Town of Brookline
Massachusetts

PLANNING BOARD

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11/7/19

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To: Brookline Planning Board

From: Brookline Planning Department

Date: 11 / 14 /19 Planning Board Meeting

Subject: Construct third floor addition, adding approximately 2,000 SF of additional gross floor area

Location: 290-292 Tappan Street

Atlas Sheet:	47	Case #:	2019-0046
Block:	225	Zoning:	T-6
Lot:	03	Lot Area (s.f.):	6,258

Board of Appeals Hearing: **December 12, 2019 at 7:00pm or later**

11/7/19 STAFF UPDATE

At the October 24, 2019 meeting, the Planning Board requested that the applicant reduce the FAR to 130% and to make further improvements to the rear façade. The applicant has submitted revised plans reducing the overall FAR from 140% to 131% (with 400sf removed from the 3rd floor) and altering the rear façade to reduce the perceived massing. The alterations to the rear façade include shifting the deck on the 2nd floor towards the center of the building and breaking up the massing of the dormer on the 3rd floor. Staff feels that the proposed changes are a vast improvement over the original proposal, but that previously expressed concerns are still relevant.

10/16/19 STAFF UPDATE

The Planning Board first reviewed this project at their meeting on August 8, 2019. The Board raised strong concerns about the massing of the proposed building, indicating that the addition of a 3rd floor was likely unacceptable. The applicant has submitted revised plans showing a reduction in the proposed size (roughly 600 sf reduction) of the 3rd story and an alteration in its exterior appearance. Staff feels that the proposed changes are a step in the right direction but that the proposal remains problematic for the same reasons set forth in the report issued to the Board for the August 8 meeting, replicated below.

JULY 29, 2019 PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORT:

DEMOLITION/PRESERVATION

An application was submitted to the Preservation Commission for Demolition Review on June 24, 2019. On July 1, 2019, and initial determination of significance was made by Preservation staff that the dwelling is significant by reason of period, style, method of construction, or association. A public hearing has been scheduled for August 13, 2019, at which time the **Preservation Commission found the building significant, and imposed a delay up to one year**.

SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD

290-292 Tappan Street was constructed as a two family dwelling in 1923 as part of a larger development by Aberdeen Realty Corporation. The property is located south of Beacon Street near the Beaconsfield, Washington Square and Aspinwall Hill neighborhoods. The neighborhood consists almost entirely of two-family dwellings and townhouses. Tudor-style homes are fairly common in the neighborhood, along with large brick/stone apartment buildings, making this specific structure a typical example of neighborhood character.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The owner, 290-292 Tappan Street, LLC, is proposing to renovate the existing building and add an additional 3rd story. The additional story would be within the existing footprint and present itself as a 3rd story from Tappan Street, while appearing as a 5th story from the rear. The additional story would add 1,431 SF of livable space. The project also involves minor extensions of the footprint on the lower level, first floor, and second floor, and significant modifications to the exterior elevations in terms of materials/design and window placement. In total, the project would add 2,027.31 SF of square footage, the large majority of which would be added to the second unit (floors 2 and 3).

FINDINGS

Section 5.20: Floor Area Ratio

Floor Area Ratio	Maximum	Existing	Proposed	Relief
T-6; 2-family dwelling	0.75	0.77	1.10	**Special Permit ***
	100%	103%	147%	

*As a pre-existing nonconformity, the FAR may be extended if the altered structure is found to be not substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure.

Section 5.62: Fences and Terraces in Side Yards
Section 5.43: Exceptions to Yard and Setback Regulations

The proposed deck in the left-side yard requires a Special Permit under Section 5.43 because it extends further into the side yard (~3 ft. setback) than half of the required setback area (5 ft.). If a counterbalancing amenity is provided, such as landscaping, a Special Permit may be granted. The applicant has not explicitly designated a counterbalancing amenity.

Section 8.02: Alteration or 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 is not supportive of this proposal. The existing structure is a two-family dwelling providing approximately 2,500 SF to each dwelling unit. Although the structure is in relatively poor condition, it exhibits an architectural style that typifies the neighborhood and an FAR that is essentially consistent with the maximum under the Bylaw. Extensive expansion and renovation of the building, as proposed, should be well justified if it involves the erasure of this significant architectural resource. If the additional square footage entailed the creation of additional dwelling units, it might be justifiable. Unfortunately, the proposal does not increase the number of units, does not preserve the architectural style, and does not stay within reasonable range of the maximums under the Bylaw. Compared to the existing structure - a perfect fit in this area - the altered structure is a substantial detriment to the neighborhood.

The Planning Department recommends that any changes to this structure be limited to renovations and minor additions to the existing floors of the structure.

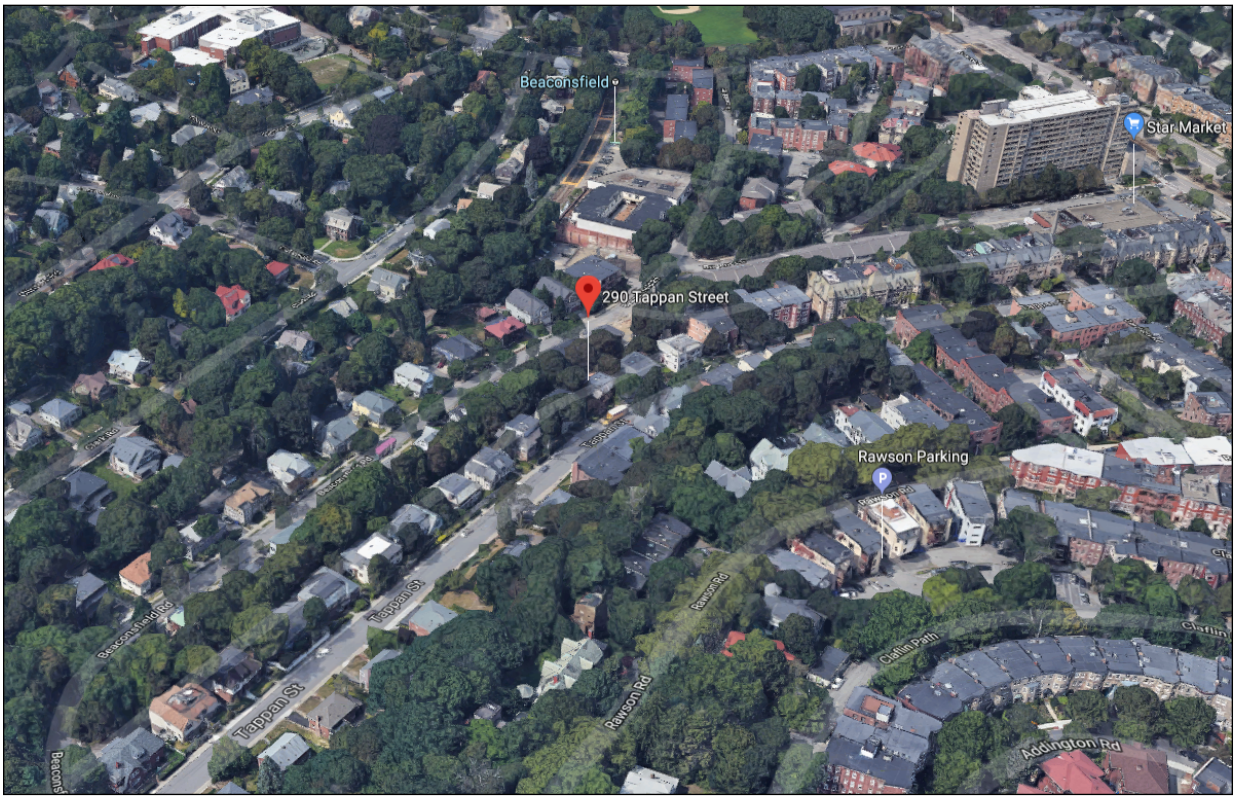
If the Planning Board opts to recommend approval of the site plan by Peter Nolan and Associates LLC, dated June 6, 2019, and architectural plans by Finespaces Architecture, LLCm dated June 18, 2019, the Planning Department recommends the following conditions:

1. **The project is limited to the expansion of the structure by adding a 3rd story and renovations necessary for upkeep. The additional story is to be consistent in architectural style with the existing house and renovations on other floors must preserve the existing exterior facades.**

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

3. **Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a final landscaping plan showing proposed counterbalancing amenities subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.**

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, and 2) evidence that the Board of Appeals decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.**

Subject Site

Aerial Photograph - Neighborhood Context