

Some Problems and Solutions Toward Newton's Zoning Redesign

Emphasizing Affordable Housing, Sustainable Development, Larger Apartments and 12+ Unit Buildings, and similar measures promoted by Engine 6 and others

Sarah Luria, 38 Garland Rd.

Newton Zoning Redesign Office Hours, July 8, 2020



1. Current Focus of Zoning Redesign Conversation Seems to be on preserving our “green leafy spacious neighborhoods with backyards” of Zones R1 and R2, and our charming village centers

(Kathleen Kouril Greiser, June 8 office hour)



All photos from Newton Villages Alliance website
<http://www.newtonvillagesalliance.org/>

Make Zoning Redesign Top Priority: The Other Newton

R3, N, V1, V2, and some R2 = Where a lot of us live

Improve and Preserve Newton: “Preserving and enhancing the existing character of Newton’s...neighborhoods” often does not go far enough

(Draft Zoning Ordinance, 1.2.D-E)



Washington Street



Route 9



875 Walnut St. across from Whole Foods @ Beacon



Beacon @ Four Corners

2. Current Emphasis of Redesign Language is Preserving Neighborhood Fabric including its “Predictability”
Proposed Revision: Emphasize, Celebrate, and Expand Newton’s Already Diverse Character and Fabric



Fisher Street

Where many blocks combine “suburban infill” of ranch, cape, colonial, *and* multi-unit apartments make good neighbors for Victorians, or feature worker’s cottages and mill housing.

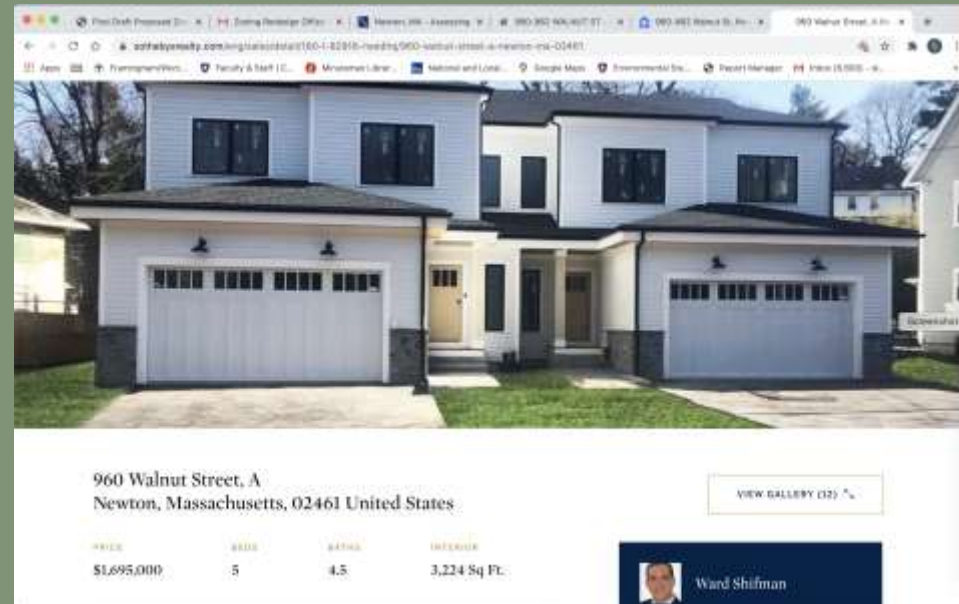
Draft Ordinance, 3.1.3.A, 3.2.4.A

Norwood Ave. Apts. Next to Victorians on Crystal Lake



3. New Housing Type Trends In Newton Do Not Model our Espoused Goals of Sustainable Affordable Development

2-Unit Town House Trend, Upscale Not More Affordable or Sustainable & Not Historic



2 Unit Residence Draft Ordinance 3.2.7

Historic Model: Mill Village Housing

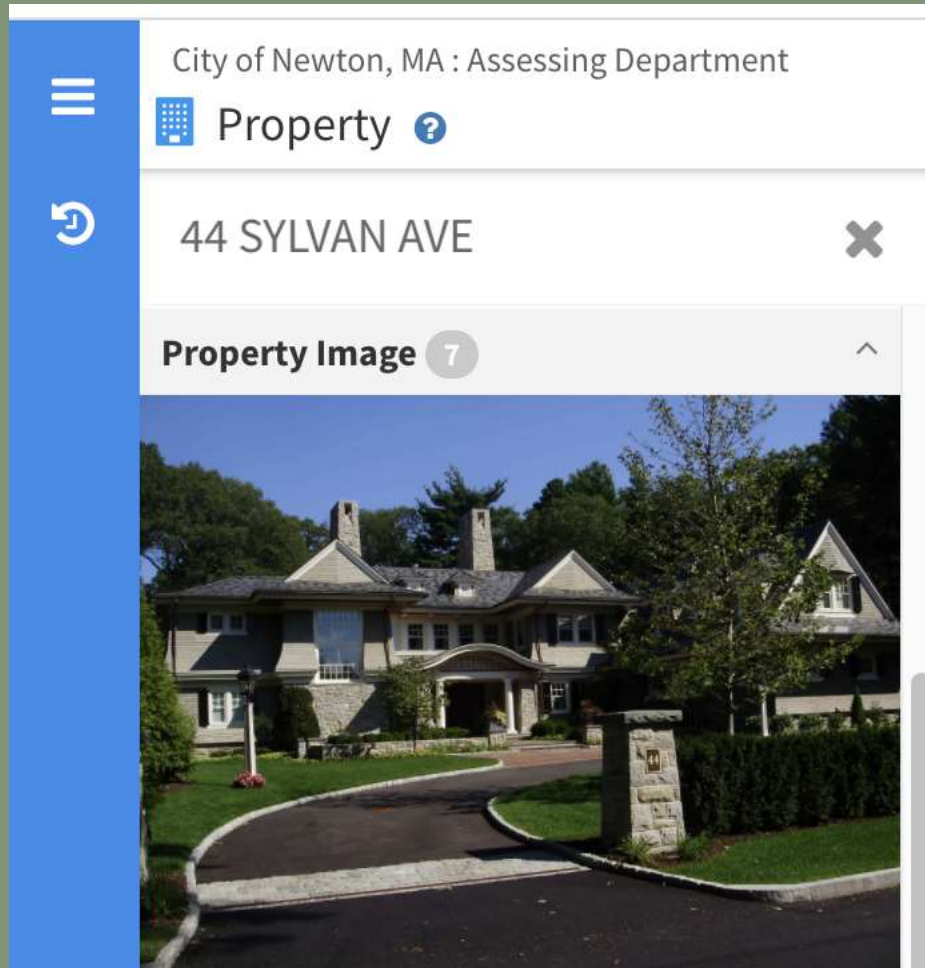
Unit 962, B (right) sold = 1,675,000.00

Unit 960 A (left) under contract (sale price 1,695,000.00)

Where We Are Headed: More rather than less economically segregated: The California-fication of Newton

Mansion, W. Newton: \$7,012,100

Small House & Lot, 4 Corners: \$935,000



15 Garland Rd.

Lot 3049 sq. feet; House 1300 sq feet house; 3 BR, 3BA
Built 1935; Renovated 2019; Sold 4/2020 \$935,000

Built 2013

Use Zoning Redesign to Decisively Advance New Housing Types that Embrace our Values and our Diverse Class History and Fabric

Promote More sustainable affordable garden apartment and small apartment complexes 4-5 stories acceptable, with potential to be even more attractive and stronger place making than 1-3 story street facade



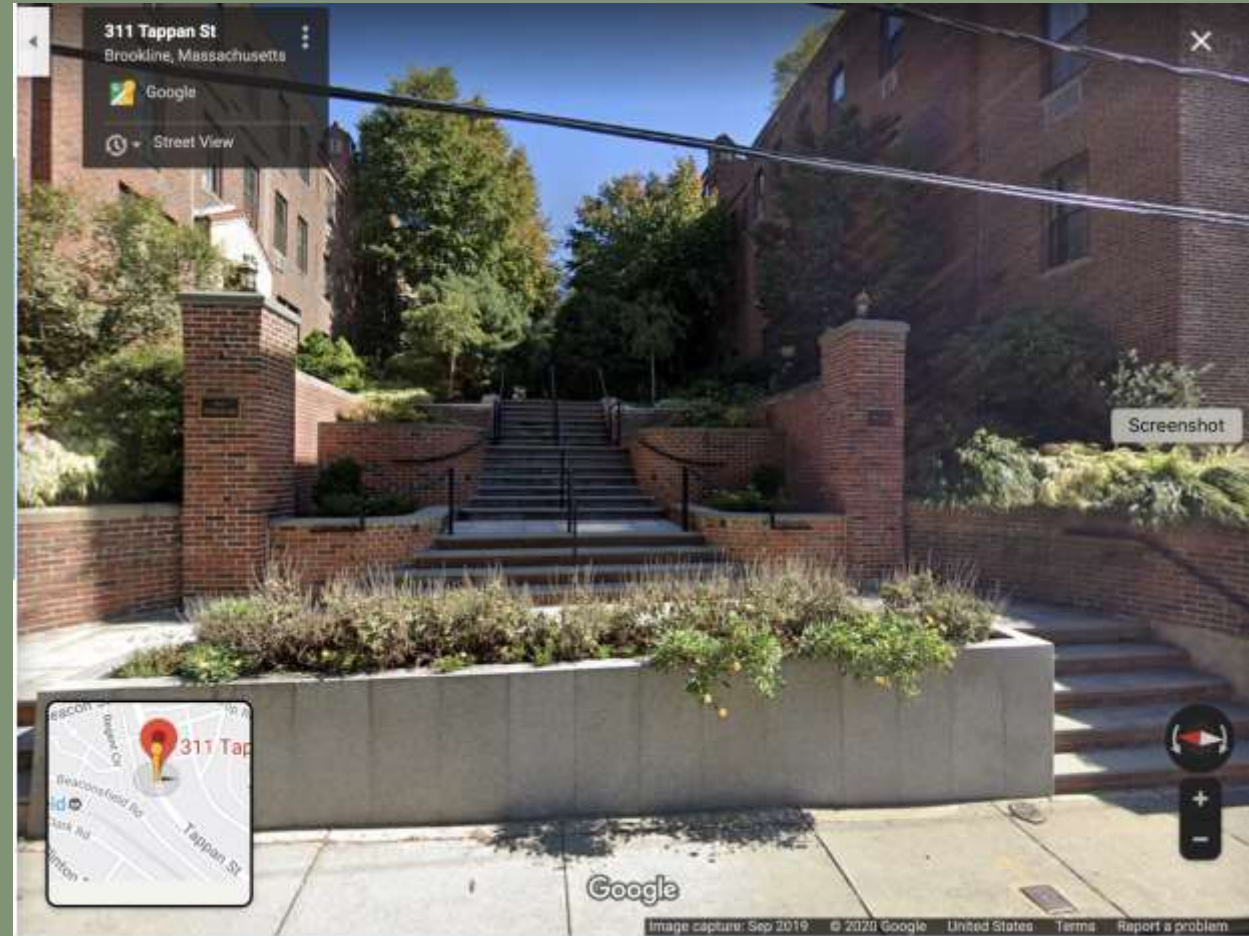
17-31 Herrick Road



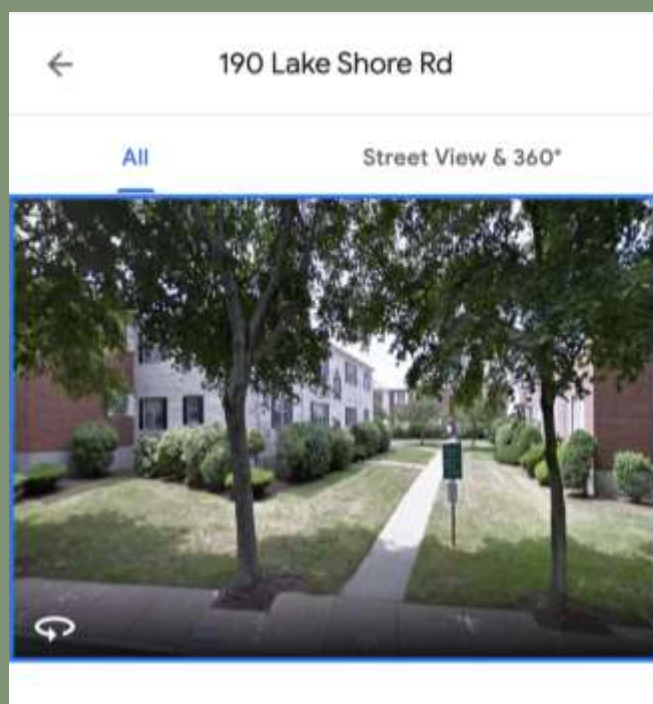
55-85 Norwood Ave.



Take Inspiration from Stellar neighboring town examples
Terraces Apartments and Townhouses, Tappan Street, Brookline
4-5 stories Acceptable, In Places Perhaps Preferred



Terrace Apartments, 311-325 Tappan St. Brookline
Built 1930



Town Estates, Lake Shore Road, Brighton
354 Condominiums
88 2-story garden style buildings
15 acres
Swimming Pool

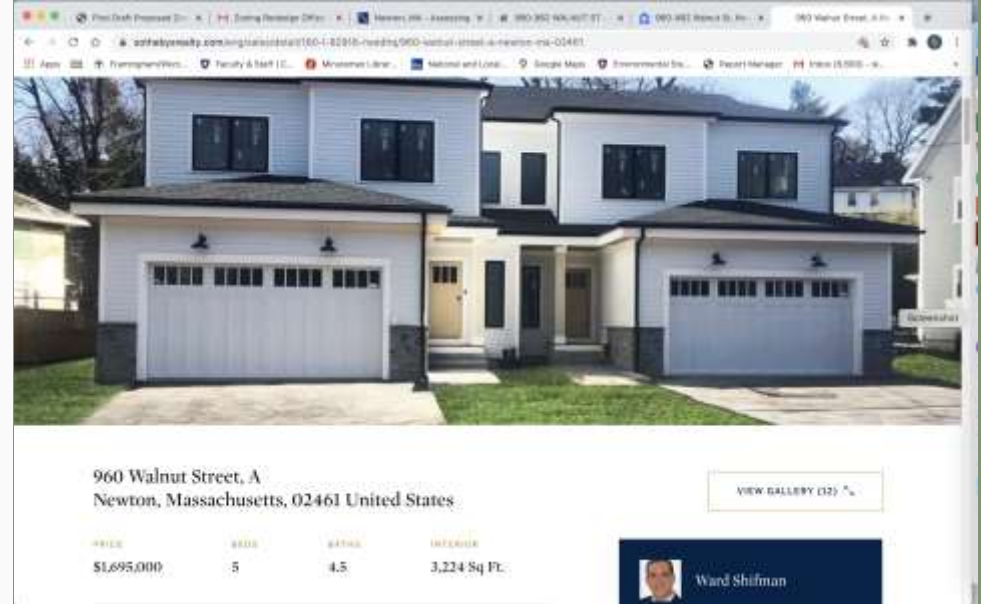
4. We Miss Opportunities to Develop Larger Lots, Adjoining Parcels: 960-962 Walnut Street



Previous

Next

960-962 Walnut (2019)



960-962 (2020)

Unit 962, B sold = 1,675,000.00

Unit 960 A under contract (sale price 1,695,000.00)

Use such parcels to Create a New Type of Multi-House/Apt. Complex: Innovative, Sustainable, More Affordable
We Missed an Opportunity @ 956 960-962 & 956 Walnut Street for a 10 Unit (Cottage) Development



Type Proposed : MBR ground floor, loft w/ 2nd bedroom 1500 sq ft, Common Front yard, parking on perimeter, \$800,000

Make Multi-Resident/Multi-Use the **Focus** of Zoning Redesign, Expand by Right Rather than Special Permit Development

It is only logical to take advantage of Connected and Large Parcels throughout the City to promote Multi-Unit Housing and small to even very large Apartments such as Riverside and Northland

And we can do that better than River-Pleasant Street, Watertown



4. Current Emphasis on “Preserving the Scale of [our Village] Centers,” but Some Need Improving



Four Corners

Create Greener more Sustainable Transit Corridors: Turn these Voids into Places



Washington St. & Mass Pike

Four Corners Could be a Model Village

It enhances walkability tremendously—is close to T stop, on Bus Line to Newtonville Rail, has many services (Walgreens; Whole Foods; Bank; Pizza, Chinese Food; Gas & Great Mechanic; Dentist; Haircut; Wine...)

Develop with more diverse housing stock including small apartment developments.

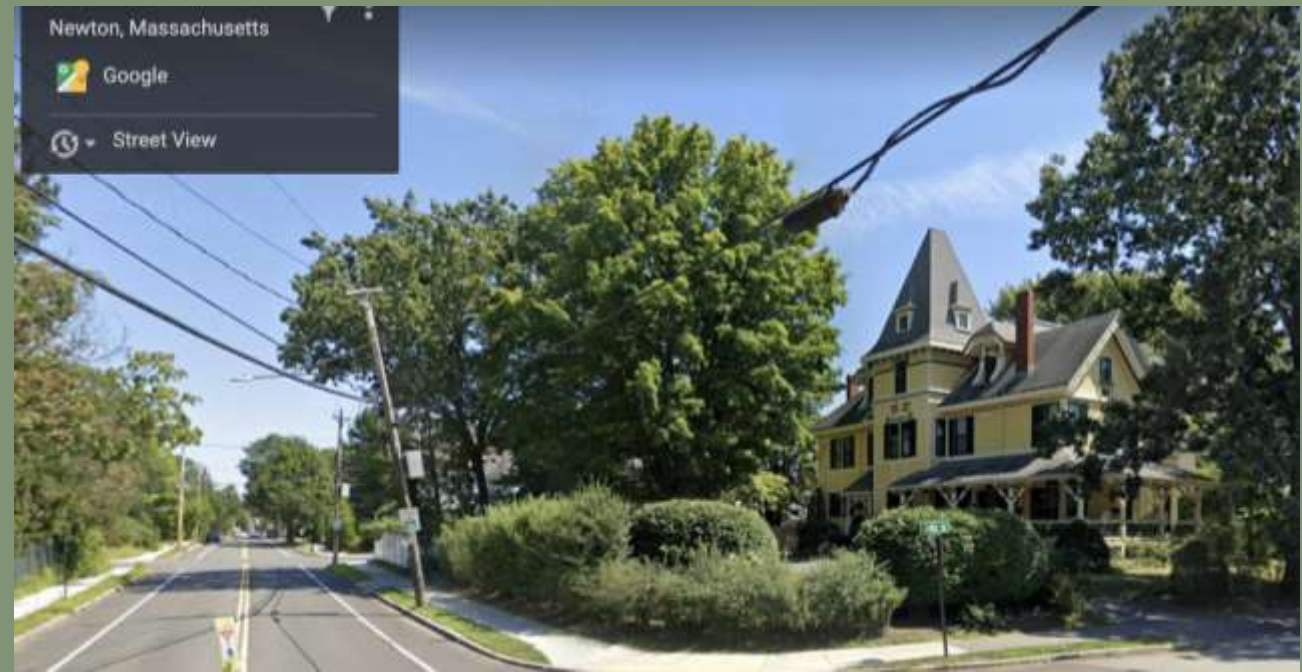


Four Corners

- These townhouses were a step, but were a missed opportunity to go much further in creating a streetscape.
- Use N Zoning to develop this area-- small apartment buildings, more significant townhouse complexes.
- The many small businesses of 4 corners would benefit from a bigger local customer base. (The restaurant building (bottom right) has been vacant for 4+ years.)



Why are we so scared of 4 stories?



Do we need 3 Village designations—one for significant but extra-small village centers like 4 Corners to encourage their further development, such as at Oak & Chestnut?



To Conclude: We Need Visible Progress Toward Our Espoused Goals:

“1) more housing serving a wider range of people and incomes; 2) development that is environmentally and economically sustainable; 3) development that preserves and adapts our historic fabric. “

(Zoning and Planning Meeting, April 27, 2020)



Missed Opportunities Create “Revitalization,” “Redesign,” “Comprehensive Plans” Skepticism (and Resident Fatigue!)

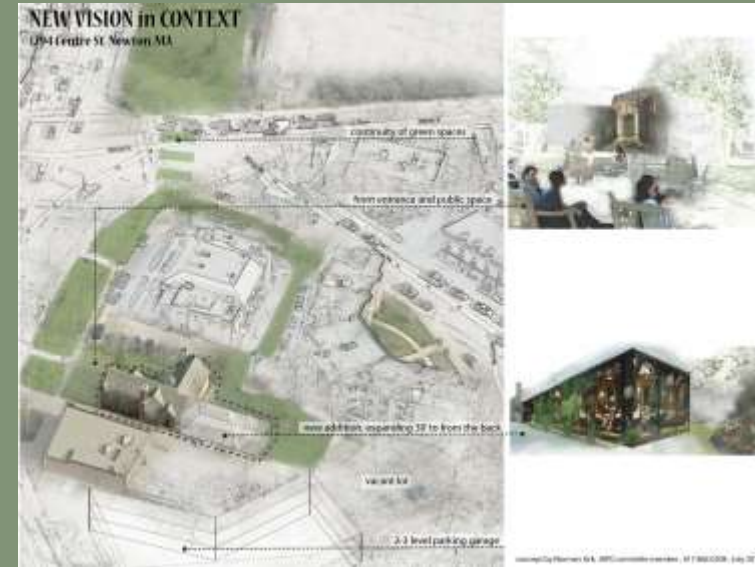
Toward the Revitalization of Newton Centre

Combined Group Two and Three Report
Newton Centre Task Force



sketch by Mongkol Tansantisuk

Newton Centre Task Force
Final Report 2008



Norm Spirk, JAPG, Suggested Vision

Sept. 2012 JAPG Recommendation: Use
site to create and Vibrant
Village Center and Connectivity to
Newton Center Green Spaces

- Emphasize the Other Newton—Which Often Means Improve Rather than Preserve
- Focus on Greening and Improving Transit Corridors (e.g., Washington Street, Route 9, Beacon Street)
- Make Multi-Resident/Multi-Use the **Focus** of Zoning Redesign: Effectively Promote New Sustainable Affordable Housing Types Like Garden Apartments, Courtyard development and Apartment Buildings. Expand such Building By Right
- Prioritize Creating More Visible Signs of Progress toward our goals of an inclusive sustainable affordable Newton to Build Momentum and Hope
- Build the Talk!

Thank You!