



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

PLANNING BOARD

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

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To: Brookline Planning Board
From: Brookline Planning Department
Date: July 30, 2019
Subject: Construct addition including attached garage
Location: **114 Rawson Road**

Atlas Sheet: 45	Case #: 2019-0036
Block: 222	Zoning: SC-10
Lot: 9	Lot Area (s.f.): 15,580

Board of Appeals Hearing: August 29, 2019

Project Update

The Planning Board first reviewed this application at their meeting on July 11, 2019. The Board voted to continue review of the application because the Board felt that the project, as proposed, should be revised to push back the attached garage, reduce the scale of the addition and work on the design, make more efforts to preserve the existing landscape, and limit the driveway width to 14 feet.

The applicant has submitted revised plans (dated July 15) that address some of the Planning Board's comments. The garage has been pushed back, square footage has been reduced, and significant trees are better protected. While the scale of the house has been reduced, the design of the house has not changed and the driveway remains wider than the requested maximum of 14 feet.

Previous Planning Department Comments

Demolition/Preservation

At a Public Hearing on September 11, 2018, the Preservation Commission voted to uphold the initial determination of significance made by staff for the house at 114 Rawson Road. A 12-

month stay of (partial) demolition was imposed that will expire on September 11, 2019. Although the applicants did briefly seek to lift the stay of demolition, it seems that, at this time, their intention is to wait for the expiration of the delay period before proceeding with the project.

Site and Neighborhood

114 Rawson Road is a center-entrance colonial revival house built in 1948. The approximately 4,000 SF existing house sits on a level shelf in between two steep portions of the 15,580 SF lot. The existing house has two stories and an attached one-car garage. It is located in the Aspinwall Hill neighborhood, which is a residential area flanked by the Brookline High School, the Pierce School and Town Hall, and Washington Square. 114 Rawson Road is located adjacent to Rawson Path and close to Schick Park. The homes in the neighborhood are mostly large single and two-family dwellings. The direct abutters also have rear yards with steep slopes.

Applicant’s Proposal

The applicant, Rawson Road LLC, is proposing a substantial addition and renovation to the existing house. The addition would expand the second story to cover the entirety of the structure’s footprint, and add an attic (non-habitable) above that. The first floor would see an extensive renovation, where only limited portions of the first floor wall along the front façade would remain preserved. The addition also entails the expansion of the footprint towards the left-side property line; this expansion would include a two-car garage and second-story master suite.

FINDINGS

Section 5.22.3.b.1.b – Floor Area Ratio

Section 5.09.2.n & j – Design Review

Floor Area	Allowed	Existing	Proposed	Finding
Floor Area Ratio (% of allowed)	.35 (100%)	.26 (74%)	.40 (114%)	Special Permit*
Floor Area (s.f.)	5,453	4,053	6,221	

This altered structure would exceed the maximum allowed FAR (5.09.2.j) and include floor area that could be made habitable without significant exterior alterations where, if finished, would result in the total Gross Floor Area being greater than the maximum allowed under Table 5.01 (5.09.2.n). Both of these conditions make the project subject to Design Review. Relevant sections of the design review standards are described below. See also the applicant’s Impact Statement.

- Preservation of Trees and Landscape
- Relation of Buildings to Environment
- Relation of Buildings to the Form of the Streetscape and Neighborhood

- Open Space
- Stormwater Drainage
- Utility Service
- Heritage

While the altered structure will be somewhat larger than immediately adjacent houses, it will be reasonably consistent with the scale, style, and siting of other houses in the neighborhood. The expansion of the footprint will necessitate the removal of a number of existing trees. Most of the trees to be removed are within the footprint of the addition and therefore cannot be practicably preserved. The proximity of the driveway and wall to the 40" tree at the front left corner of the lot is of great concern. A number of Norway Maples in the rear yard are being removed; the reason for this is unclear but they are an invasive species, so their replacement with alternative, native species would be welcome. Unfortunately, the applicant's planting plan is limited. No substantial trees are being proposed that adequately mitigate the removal of the existing trees. The proposed plantings will however provide screening for the proposed house. Minimal regrading is being proposed, thus preserving the existing site layout and having little impact on drainage.

Section 8.02.2 – Alteration and Extension

The existing structure is nonconforming and therefore may be altered as allowed by §8.02.2, provided that no nonconforming condition is increased. The proposal complies with this section.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

The Planning Department does not oppose this proposal for various alterations at 114 Rawson Road. The architectural changes will produce an altered structure that is substantially consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and have limited impact on the site. ~~However, the design review standard requiring preservation of landscape is not being met. Tree removal is relatively significant with little corresponding plantings and a 40" tree that the applicant commits to preserving is very clearly at risk given the extreme proximity of the proposed driveway. The Planning Department recommends that additional tree plantings are proposed to mitigate the removal of the Norway Maples (Red Maples or Sugar Maples would be appropriate), the width and/or location of the driveway be altered to ensure the survivability of the 40" tree or that the 40" tree be identified for removal and that appropriate replacement planting(s) be offered.~~

Therefore, the Planning Department recommends approval of the architectural plans by Yovel Design dated 7/15/19, site plan by Verne T. Porter Jr. PLS dated July 31, 2019, and landscape plan by Star Grounds Landscape dated June 28, 2019 subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a final site plan, floor plans and elevations, subject to review and approval by the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.**

- 2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a final landscaping plan subject to review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.**
- 3. 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) final floor plans and elevations stamped and signed by a registered architect; 2) a final site plan, stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor; and 3) evidence that the final decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.**

Subject Dwelling



Aerial Photograph - Neighborhood Context

