

To: Jay Sheers, Chair, and the City of Beacon Planning Board

Date: May 2, 2018

Re: **Two Bank Square Concept Plan**

I have reviewed the Concept Design Study, dated October 29, 2016, and appreciate the opportunity to give feedback on the conceptual plans early in the process. This is an exciting opportunity to fill a major gap in the streetscape and provide jobs and commercial activities at the base of Main Street.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing a new mixed-use building, including retail and office uses with a potential fourth floor for residential. The property is located at the corner of Main Street and Route 9D in the CB Zoning District.

Initial Comments

1. The City Council is considering eliminating the existing CB district and including this area in an expanded and updated Central Main Street (CMS) District. The applicant should be aware of how the draft zoning changes may affect the current proposal.
2. A fourth floor is not permitted in the CB district, but if rezoned to CMS, the fourth floor may be allowed by Special Permit.
3. This is a very prominent corner, adjacent to the Historic Overlay Zone and National Register Historic District, so architectural compatibility with the existing streetscape and historic district will be a major issue. Repetitive or bulky architecture should be avoided. If adopted, the CMS district has specific standards that will need to be incorporated into the design.
4. The existing building at 134 Main Street is not in the Historic Overlay District, but demolishing it will need some justification. The applicant should be prepared to address the history and viability of that building.
5. It is not clear from the First Floor Plan on page 6 if the existing sidewalk along the street is maintained. Any changes to the sidewalk would need to be ADA-compliant.
6. Parking is a continuing challenge along Main Street. Any application should include a complete parking count for all the proposed uses. Cross-easements may be necessary for separate parcels.
7. Having all or most of the vehicular access off West Church Street through a residential district will likely be a problem. Any parking areas adjacent to West Church Street should be designated for residential uses.

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If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me.

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