



e) Off-street parking and loading spaces, internal ways, and maneuvering areas have been designed to provide for adequate drainage, snow storage and removal, maneuverability, and curb cuts. Snow storage areas are provided in a number of locations, including adjacent to the sidewalk on Washington Street, between the parking spaces and the reciprocal access easement with 37/47 Washington Street, and in a corner of the parking lot at the back of the site.

f-j) The number of driveway curb cuts on Washington Street will be kept to a minimum. The two curb cuts for on the southwest portion of the site along Washington Street will be removed. Driveways will be consolidated so that the parking lot behind the building is accessed via reciprocal easements with Jack Flats at the north of the site and 37/47 Washington at the south. The existing curb cuts to access those easements will remain. The two curb cuts in front of the building will each be 20 feet wide. In total, the length of curb cut openings along Washington Street will be reduced by about 80 feet. Granite curbing is required. Stop signs will be installed for vehicles exiting from the front driveway and from the south driveway into the reciprocal access easement with 37/47 Washington. Signs will be posted at driveways to alert drivers to pedestrian activity. It appears that there is adequate sight distance provided at driveways.

## 5. *Parking*

a) Surface parking will be screened along Washington Street via a landscape buffer that is 15 feet wide in its most narrow location. The Applicant intends to plant a number of deciduous shade trees and ornamental trees that should help prevent light from cars from spilling into adjacent streets and properties.

b) A six-foot wide concrete sidewalk will start at the Washington Street lot line, wrap around the southeastern corner of the building, and ends at an ADA-accessible entrance with a ramped walkway behind the building. There will be a crosswalk that connects this sidewalk the dog park area and with the large surface parking lot at the back of the site.

c/d) No parking structures are included in this proposal. Parking and loading will mostly take place behind the building and no on-street loading will be permitted. Trees and other landscaping should help screen the parking areas that are visible from Washington Street.

## 6. *Site Lighting*

a-g) A Site Lighting Plan was provided. Broad area lighting has been avoided. The parking lot pole lighting is 15 feet high, below the 18-foot maximum in the SGD zoning. Pole lighting will be installed along roadways, driveways, and sidewalks that matches that of the Jack Flats and 37/47 Washington developments. Bollards that are 42 inches high will illuminate the front courtyard and the back of the connector building. The lights are to provide warm light and not a strong yellow or blue light. These fixtures are compatible with the character of the area, existing City standards, and the proposed building lighting. All the proposed site lighting is energy-efficient LED.

Based on the information provided, lighting will not spill onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. The pole lighting has a fully shielded design that will not emit direct light above a horizontal plane passing through the lowest part of the luminaire. There will be no illumination of the building façade. The bollard lamps are below 900 lumens and should not direct light toward adjacent buildings or create glare for motorists.

## 7. *Infrastructure*

*a-b)* The proposed plan is to remove the water services at the front of the building and install new services at the rear, adjacent to the proposed mechanical room. There will be a four-inch domestic service and a separate six-inch fire service. The rear water services will connect to the existing ten-inch diameter looped water main that was installed as a part of the Jack Flats/Stone Place development. This will likely be adequate in terms of water supply though the Applicant should also provide figures demonstrating that adequate water pressure exists.

The existing sewer service connections will be abandoned and replaced with two six-inch PVC sewer lines, one from the mill building and the other from the gatehouse building. The two lines will connect to a manhole adjacent to the gatehouse building that will then connect to the sewer main within Washington Street via an eight-inch diameter clay pipe, which will be maintained but rehabilitated using a PVC slip liner. The flow from 99 Washington will go into the sewer main on Washington Street, as it does now, and will proceed to flow downstream to the intersection with Stone Place. There, it takes a turn to the east and heads under the MBTA tracks, and into the MWRA interceptor. As requested by the City Engineer, the Applicant's engineer should provide an analysis confirming that the pipes downstream both on Washington Street and through Stone Place have adequate capacity to handle the additional flow from the proposed development.

Drainage on this site should improve due to the fact that almost 30,000 square feet of impervious material is being replaced with landscaped islands, pervious pavement, and permeable pavers. The outdoor courtyard will be constructed with permeable pavers and both the driveway in front of the building as well as the parking lot directly south of the building will utilize permeable pavement. Roof leaders, catch basins, and underdrains will direct stormwater from the property to stormwater management systems on the Jack Flats and 37/47 Washington properties. According to the Applicant's engineer, who was also the engineer for the other SGD projects, those projects were designed to manage stormwater from 99 Washington Street. While this seems reasonable, it is likely that the City Engineer will recommend that stormwater be stored and treated directly on site via an underground detention system, in accordance with the criteria for Site Plan Review.

Traffic circulation on site will be safe and convenient. The only roads that lack the required width are the two-way aisles directly north of the building and between the parking spaces directly behind the building and the parking spaces belonging to Jack Flats and the discrepancy is minimal. Changes to the curb cut locations mean that no driveways will be within 30 feet of each other or less than 50 feet to the curblines of Brazil

Street. The driveway to access the easement shared with Jack Flats, directly across from the Washington Street and Pleasant Street intersection, is an existing condition and will not be changing with this proposal.

Traffic flow and circulation at nearby intersections will be preserved. The project will generate 22 net new vehicle trips during the morning peak hour and 27 net new vehicle trips during the evening peak hour. The operational level of service (LOS) at nearby intersections will not change as a result of the additional vehicle trips. LOS at the Washington Street and Brazil Street intersection will actually improve. However, there are traffic issues in proximity to the site, mostly at the signalized intersection a half-mile away at Washington Street/Glenwood Street/Winter Street/Grove Street in Malden. That intersection currently has an LOS of F during the morning peak and an LOS of E during the evening peak. The Applicant should provide the change in delay between the no-build and build (2026) conditions for the intersections that already have an LOS of F or will have one under the no-build condition so a comparison can be made.

#### 8. *Signs*

*a-h)* A standing sign that says “OAK GROVE MILL” has been proposed that meets the standards, complements the architecture of the building, and is located in a logical place in front of the building. The street number is proposed to be located above the main residential entrance using what appears to be individually-mounted numbers. More details about the street number sign, including its dimensions and materials, should be provided.

#### SITE PLAN REVIEW CRITERIA

Melrose Zoning Ordinance Section 235-16.1.E specifies that the Planning Board as Site Plan Review Committee shall find that the following criteria are fulfilled.

##### 1. *Consistency with the design, character, and scale of the surrounding area.*

The project is consistent with the design, character, and scale of Melrose’s Smart Growth Overlay District. Please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *Building Design* standards.

##### 2. *Consistency with all sign, design, landscaping, lighting, buffering, and public safety requirements and standards established by City of Melrose departments.*

The project is consistent with the sign, design, landscaping, lighting, buffering, and public safety requirements and standards established by City of Melrose departments. Please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *Landscaping, General Site Design, Parking, Site Lighting, Infrastructure, and Sign* standards.

##### 3. *Protection and enhancement of important existing natural, historic or scenic site features.*

This project protects and enhances the two existing historic structures on the property by rehabilitating them, expanding them, and connecting them into one large building. Along with adding considerable new landscaping to the site, the project will also protect the existing trees in front of the building along Washington Street.

- 4. Protection of adjacent properties and surrounding areas from detrimental impacts during and after construction, including but not limited to air and water pollution, flood, noise, odor, dust, vibration, and lighting.*

The Construction Management Plan specifies the hours of construction activity, vehicle access to the site, and protective measures that will be taken during construction. The construction hours will generally be from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and trucks will avoid local streets. Limited on-site construction worker parking will be allowed to encourage use of public transit, mainly via Oak Grove Station. Acoustic monitoring will be performed before on-site activities commence to establish baselines and acoustics will continue to be monitored during major activities. Noise mitigation measures will be undertaken in order to assure continued conformance with the noise levels permitted by the city.

Secure fencing and barricades will be utilized to isolate construction areas from pedestrian traffic around the site. Directional signage will be installed to orient pedestrians around the site as well as direct truck traffic and deliveries. Police details will be provided as necessary during construction activities to facilitate pedestrian safety and traffic flow.

The Applicant intends to contact all properties immediately abutting 99 Washington Street to explain the project phasing and discuss anticipated construction impacts. These abutters will be given periodic updates about the project progress and expectations for construction. There will be management staff on-site at all times during construction activities who will be available for assistance.

- 5. Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and of the location of driveway openings in relation to traffic and/or adjacent streets.*

The convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movements within the site will improve as a result of this project compared to existing conditions. Please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *General Site Design* and *Infrastructure* standards.

- 6. Adequacy and arrangement of parking spaces, bicycle racks, internal ways, loading areas, and sidewalks, and the ability of the site plan to accommodate parking in areas other than the front of the building.*

The proposal contains an adequate number of parking spaces and bicycle racks and their arrangement is appropriate. Space for 44 bicycles will be provided in a bike room on the first floor and there will be four outdoor bike racks adjacent to the courtyard. There will be 172 at-grade parking spaces as a part of this development, though only 170 are identified on the plans.

Twenty-two of the spaces, including two ADA-accessible spaces, will be located along a driveway in front of the mill building on Washington Street. There will be three parallel spaces located directly north of the gatehouse and connector buildings and 29 spaces will be located just behind the mill building. Another 22 spaces, including four ADA-accessible spaces, will be located to south of the building and the remaining 94 spaces will be located in the back of the site between the building and the MBTA railroad right-of-way. The Applicant should clarify where the last two parking spaces will be located or modify the proposal to include 170 spaces.

Though a considerable amount of parking is included in this proposal, the overall parking ratio of 1.22 spaces per unit is below the SGD requirement of no less than 1.25 spaces per unit. A Variance from the ZBA will be necessary for this but the proposed rate is appropriate and even higher than ideal for a site so close to mass transit. Planning staff supports a parking ratio of one space per unit (141 spaces) plus visitor spaces (141 spaces x 10% = 14 spaces), which comes out to 155 total parking spaces. The Applicant should strongly consider outfitting a number of the parking spaces with EV charging stations and having at least two car share spaces.

While parking in front of the building is something that the Planning Board usually seeks to avoid, it is an existing condition in this case. There is approximately twice the number of parking spaces in front of the building today than there will be with the redesigned one-way driveway. Significant landscaping has also been proposed for the front of the site that will help to shield the parking spaces.

At 8.5 feet wide, the standard parking spaces are proposed to have a width just short of the required nine feet. While this will require a Variance from the ZBA, the City feels that 8.5 feet is an appropriate parking space width and many other projects have been approved with this width. For more analysis related to internal ways, loading areas, and sidewalks, please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *General Site Design* and *Infrastructure* standards.

#### 7. *Adequacy of the local streets to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed use.*

The local streets should be adequate to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed use. Please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *Infrastructure* standards.

A number of transportation demand management strategies have been proposed for the development that should reduce the volume and impact of cars on local streets. A Transportation Coordinator will be designated to oversee and manage all transportation issues associated with the project, such as deliveries and move-in/move-out activity. The Transportation Coordinator will also raise awareness of public transit with residents as they move in. Parking spaces will be rented at market rates and separately from the units so that residents without a vehicle do not have to pay for parking. The Applicant will provide each new resident with a one-month MBTA pass in addition to installing an electronic display monitor in the residential lobby to provide real-time information on nearby transit service. As noted above, the Applicant should strongly consider outfitting a number of the parking spaces with EV charging stations, provide at least

two car share spaces and consider a parking ratio of 1 space per unit which will reduce the number of cars associated with the development.

*8. Adequacy of sewerage and water supply systems within the site to serve the proposed use without overloading the municipal systems to an extent that the health, safety or general welfare of residents of the City is put at risk.*

The sewerage and water supply systems within the site and modified by the proposal will be designed to be adequate to serve the proposed residential use. Please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *Infrastructure* standards. The City Engineer will document the adequacy of the sewerage and water supply systems in her forthcoming report.

*9. Adequacy of proposed methods of refuse disposal and storage.*

The proposed methods of refuse disposal and storage should be adequate. The building will contain a trash room on each floor and there will be a compactor on the ground floor. The Applicant should clarify if there will be a trash compactor, recycling compactor, or both. Trash chutes should either be avoided or a condition should be included in the Decision that requires them to be professionally cleaned on a regular basis. More information will be needed about the method and frequency of collection.

*10. Adequacy of snow management, including removal or on-site storage.*

Snow storage areas are provided in a number of locations, including adjacent to the sidewalk on Washington Street, between the parking spaces and the reciprocal access easement with 37/47 Washington Street, and in a corner of the parking lot at the back of the site. The Applicant will haul snow away from the property if the on-site storage is insufficient during large storm events.

*11. Adequacy of soil erosion plan and the plan for protection of steep slopes, both during and after construction.*

The site is flat and requires no blasting. Environmental monitoring will be implemented during construction, including air and dust monitoring. Action levels will be provided which, if exceeded, will trigger mitigation of dust, vapor migration, and/or odors. Street cleaning will take place daily or more frequently if necessary. All construction debris will be taken off site by a licensed waste hauler with off-site sorting capabilities for recycled and waste debris. Construction debris will be wetted and covered to minimize airborne dust particles.

*12. Stormwater management.*

The City Engineer will document the adequacy of the proposed stormwater management in her forthcoming report, but it is generally the City's policy to require stormwater to be stored and treated on site. Please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *Infrastructure* standards.

*13. Adequacy of landscaping, including the screening of adjacent residential uses, street trees, landscape islands in any parking lots and landscape buffers along the street frontage.*

Adequate landscaping has been proposed and the Applicant has submitted a detailed Overall Landscape Plan. The Plan should be updated so it specifies where each species will be planted. Please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *Landscaping* standards.

*14. Adequacy of screening for storage areas, loading docks, dumpsters, rooftop equipment, utility buildings and similar features.*

Adequate screening of the transformer and rooftop equipment has been provided. Please see the Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards section of this Staff Report for details about compliance with the *Building Design* and *Landscaping* standards.

A loading area has been proposed for behind the building that will connect to the trash compactor. The Applicant should provide additional details about how this arrangement will work so the Planning Board can determine if screening is needed.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board is presented with a proposal for a significant adaptive reuse project in Melrose's Smart Growth Overlay District. While it will be a shame to lose beloved businesses in the 99 Washington Street building such as Marty's Furniture, there is no doubt that this is the perfect location for a large residential development given the proximity to Oak Grove Station. The Applicant has proposed an exciting way to enhance the two SGD landmark buildings by connecting them into one and adding an additional story with pop-up lofts over the mill-portion of the building. Modern elements like the glass connector building and the third-story siding of wood-look panels with corrugated aluminum will create a unique, contemporary structure that will fit well in its location.

Planning staff supports the proposed project and views it as consistent with goals articulated in the Melrose Forward Master Plan and with the City's focus on smart growth and transit oriented development. This development addresses the strong local and regional demand for new housing units in an area that is well served by public transit and existing infrastructure. The provision of 19 affordable housing units is a significant benefit. While Planning staff has advocated for a commercial component to this project, its potential viability, or lack thereof, must be evaluated and taken into account.

We look forward to reviewing the project at the upcoming public hearing and to further refinements that result through that process.