



STONYBROOK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

jamaica plain, massachusetts

76 Stonley Road Issues Statement **prepared by the 76 Stonley Road Subcommittee** **Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA)**

Background and Summary

76 Stonley Road is a proposal by developers John Morrissey, Bryan Austin and Michael Forde for a 5.5 story 32-unit apartment building. The proposal involves a portion of the Stonybrook Neighborhood currently zoned as and used for industrial purposes. A potential transformation in this area, from industrial to residential, represents a significant opportunity to provide additional housing in an established and increasingly popular neighborhood that is pedestrian friendly and well served by the MBTA. Any proposal for this area should reflect these facts, respecting the existing uses and planning adequately for the future.

The project as currently proposed poses a number of problems in this regard and fails to fully live up to the site's potential. Further, since the developers control several other abutting parcels, future plans for all of these lots - comprising almost .75 acres - should be considered at the same time.¹ The SNA has met with the developers three times, has seen little change since their original proposal, and has requested but not received a plan for all of their parcels.

Major Issues

Density and Height

The proposed project suffers in several ways. The first floor is devoted to parking. We encourage residential or other non-parking uses, such as offices or studios, on the first floor and fully underground parking. As proposed the building is too high relative to the existing structures in the neighborhood, which are mostly triple-deckers. We propose that the sides of the building facing these existing houses start at 3 stories and step up from there. This is in keeping with other recent projects in Jamaica Plain that have successfully blended higher structures with traditional three story housing stock. For examples, please refer to the Commons at Forest Hills' edge adjacent to Burnett Street homes, Bartlett Square I, 3383 Washington Street, and see examples in this report for 3521-3529 Washington St and 3200 Washington St.²

¹ See page 7; Parcels 1102704000, 1102670000, 1102671000, 1102673000, and 1102674000

² See pages 4-5



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Streetscape

The current plan does not fully take into account the need to bring the area in question up to city street standards. See Complete Streets report by the city of Boston.³

Examples Include:

- **Inadequate Sidewalks** The back of the project (Stedman Street) has no sidewalk. Plans show grass going fully to the street's edge with no room to walk, a serious flaw in a neighborhood with heavy pedestrian traffic. The lack of sidewalks is particularly difficult because a neighboring lot is currently a busy construction staging area with a high volume of truck traffic.
- **Lack of street lighting** This is consistent with the need to upgrade all parts of this section of the neighborhood to full city streets, some of which currently include private ways.
- **Allow for Future Connectivity** The project fails to take into account the need for the streets to foster connectivity with future development of the Arborway Yard parcel. Meanwhile, 76 Stonley Rd must be integrated into the existing Stonybrook neighborhood from the Brookley Rd side; otherwise, until the Arborway Yard is developed, this project will be completely isolated.
- **Street Level Presence of Building** Plans should allow for better use of the building's ground level outdoor space by residents. This will help connect the building with the neighborhood.

Inclusion of Planning for Neighboring Parcels

Since the owners of 76 Stonley Rd. also own several abutting parcels, an effort should be made to advance a coordinated plan for this section of the neighborhood. A commitment to develop their lots on Stedman Street that abut three-family houses on Plainfield Street under the standard 3F-4000 zoning code would be particularly welcomed.

Design Should Benefit from Past and Current Planning Efforts

The project does not reflect Forest Hills Improvement Initiative⁴ recommendations with respect to this area. The Arborway Yard Section, p3-6, includes Stonley Rd and sets guidelines for residential housing on side streets that are different from Washington St. The current design also does not take into account current priorities coming out of the PLAN: JP/Rox process such as "Respect and preserve neighborhood character including existing heights and densities." Revisions to the design should reflect the efforts of this planning process and will undoubtedly benefit from it.

³ Complete Streets Guidelines, City of Boston, <http://bostoncompletestreets.org/>

⁴ <http://bit.ly/1TB9Qpi>



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Precedents and Speculation

Another 2 1/2 industrial acres abut residential housing in the SNA area. The design of 76 Stonley Rd will set precedents for other currently zoned industrial parcels located next to residential housing. If this parcel can be built with 32 units, the sale prices of other parcels will climb to reflect the higher density. On recent Washington St projects⁵ the SNA and the developers successfully worked together to bring scale down to 3 and 4 stories where the large projects were proposed next to three-story homes. It is important to establish density and height guidelines for developments next to residential zoned areas now before speculation leads to over pricing of parcels.

Affordability and Unit Format

The SNA has endorsed the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council's target of requiring developers of projects with ten or more units to designate 25% of units as "affordable" as defined in their statement on Inclusionary Zoning. For more information, please refer to their website.⁶ These targets should not, however, be met by merely increasing the size and scale of the 76 Stonley building without regard to the existing neighboring structures, as discussed above. Further, like other residential projects in Jamaica Plain, either proposed or under construction, 76 Stonley is comprised of a majority of 2 bedroom units and only a handful of 1 or 3 bedroom units. The SNA has suggested that this and other projects should include far more family-formatted 3-beds to allow for families to grow and stay in the SNA neighborhood, where the majority of existing units are also 2-beds.

Conclusion

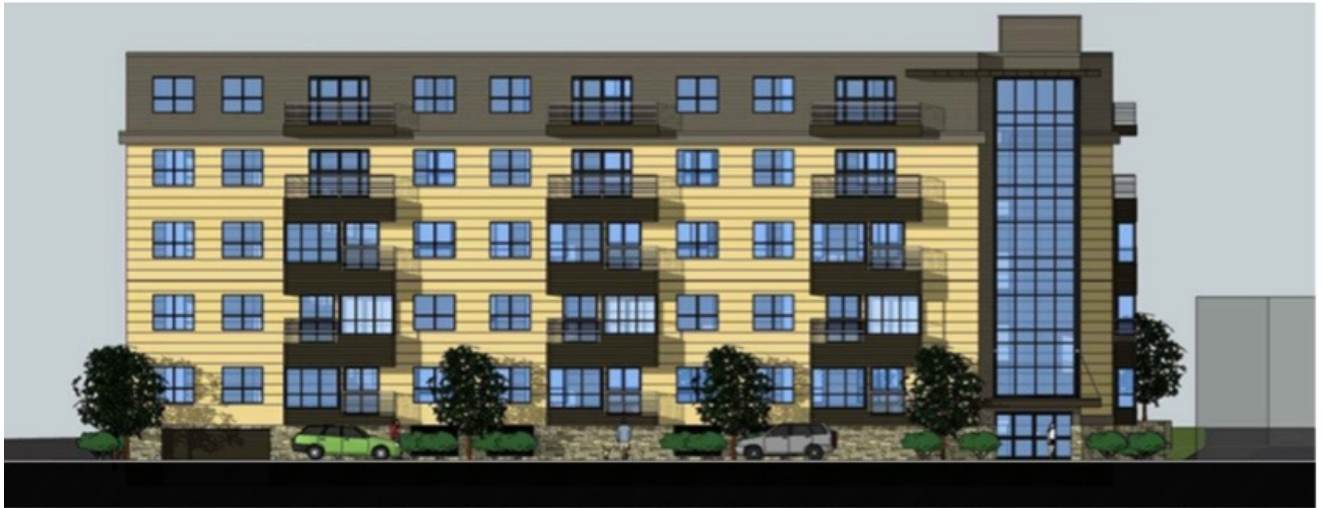
The 76 Stonley Committee calls for 2 steps:

1. A redesign of the project to address our concerns
2. A community plan that studies it and surrounding parcels as part of the existing neighborhood with sidewalks, trees, street lights, and connecting streets

Further, this project can serve as a useful case study for some of the priorities for the rezoning of the Washington Street Corridor established through the PLAN: JP/Rox process currently underway.

⁵ Commons at Forest Hills and 3521-3529 Washington St.

⁶ <http://www.jpnc.org/documents/inclusionary-zoning/>



76 Stonley Rd Proposal



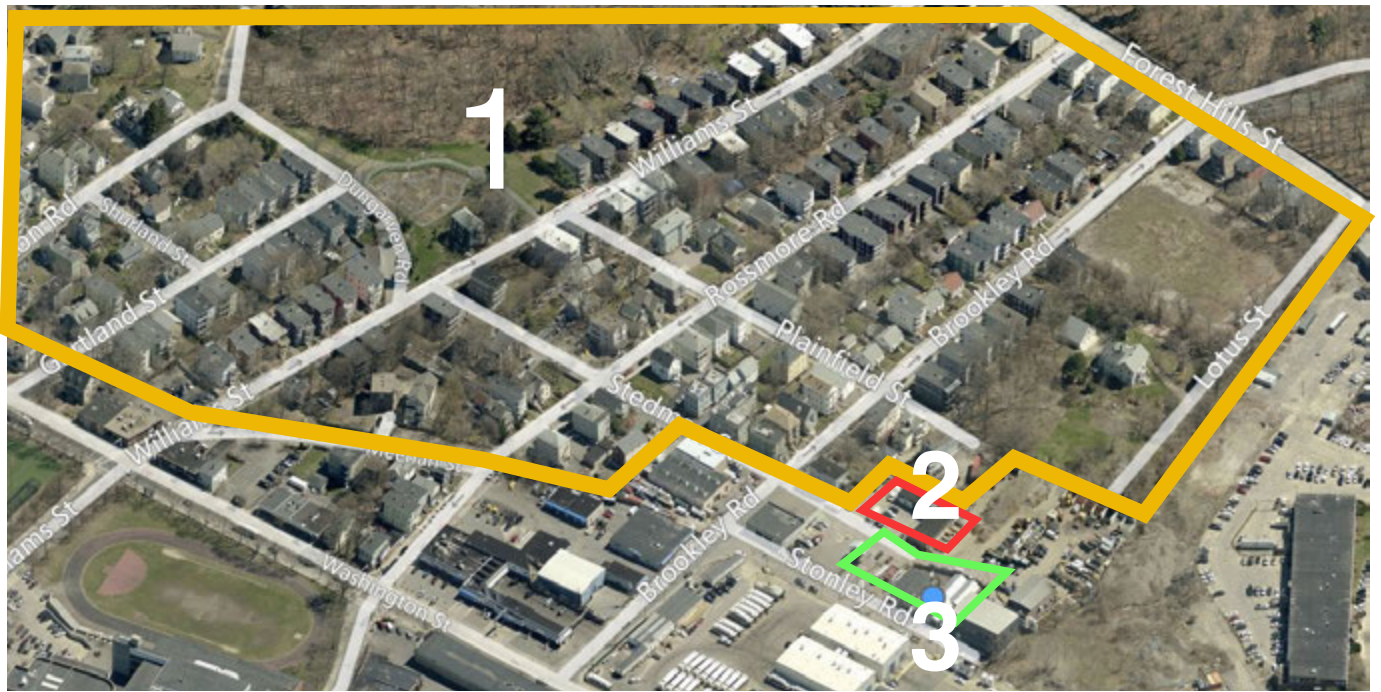
363 Centre St - Scaling of New Development to Surrounding Buildings



3200 Washington St, Scaling of New Developments to Existing 3 Family Homes



3521-3529 Washington St - Scaling Down of Building to Correspond to 3 Story Burnett Homes



Area of the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA)

1. Residentially Zoned Area, Parks, and Open Space
2. Parcels purchased by developers November 2015
3. 76 Stonley Rd. Proposal

