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PUBLIC HEARING/WORKING SESSION MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 13, 2015
MEETING DATE: March 17, 2015
TO: Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen
FROM: James Freas, Acting 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 hearings, and/or staff technical reviews, the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming public hearing/working session. This information is supplemental to staff analysis previously provided at the public hearing.

PETITION #366-14

143 Lincoln Street

Request for Special Permit/Site Plan Approval to allow the expansion of an existing two-family, which is a nonconforming use in the single residence district, and to exceed the maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR).

The Land Use Committee (Committee) held public hearings on December 9, 2014 and February 10, 2015, which were held open so that the petitioner could respond to questions/concerns that were raised in the Planning Department's memorandums and at the public hearing by the Committee and public. The petitioner submitted information on March 11, 2015 in response to the questions/concerns that were raised. Overall, the Planning Department finds that the petitioner's responses are complete, and provides the following comments.

Community Meeting Results. A community meeting, facilitated by the petitioner, was held on Wednesday, March 4, 2015 with residents of the surrounding neighborhood to discuss the latest design for the two-family structure. According to information provided by the petitioner, residents were concerned about the visual impact of the structure on the surrounding historic homes. Specifically, the residents suggested the Committee consider the following issues:

- Two unit entrances on Mountfort Road;
- The use of carport or a porte-cochère;
- The size of the driveway; and

➤ Exterior cladding.

Per these comments, the petitioner issued a revised set of architectural plans for the project. These plans relocate one of the unit entrances from the Mountfort Road side to the northern side (facing the detached garage) of the structure. The portion of the building façade previously occupied by the relocated unit entry will be replaced with windows on the first and second floor. The petitioner has also decided not to pursue the development of the two carports attached to the detached garage or a porte-cochère. Although the petitioner was asked to reduce the width of the driveway so the potential number of vehicles parked in the driveway would be limited to two, the size of the driveway has not changed. The petitioner is, however, proposing to use a finished surface for the driveway that consists of bituminous and grasscrete pavers with pervious modular paver edging. The Planning Department still believes that the overall size of the driveway is excessive, and encourages the petitioner to eliminate one or both of the open parking spaces adjacent to the detached garage.

Building Footprint and Floor Area Comparison. According to data provided by the petitioner, the following table illustrates the building footprint and floor area of the previous and proposed building designs for the two-family structure:

Plan Sets	Building Footprint	Floor Area	FAR
3 rd Plan Set-3/8/2015	2,448 sf	5,267 sf	.45
2 nd Plan Set-1/27/2015	2,369 sf	4,175 sf	.36
1 st Plan Set-10/9/2014	2,432 sf	5,839 sf	.50

Based on a comparison of the 1st Plan Set (dated 10/9/2014) and the 3rd Plan Set (dated 3/8/2015), the footprint of the proposed buildings (includes garage) has increased by 16 square feet and the total floor area of the structures has been reduced by 572 square feet. The significant differences between the 2nd and 3rd plan sets are due to the reconfigured attic floor. At the last public hearing, the Committee and residents asked the petitioner to adjust the proportions of the building so that the mansard roof was more visually and functionally consistent with a structure of this style. As a result, the petitioner is seeking relief from the FAR requirement of the Newton Zoning Ordinance to increase the FAR from .24 to .45, where .36 is the maximum allowed. The Planning Department believes that the reduction in bulk and mass of the building will significantly improve the visual appearance of the structure, and will compliment other historic structures in the surrounding neighborhood. For these reasons, the Planning Department supports the current proposal.

Building Cladding. The petitioner provided the following images of the proposed cladding materials:

Roofing: Majestic Synthetic Slate Roof System



Siding: Harvey Industries - Fiber Cement Siding System



The petitioner has indicated that the proposed roofing and siding systems, which are composed of synthetic materials, will replicate the design, finish, and proportions of the historic cladding materials found on buildings of this style. The Planning Department is comfortable with the proposed materials, but would encourage the petitioner to consider using natural cladding materials (i.e. cedar siding, wooden sashed windows, etc.) where appropriate to be more in-keeping with the surrounding structures.

Recommendation.

Based on the supplemental information submitted, the Planning Department finds the petition to be complete. The Planning Department is supportive of the project and recommends approval with conditions.