



# Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council

## Memorandum

Alderman Marc C. Laredo, Chair, Land Use Committee  
Members, Land Use Committee  
City of Newton  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459

December 9, 2014

Regarding: Petition #366-14 Arman Chitchian petition for a SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL to construct an addition and reconfigure an existing two-family dwelling to two side-by-side attached dwellings, which will increase the Floor Area Ratio from .24 to .50 where .36 is allowed, at 143 LINCOLN STREET, Ward 5, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, on land known as SBL 52, 1, 18, containing approximately 11,775 sf of land in a district zoned SINGLE RESIDENCE 2.

Dear Members of Land Use Committee,

The Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council (NHNAC) urges you to **REJECT** Docket item #366-14, a Special Permit to construct two side-by-side attached dwellings which will increase the Floor Area Ratio to .50 where .36 is allowed, at 143 LINCOLN STREET, Ward 5, NEWTON HIGHLANDS.

At its November 6, 2014 and December 4, 2014 meetings, the NHNAC and other members of the community reviewed and discussed the Special Permit for 143 Lincoln St. application. At the December 4, 2014 meeting the Area Council members voted 7-0 to request that the Aldermen reject the Special Permit application. Although the community would welcome modest improvement to the subject property, this proposal as presented is inconsistent with neighborhood character, size, scale, and design, and would set an undesirable precedent for future development in the area. In particular the community believes the requested relief both of the FAR and the introduction of attached dwellings to a neighborhood of stately 100 year old Victorian homes fails the Special Permit criteria of not being "...substantially more detrimental than the existing nonconforming use to the neighborhood" NZO Sec. 30-21(b). Among the concerns expressed during discussion are the following points.

As noted in the petition and as can be seen from the elevation drawings submitted with the application, the new massive structure, though in a single residence zone, is for two attached dwellings that would replace a single structure containing two dwelling units. Although the number of units is unchanged, this is a substantial design change and is inconsistent with the existing character of the neighborhood.

The >100% increase in the FAR from 0.24 to 0.50 (where 0.36 is permitted) is much above the 0.26 average or .23 median FAR of nearby dwellings on both sides of Lincoln St. and Mountfort

Rd. (see attached Table). There is no compelling reason why Newton's FAR standard should be overridden, and certainly not to the extent proposed, particularly since the existing neighborhood density is far below the FAR limit.

The property is located in the five blocks of Lincoln St. that is essentially "Main Street" in Newton Highlands. It is central to what everyone, residents and visitors, encounter and use in creating their impression of the character of the Highlands community. The large size and appearance of the proposed dwelling contrasts with the rest of Lincoln Street's attractiveness and traditional character the community would like to see preserved. The Newton Historical Commission, at the behest of Newton Highlands' residents, recently voted to study the creation of a Newton Highlands Local Historical district which is an indication of the value the community puts on preserving its dominant historical character and preventing the intrusion of structures that are inconsistent and that poorly integrate with their surroundings.

A concern was expressed that if this project is approved as proposed, it could begin a "domino effect" that has occurred elsewhere in Newton. The argument for approval of similar future projects would be that "that ship has sailed" because other examples have already occurred. Many members of the Newton Highlands community do not want to see developers impose a gradual transformation of its eclectic mix of traditional housing styles to one with bland attached dwellings and front yards made up of an extensive sea of pavement leading to garage doors.

We thank the Land Use Committee for taking into consideration our recommendations to vote to **Reject** this Special Permit. The NHNAC supports development in our city that adds to community vitality while protecting the nature of our residential neighborhoods. This Special Permit application does not protect the nature of the Lincoln St. single residence neighborhood because of its size, scale, and design and should be rejected.

Sincerely,



Srdjan S. Nedeljkovic, President

On behalf of the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council

Attachment

Data and Information for Properties in the Neighborhood of 143 Lincoln Street.

	Lot Size (sq. ft.)	Size of Buildings (sq. ft.) <sup>1</sup>	FAR	Use	Design	Year Built
143 Lincoln St. <sup>3</sup>	11,775	3,038	0.26	2F	Two family	1910
143 Lincoln St. <sup>4</sup>	11,775	5,839	<b>0.50</b>	2F	Attached 2F	1910
151-153 Lincoln St.	19,392	5,540	0.29	2F	Victorian	1880
18 Mountfort Rd.	5,812	1,795	0.31	SF	Old Style	1910
157 Lincoln St.	20,595	4,574	0.22	SF	Victorian	1885
163 Lincoln St.	24,270	5,179	0.21	SF	Victorian	1885
166 Lincoln St.	7,079	3,038	0.43	SF	Victorian	1885
160 Lincoln St. <sup>5</sup>	16,715	3,720	0.22	SF	Victorian	1884
154 Lincoln St.	12,296	2,670	0.22	SF	Victorian	1890
146 Lincoln St.	13,800	4,626	0.34	2F	Victorian	1880
138 Lincoln St.	13,800	3,762	0.27	2F	Victorian	1880
130 Lincoln St.	6,900	3,941	0.57	2F	Victorian	1895
125 Lincoln St.	11,250	2,630	0.23	SF	Colonial	1910
135 Lincoln St.	14,220	4,376	0.31	2F	Victorian	1880
19 Mountfort Rd. <sup>6</sup>	19,000	4,902	0.26	2F	Victorian	1890
21 Mountfort Rd.	17,477	2,178	0.12	SF	Colonial	1930
24 Mountfort Rd.	8,743	1,942	0.22	SF	Old Style	1900
Average	14,090	3,658	0.26			1892
Median	13,800	3,720	0.23			1885

<sup>1</sup>Includes detached garages per current NZO FAR rules.

<sup>3</sup>Existing conditions for 143 Lincoln St.

<sup>4</sup>Proposed conditions for 143 Lincoln St.

<sup>5</sup>Planning Memo shows size as 3720 but ADB adds to 3640

<sup>6</sup>ADB size of buildings is 4092 not  
4,902