

Linda M. Finucane

From: Per Dutton <perdutton@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 1:50 PM
To: Linda M. Finucane; Gregory J. Schwartz
Cc: Deborah J. Crossley
Subject: 143 Lincoln St. #366-14
Attachments: 143Lincoln Elevation Question_033115.pdf

Dear Land Use Committee,

I am unable to attend today's meeting and am writing regarding the latest plans submitted for 143 Lincoln St. While I feel a sense of progress along with others, significant objections remain including what some of us believe is an error in the latest plans. Many neighbors remain committed to progress and hope to reach quick resolution through further discussion with the owner. Please consider these points in your deliberation:

1. The building mass, while less than earlier proposals that received very strong neighborhood opposition due to extraordinary size, remains oversized for the lot.
 - o a. The hybrid mansard "looking" roof adds mass to the building where the Planning Board provided a more effective solution to this issue. The petitioner has rejected their solution due to its effect on floor area -- as a reminder this project grows a 2,900 sq ft house by 67% to 4,800 sq ft, so the Planner's suggestion was to slightly diminish a request for exceptional floor area growth.
 - o b. The 250-300 sq ft of low-ceiling "uninhabitable" but finished 3rd floor space in Unit B contributes to issues of mass. While not part of FAR calculations, this is relevant for the larger discussion of the project's mass, and should color the LUC's review of a special permit to exceed FAR as FAR's purpose is to regulate mass/volume. This project seeks to extend non-conforming 2-family use including finished but "uninhabitable" space and exceeding FAR.
 - o c. Extended footprint. While most additions to Newton homes show diminishing mass relative to the original house, this project shows the opposite: extending beyond the original house to the West, and reaching flush with the house to the East (where a greater setback relative to the original structure would visually diminish the apparent size of the addition). It's like a house appended to the addition.
2. Elevations. In the attached PDF, I have outlined aspects of the latest plans that are confusing and might highlight an error discovered yesterday. Hopefully this can be clarified by the architect & owner with updated plans.
 - o A-9 shows the West elevation, with the addition on the left side showing the lower mansard-looking roof for the entire addition. A-6 shows that this same addition with the lower roof clearly extends beyond the rest of the house to West (facing the Rosenbergs) by several feet. Thus, the lower roof should be visible from Lincoln St., extending beyond parts of the house with 3 floors.
 - o A-7's view from Lincoln St does not show the lowered roof extending toward the Rosenbergs, rather it shows a full 3-floor mansard profile with dormer (circled in red). A-10's view from the North confirms A-7's full 3-floor mansard profile that is flush with the lower addition's side facing the Rosenbergs. This appears inconsistent with the roof line shown by pages A-6/A-9.
 - o Interpretations of different pages suggest different sizes for the house.
3. The alternate by-right single family plan, while providing a benchmark, also suggests a potential destruction of value beyond what I suspect anyone desires. Two units are worth more than a single family to the owner (for rent or sale), as is a single family that is wider than 28 feet. The City and neighbors do not want a design not in keeping with a historic neighborhood (which also reduces owner

value) -- heading down this path really points at the decision to allow demolition of a property that Newton simultaneously highlights today as a "Historic Property" on its website: <http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/29694>

screenshot:



It is and would be a shame to lose more of the historical feel of this neighborhood.

4. The argument has been made that the relative over-size of this project is OK in light of the sizes of Lincoln St. houses nearby, the smaller sizes of houses on Mountfort Rd. notwithstanding. As a precedent being set, this logic suggests that ANY small lot bordering big houses could/should allow for exceptions to FAR. Is there a limit to the number of exceptions the LUC would allow in Newton Highlands, or in Newton in general? What is the limit?

Many of us were glad to see in progress the most recent plans. We are encouraged but had hoped our request would be accepted to bring this forward at the next LUC meeting instead of today to allow for more time. In light of where we are with a quick review of the latest plans, I request that you reject the special permit. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,
Per Dutton
157 Lincoln St.