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PUBLIC HEARING/WORKING SESSION MEMORANDUM

Date: August 1, 2014

To: Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen

From: Candace Havens, Director of Planning and Development
Alexandra Ananth, Chief Planner for Current Planning
Daniel Sexton, Senior Planner

Cc: Petitioner

In response to questions raised at the Land Use Committee public hearing and/or in staff technical reviews, the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming public hearing/working session. This information is supplemental to the staff analysis previously provided at the public hearing/working session.

PETITION #222-14

29 Wedgewood Road

A request to allow a 1½-story addition, which will increase the floor area ratio from .42 to .54, where .48 is the maximum allowed by right.

The Land Use Committee held a public hearing on July 15, 2014. The public hearing was held open so that the petitioner could provide supplemental information. In response to the items requested in staff's technical review memo and concerns raised by the Committee at the public hearing, the petitioner submitted the following supplemental information:



Support for the proposed plan. The petitioner submitted a power point presentation summarizing their argument as to why the proposed design is consistent with and not in derogation of the size, scale and design of other structures in the neighborhood. The agenda items in the presentation included an analysis of the neighborhood context, mass of the proposed addition, the historic review process, and a more detailed landscaping plan. In particular, the petitioner addressed:

- The style and number of stories of other homes on Wedgewood Road;
- Analysis/calculation of the additional mass;

- Petitioner's perspective on the Newton Historical Commission's review and decision;
- Explanation of the higher ridgeline of the proposed addition;
- Additional detail on the landscaping plan;
- Letters of support from the surrounding neighborhood.

Floor Plan with Furniture. The petitioner provided a floor plan with furniture to show the space limitations of the proposed addition.

The only changes to the proposed plans from those presented at the public hearing are to add a second garage window on the side of the addition, and to raise both garage windows to the height of the windows on the front of the house.

Recommendation. Based on the information presented above, and considering that the site plan and elevations have not substantially changed, the Planning Department continues to recommend modifications to the proposed design as outlined in the Executive Summary of the Planning Department's public hearing memo.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Executive Summary of Planning Department's public hearing memorandum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The property located at 29 Wedgewood Road consists of 4,501 square feet of land improved with a two-story residence with an attached one-stall, one-story, garage constructed in 1935. The petitioner is proposing to demolish the current attached garage and breezeway, and construct a new addition totaling approximately 880 square feet. The addition will consist of a two stall garage totaling 378 square feet, a first floor bathroom and mudroom totaling 172 square feet, and two bedrooms on the second floor totaling 330 square feet. In order to construct the proposed addition, the petitioner is seeking a special permit to increase the floor area ratio (FAR) from .42 to .54, where .48 is the maximum allowed by right. If approved, the proposed addition totaling 880 square feet, which represents a net increase of 540 square feet, will increase the dwelling from 1,902 square feet to 2,442 square feet.

Due to the age of the structure and scope of the proposed project, the Newton Historical Commission (NHC) reviewed the proposal and determined the structure to be preferably preserved (**ATTACHMENT A**). The petitioner received a waiver of the demolition delay from NHC with the understanding that the ridgepole of the addition would match the existing house; the petitioner has chosen to pursue a different design. The demolition delay is therefore in effect. According to the *Newton Comprehensive Plan*, adopted 2007, residential property owners are encouraged to consider modest additions to older homes in order to preserve the existing structure, while allowing them to meet the needs of today's families.

The Planning Department has no particular concerns with the construction of an addition on this dwelling. The Department does, however, have reservations about the bulk and mass of the proposed addition, and its visual fit within the surrounding buildings and residential context. To reduce the bulk, mass, and visual impact of the front building plane and western facing side facade of the proposed addition, the Department encourages the petitioner to consider 1) reducing the size of the front dormer to align it with the two existing dormers; 2) use a shed dormer on the rear of the residence to increase articulation of the building instead of the proposed gable; and 3) installation of screening measures, consisting of plantings or the extension of the existing sight obscuring fence. The Planning Department believes that the project, with slight modifications, will not be in derogation of the size, scale and design of other structures in the neighborhood.

I. SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

When reviewing this request, the Board should consider whether:

- The proposed FAR of .54, where .48 is the maximum allowed by right and .42 is existing, is consistent with and not in derogation of the size, scale, and design of other structures in the neighborhood. (§30-15 Table A, §30-15(u)(2))