



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

PLANNING BOARD

Town Hall, 3rd Floor
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445-6899
(617) 730-2130 Fax (617) 730-2442

Linda K. Hamlin, Chairman
Steven Heikin, Clerk
Robert Cook
Blair Hines
Sergio Modigliani
Mathew Oudens
Mark J. Zarrillo

To: Brookline Building Commissioner

From: Brookline Planning Board

Date: July 14, 2016

Subject: **Convert a three-family to a four-family and add three parking spaces in the basement in addition to the three garaged spaces**

Location: **1517 Beacon Street**

Atlas Sheet: 42	Case #: 2016-0044
Block: 214	Zoning: M-1.5
Lot: 13	Lot Area (s.f.): ± 4,679

Board of Appeals Hearing: August 4, 2016 at 7:00 pm

SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD

1517 Beacon Street is a four story attached row house south of Beacon Street and east of Fairbanks Road. The site is located between Coolidge Corner and Cleveland Circle in a residential block of four attached buildings. At the rear of the attached buildings, on the downhill side of the lots, are a series of one story attached garages which are accessed via Intervale Crosscut and a common passageway. The back garage walls touch the rear foundation walls for the buildings. Stairways at either ends of the passageway lead up to the roofs of the garages and allow access to the rear of the attached buildings.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to convert 1,601 square feet of the lower level (one level above the basement) to habitable space to create a fourth unit in the building, create a roof deck and three additional parking spaces in the basement. The row buildings were constructed into a steep hillside with Beacon Street as the high point and the rear driveway as the low point. The existing garage roof is approximately 3 feet

below the floor of the lower level. Due to the topography and raised first floor, the existing lower level has windows on all four sides. The proposal is to install a steel beam at the rear foundation wall allowing the excavation under the existing building to deepen the garage bays for tandem parking, install an elevator in the center of the residential building from garage level to top floor and extend the interior stair down into the garage level allowing direct access from the apartments.

The proposal also includes repairs to the existing garage parapet walls, re-building the two common stairs from the garage roofs to the passageway and re-paving the passageway from Intervale Crosscut to the end of it.. Also, in order to provide some usable open space, a large roof top deck will be constructed for tenant use.

FINDINGS

Section 5.05 – Conversions

When converting a dwelling to create additional dwelling units in an M District, the Board of Appeals may by special permit waive any dimensional requirements except minimum lot size, provided no previously existing nonconformity to such requirements is increased and all other requirements of the By-law for conversions are met. This proposal conforms to the minimum lot size and seeks only an increase in the Floor Area Ratio to the level allowed under Special Permit in conformance with Brookline Zoning Bylaws Section 5.22 paragraph 3.b.2.

Section 5.09.2.d – Design Review

Exterior alterations on Beacon Street, multiple dwellings greater than four units, and any addition triggering FAR relief requires a *special permit* subject to design review standards listed under *Section 5.09.4(a-1)*. All conditions have been met; the most relevant sections of the design standards are described below:

b. Relation of Buildings to Environment

There are no exterior building envelope additions or increase in the building footprint. All work is underground and within the confines of the existing building. The renovations will include insulating of exterior walls, new thermal windows and new mechanical systems which will improve the efficiency of the building and reduce energy consumption.

c. Relation of Buildings to the Form of the Streetscape and Neighborhood

As stated above, the only obvious modifications to the building will be the new windows which were selected to match the existing size, mullion patterns and color of the existing building and in conformance with the architectural detailing of the block of row buildings.

k. Heritage

This proposal strives to preserve the architectural style and detailing of the street and preserve the heritage of these buildings while providing desirable living accommodations and additional parking.

Table 5.01 – Table of Dimensional Requirements, Footnote 1

Section 5.22.3.b.2 – Exceptions to Maximum Floor Area Ratio

Section 5.91 – Minimum Usable Open Space

Section 6.02.1.a – Off-Street Parking Space Regulations

	Existing	Proposed	Required/Allowed	Allowed By Sp Permit	Relief
Floor Area Ratio	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.8	SP *
Garage Setback	0 ft.	0 ft.	20 ft.	----	Pre-extg non-conforming/SP **
Usable Open Space	0 sq. ft.	290 sq. ft. (only ½ of 580 sf. roof deck may count):	240 sq. ft. (15% of addlt sf)	----	Compliant
Off-Street Parking	3	6	9	5	SP***

* Under **Section 5.22.3.b.2** the Board may allow by special permit an interior/exterior addition up to 120% of the permitted gross floor area so long as the maximum allowed FAR of 120% has not been reached.

Under **Section 5.05, when converting a dwelling to create additional dwelling units in an M District, the Board of Appeals may by special permit waive any dimensional requirements except minimum lot size, provided no previously existing nonconformity to such requirements is increased and all other requirements of the By-law for conversions are met.

***Under **Section 6.01.2.a**, the Board of Appeals may waive up to one half of the required parking spaces when a structure is converted for one or more additional dwelling units.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board does not object to the lower level being finished for an additional dwelling. The building has been gutted and will be renovated with new windows and sprinkler system and will be brought up to meet all current building codes. The elevator will provide handicap accessibility and convenience to the residents. There is rapid public transit directly across the street from the building and the additional finished floor area is within the 120 % increase allowed by special permit. The applicant is providing a benefit to residents of the attached row houses by agreeing to repave the common passageway and to repair the stairways at both ends of the garages. An abutter raised the issue of a tree on the edge of the common passageway damaging the concrete retaining wall and the applicant agreed to work with them and the other users of the passageway on evaluating the best way to address this, possibly replacing the tree with new landscaping and or installing a fence on top of the wall as part of the counter balancing amenity. The Planning Board was concerned about the impact of three additional cars on the common passageway and recommended that the parking be limited to five cars, which also presents a much more workable situation for moving the cars and storage of trash receptacles in the garage.

Therefore, the Planning Board recommends approval of the plans by Hendren Associates, dated 3/18/16, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit final floor plans, elevations, and parking plans, limited to five cars, subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.
- 2) Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a final site plan, including landscaping, fencing and possible tree removal, subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.
- 3) Prior to a certificate of occupancy, the common passageway shall be repaved and the two stairs to it repaired.
- 4) Prior to 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 and floor plans stamped and signed by a registered architect; and 3) evidence the decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

pss