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March 16, 2022

John F. Field, P.E.  
Land Use Coordinator  
Inspector of buildings and Zoning Enforcement Officer  
Town of Weston  
P.O. Box 378  
Weston, MA 02493

Re: Landscape Architectural Peer Review of 518 South Avenue, Weston,  
MA Hanover-Weston 40B Proposal

Dear John and members of the Board,

I am writing to provide you with my second landscape architectural peer review for the proposed Hanover-Weston 40B development located at 518 South Avenue in Weston.

We have not received any feed back from the Applicants on our previously submitted Landscape Architecture peer review dated 2-13-2022 and so this letter is in response to the Applicants Matrix entitled “Hanover Weston Response to Peer Review Comments” dated 3-3-2022, response to those comments by PSC, and responses to presentations at the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

**RESPONSES TO THE MATRIX:**

PSC 13; page 2: We are in agreement with other Peer Reviewers that the inclusion of a Bioswale in the center of the Emergency Access Road is not recommended.

PSC 13.a; page 2; We agree with the other peer reviewers that the swale feature is unsuitable for passage of emergency vehicles.

PSC 13.d, pare 3; If the rain garden/bioswale is staked to prevent damage by snow plows won't the stakes interfere with the emergency vehicle access?

PSC 13.f, page 3: Lowering the East lane of the Access Drive will allow unfiltered, possibly contaminated water flow into the adjacent wetland.

PSC 23, page 7; “At the Emergency Exit , a stabilized construction exit is noted” The proposed tire Wash Station should not be located next to the Wetlands-this is a sensitive location.

PSC 33, page 8; “Snow Storage is Shown on the Landscape Plans” Agree with the other peer reviewers-the proposed snow storage is inadequate, several locations are in inaccessible areas (beyond retaining walls, etc.) and there is no indication of a snow storage plan for the roof top garage.

PSC 45, page 11; “the Landscape Plan depicts the transformer screening”. Agree with other peer reviewers and stated this in our previous report, the Planting Plan and Plant legend are very schematic and the plant symbols are difficult to decipher which makes it hard to analyze what plants are proposed for which locations. The Planting Plan needs to be more clear and detailed, and actual proposed plants should be called out by name on the plan.

PSC 62.a, page 15; ‘A bicycle path should be added between the building and South Street.’ Agreed, The applicant is proposing that bikes use the driveway and/or sidewalk. This creates a conflict between bikes and cars/trucks as well as bikes and pedestrians. At least a Bike lane should be marked out on the entrance driveway as well as No Parking Signs to reduce the level of conflict.

PSC 62.b page 15: Bicycle Racks should be added at the main building entrance. Although bicycle storage is provided in the garage, visitors and frequent riders will have to walk a distance to park their bikes. There does not seem to be an easy entrance to the building from the garage. Perhaps on ground bike storage could be around the corner toward the dog yards if right in front of the building is not an option.

PSC 64.b, page 15; The on-site access drives should be signed for “No Parking” . See above notes (PSC 62.a). the main Drives are used for Pedestrian, Bus, Car, Bike, Delivery Trucks. Parked vehicles will reduce access for already conflicting uses.

PSC 64.e, page 16; School bus access to the site. Proper safe access to the site is needed for school buses for the safety of students who will live in the building. Should the solution remain as proposed by MDM Associates at the February 15, 2022 Public Hearing for the buses to circle the building and then pick up and drop off students, the slope of the proposed ring road should be analyzed to confirm that it is safe for a bus to traverse in the icy winter months. There is a 10 to 1 slope on the road near the garage entrance and it also becomes narrower at that point.

PSC 65, page 16; Snow Storage. This needs to be looked at again to provide adequate storage for snow piles on site in areas that are safely accessed by the plows. Also, again, no plan is shown for the snow on the roof garage.

PSC 66, page 16; Proposed Retaining Walls. The Proposed Retaining Walls need to be fully designed before the plans are approved and construction begins. The Board should see details for construction, stability from turning over, interface with various infiltration structures where they are supposed to provide barriers to underground water flow, screening from neighbors,

guard rails, and aesthetics. The walls are critical elements to the applicants' plans and the details are far from resolved at this time.

PSC68, page 16; Retaining walls-relief from zoning requirements has been requested. The proposed retaining walls are 11 feet tall in some places and are proposed within 4 feet of the property line in many places. Because of this design there is little or no opportunity to provide any visual relief of the proposed walls from abutting neighbors. The walls should be moved away from the property lines and reduced in height in order to reduce the visual impact to the neighbors. They are impossible to screen with planting using only the applicant's property without moving them further inside the property line.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Since we have had no response from the Applicants on our previous Peer Review for Landscape Architecture on the site, dated 3-13-2022, as stated above, none of our recommendations or issues with the Landscape/Site Plan have been addressed. Our conclusions and recommendations remain the same as they did for our initial report, with some additional observations added, as outlined below:

- The scale of the project as designed is too large for the site.
- The building and roadways take up most of the site.
- There is very little existing vegetation proposed to remain on the site except for in the protected wetlands.
- The building and Ring Road are too close to the property lines and do not allow room for buffer planting and screening to mitigate the 4 to 5 story building from the abutting neighbors.
- The retaining walls required to make the site work for the current design are too tall in places and too close to the property lines.
- Circulation on the site needs to be improved to allow for safe boarding of School Buses by children and reduce possible bottle necking in traffic between delivery trucks and entering and exiting vehicles.
- The Applicants should look at redesigning the Entry Court to provide ample turning radii for buses, delivery trucks, fire trucks, and improve the circulation to reduce conflict of use issues.
- In a car-centric neighborhood there are not enough parking spaces per unit and no extra parking for visitors and employees.
- There are not enough safe outdoor spaces for children and families to recreate. The play area provided is too small, located in a remote location, and under the only open wall of the garage where possibly toxic emissions may be vented.
- Pedestrian circulation on site and between the site and the town could be improved.
- The proposed Bio-swale in the Emergency exit road is an issue for safety and maintenance.
- The Planting Plans need to be more clear and specific. Sizes and quantities of proposed plants should be included on the plan.

- Plants on the Planting Plan should be labeled so they can be easily identified for assessment of plant location as well as design intent.
- Buffering between neighbors should be improved.
- Shade studies are needed for the courtyard and front of the building to assess plant choices for survival because of light conditions.
- The Lighting Plan should indicate the Lumen value of the proposed fixtures so as to fully evaluate the impact on the neighborhood. Also the plan should go into more detail as to other lighting that may be required by code.
- Sections should be provided to show the impact of the elevation changes and building heights on all neighboring properties including those on Wellesley Street.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Principal  
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