



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

PLANNING BOARD

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To: Brookline Board of Appeals
From: Brookline Planning Board
Date: June 13, 2013
Subject: **Construct an addition and increase number of sleeping rooms for existing bed and breakfast inn**
Location: 143 St. Paul Street

Atlas Sheet:	26	Case #:	2013-0043
Block:	125	Zoning:	M-1.5
Lot:	01	Lot Area (s.f.):	±8,997

Board of Appeals Hearing: **June 27, 2013, at 7:30 p.m.**

BACKGROUND

August 10, 2010 – The Preservation Commission determined the building at 143 St. Paul Street to be significant in response to an application for partial demolition of portions of the side facades, and all of the rear façade. A demolition stay was imposed and expired August 10, 2011.

September 16, 2010 – The applicant presented the initial plans for a large rear and side addition at 143 St. Paul Street to the Planning Board in order to hear comments from the Board and neighborhood. The Board expressed concern over the size of the addition and its impact on abutting properties. The minutes from the September 16, 2010, Planning Board meeting are attached.

January 5, 2012 – The applicant presented plans for a revised addition and expansion to the Planning Board. The Board said the addition was still too large, the dining area and terrace was located too close to the neighbor, and the proposed new parking may not be appropriate. The minutes from the January 5, 2012, Planning Board meeting are attached.

SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD

143 St. Paul Street is a two-and-a-half story Queen Anne-style dwelling, currently used as a bed and breakfast known as the Samuel Sewall Inn, located on the southeast corner of the

intersection of St. Paul Street and Sewall Avenue. The dwelling was built in 1884 and is one of the oldest surviving houses on St. Paul Street. The dwelling's exterior is shingled and clapboarded, and the large gambrel roof is broken up by cross gables, dormers and tall chimneys with decorative brickwork. The Sewall Avenue side of the property is used for accessory parking and is the primary entrance for guests. The building was converted from a single-family dwelling to a lodging house in 1925. The building currently has 5,786 s.f. in finished floor area. The neighborhood is nearly entirely residential, except for this building and another bed and breakfast located on the northeast corner of the same intersection. That inn is owned by the same proprietor as the subject property.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant, Bryan Austin, proposes to construct three additions, one on the front of the building, another at the rear and sides, and a much smaller stair addition on the rear facade. The additions would add 3,315 s.f. to the inn for a total of 9,101 s.f. in finished floor area.

The front addition, 38'8" wide by 12' deep, would be one story tall and extend the length of the St. Paul Street facade, providing for a new dining area. The addition would have a regular fenestration pattern for the length of the front facade. A new porch, 10' by 15'8" and covered with a trellis, would be constructed on the side of this new addition closest to the street intersection, and would be used for al fresco dining and as a secondary egress from the new dining area.

The rear addition would be substantially larger than the front addition, wrapping around a portion of the Sewall Avenue facade, the entire side facade and a portion of the rear. (*Since this is a corner lot, the applicant has the option of selecting which lot line will be considered a side and which will be considered a rear for setback purposes. The applicant has selected the lot line shared with 97 Sewall Avenue as its side, and the lot line shared with 135 St. Paul Street as its rear.*) The addition would be three stories tall (38'), with shed dormers and a partially raised roofline that is consistent with the structure's existing height as seen from St. Paul. The addition would provide for a renovated entry and porch on the Sewall facade, an elevator, and several new and renovated rooms, bringing the inn from 14 rooms to 21 rooms, a slight increase from the 19 rooms shown in the previous proposal. The addition would extend 26'8" towards the side lot line on Sewall Avenue, be 44'6" deep, and span 33' along the rear facade facing 135 St. Paul Street. A new accessibility ramp would be constructed on the side of this addition.

A smaller addition, 10'9" wide and extending up all three floors, would provide a new enclosed egress stair and replace the existing fire escape on the rear facade.

All additions would be clad in clapboard and shingles to match the existing structure. The front addition would have paneling between the windows.

The applicant is also proposing to slightly revise the existing parking area's layout, retaining 6 spaces but making one of them accessible and three compact. The parking area would not be expanded.

FINDINGS

Section 4.07 – Table of Use Regulations, Use #7: A special permit is required to establish a lodging house in an M District. Since this proposal would expand an existing lodging house use,

a special permit is required. The addition would add seven rooms with attached baths, a new front entry, and a new dining area. *Special permit required.*

Section 5.09.2.e – Design Review: A special permit for design review is required for exterior additions to lodging houses. The Community and Environmental Impact design standards most applicable to this proposal are as follows:

- *Preservation of Trees and Landscape:* The proposal would require the removal and redesign of the landscaping in the front yard; the applicant is proposing several flowering and ornamental species plants as replacements. However, some of the proposed plants, while attractive, are also considered invasive, and the Board would strongly encourage the applicant to revise the landscape plan to use ornamental plants that are native to the area. The large addition at the rear and side would require the removal of a terrace and some grass landscaping, but the applicant is proposing some additional decorative landscaping there as well. New stockade fencing along the side and rear yards should provide additional screening.
- *Relation of Buildings to Environment:* The proposed additions are large, however, due to its location to the north and west of immediate abutters, significant shadow impacts on neighboring properties should be somewhat limited. The proposal would remove a significant amount of grassy open space on the lot.
- *Relation of Buildings to the Form of the Streetscape and Neighborhood:* The proposed additions are substantial, but the dimensions of the large rear addition have been revised so that it complies with the side yard setback requirement and needs less rear yard relief. The front dining room addition, while needing front setback relief, does move most of the inn's activity away from its residential neighbors, a significant concern of past proposals. The extensive fenestration on this front addition, as well as the new outside porch, does ensure some interaction with the street, as opposed to a blank wall. The additions have been designed with dormers and window detailing in character with the existing and some surrounding buildings. The neighborhood is a mix of building types, spanning from the Queen Anne style to more modern architectural types, but is primarily residential, except for the other bed and breakfast at the same intersection.
- *Open Space:* A significant amount of open space to the rear of the building would be removed and used for the addition, however, the proposal no longer includes a new separate parking or terrace area in the rear yard. Therefore, much of the grassy open area as seen from St. Paul Street will remain and new plants will be added. There is an existing terrace behind the building – it would be replaced with the new addition and a new landscaped walkway.
- *Circulation:* The existing parking area would remain, but it would be striped to show three spaces on each side, one of which would be accessible and three would be compact.
- *Special Features:* The proposal includes an enclosed trash area in the far rear corner of the lot, next to an existing garage on the neighboring property at 135 St. Paul Street. A/C equipment would be located in a screened area in the rear yard between the new large addition and the new stair addition.
- *Heritage:* This building was declared significant by the Preservation Commission in August 2010. The demolition delay has since expired. The proposal does involve modifying all of the building's facades, including removing one entire façade and significant portions of three other facades.

Section 5.43 – Exceptions to Yard and Setback Regulations

Section 5.50 – Front Yard Requirements

Section 5.70 – Rear Yard Requirements: The building’s rear lot line has been selected by the applicant to be that between 135 and 143 St. Paul Street.

Section 6.04 – Design of All Off-Street Parking Facilities:

.5.a: Parking stalls shall be set back from the street lot line a minimum of 5 feet in all districts.

.5.b: In M-1.5 districts, the surfaced area of a parking lot and all entrance/exit drives shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from all street lot lines and 5 feet from all other lot lines, and such setback area shall be landscaped and maintained.

.12: The Board of Appeals may by special permit waive the dimensional requirements of this section where new parking facilities are being installed to serve existing structures and land uses, provided it is necessary to permit the installation of the parking spaces that would be required for a similar new building.

Section 8.02.2 – Alteration or Extension: A special permit is required to alter or extend this non-conforming structure.

	Required	Existing	Proposed	Finding
Front Yard	15'	19.8'	4.6'	Variance
Rear Yard	30'	26.1'	12.1'	Special Permit/ Variance*
Side Yard	15.2' (10+L/10)	22.5'	16.5'	Complies
FAR	1.5 (max) 13,496 s.f.	0.64 5,786 s.f.	1.01 9,101 s.f.	Complies
Height	50 feet	--	38'	Complies
Parking Spaces	4 spaces (2 spaces for every 10 rooms)	6 spaces	6 spaces	Complies
Side Yard, Parking	5'	0'	0'	Pre-existing, Non-conforming
Front Yard, Parking	10'	0'	0'	Pre-existing, Non-conforming

*Under *Section 5.43*, the Board of Appeals may by special permit waive setback requirements (except for the front yard setback in M Districts) if the applicant provides a counterbalancing amenity. The applicant has indicated that additional landscaping and fencing would be provided as counterbalancing amenities.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

The Planning Board is supportive of the proposed additions and renovations to the Samuel Sewall Inn as long as design changes are made to the front addition and renovated entrance. Although the proposal would still add a similar amount of finished floor area to the structure as seen in past proposals, the new proposal better takes into consideration the impacts of the inn’s expansion on its closest residential neighbors. By moving the dining area to the front of the building, much of the building’s activity, i.e. dining and socializing, would be moved away from the nearest residential abutter. Although the proposal still needs rear yard setback relief for the large addition, a 12’ setback is twice what was previously proposed and is enough space to add screening landscaping and fencing. The Board also appreciates that the applicant is retaining the bay and bracket details on the Sewall Avenue façade, which are defining features of the building.

The front addition along St. Paul Street does require variance relief; although the addition changes the front façade’s appearance, it has been designed to be attractive and in proportion to

the existing building, and somewhat resembles a finished sunroom addition. The Planning Board would like the applicant to revise the plans so that the front addition is smaller and the new deck does not extend beyond the Sewall Avenue façade, limiting the encroachment on the lot's very visible front corner. Alternatively, the applicant may want to consider a deck on the other side of the front addition. The entrance that is currently located along the St. Paul façade is not currently used for patrons, and the new addition would extend towards St. Paul Street approximately the same dimension as the existing porch.

Regarding the other proposed changes, the Planning Board would like the applicant to consider grading options for the parking area and main entrance on Sewall Avenue; there may be a way to eliminate the one stair into the building on that side, thereby eliminating the need for a separate handicap ramp and hand rail. The applicant has submitted revised elevations showing modifications to the stair addition's fenestration, as well as to the windows on the other facades. These modifications are an improvement, and the Board supports the revised elevations.

Care will need to be taken in the selection of materials for the additions to ensure they correspond well with the rest of the building, and final Planning Board approval of the plans and materials should be a condition of any Board of Appeals relief. Additionally, landscaping can be used to soften the façades, especially the front façade, and the Planning Board would like final approval of the landscaping plan as well. The current landscaping plan proposes some plants that, while attractive, are invasive, and the Board would like the applicant to substitute plants that are friendlier to the natural environment.

Finally, changes to the parking area are minimal, and will improve the accessibility of the parking area.

Therefore, should the Board of Appeals find the proposal meets the required standards for a variance, the Planning Board recommends approval of the proposal and plans, including the site plan prepared by Dover Land Surveying and dated 4/8/2013, and the plans prepared by Andrew Richard, dated 2/22/2013 and 5/28/2013, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, final existing and proposed elevations, indicating all salient dimensions, materials, and modifications to the handicap ramp, porch façade and corner conditions, shall be submitted subject to the review and approval of the Planning Board.**
- 2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a final site plan indicating all setbacks, parking areas, and HVAC equipment, stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor, shall be submitted subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.**
- 3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a final landscaping plan, indicating all existing and proposed plantings, fencing, and hardscape areas, prepared by a landscape architect, shall be submitted subject to the review and approval of the Planning Board. This plan shall include significant new landscaping along the front and rear lot lines.**

- 4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit to the Building Commissioner for review and approval for conformance to the Board of Appeals decision: 1) a final site plan stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor; 2) final building elevations stamped and signed by a registered architect; and 3) evidence that the Board of Appeals decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.**

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Above: Sewall Avenue façade of 143 St. Paul Street. The proposed addition would replace the existing entry and construct a new front porch.

Below: St. Paul Street façade of 143 St. Paul Street.





Views of the lot's rear yard and the proposed location for the main rear addition and smaller stair addition.





Above: Closer view of the inn's main entrance and the proposed location for the rear/side addition.
Below: Another view of the inn's St. Paul Street façade.

