



CITY OF WATERTOWN
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
PARKER BUILDING, 124 WATERTOWN ST.
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, Chairperson
David Ferris, Clerk
Christopher H. Heep, Member
Alexander Dale, Member
Sarah Baker, Member
Gregory Girard, Alternate
Samuel Odamah, Alternate

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MINUTES

PRESENT:

MEMBERS- Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, *Chair*; Christopher H. Heep; David Ferris; Alexander Dale; Sarah Baker; Samuel Odamah, *Alternate Member (Voting)*.

STAFF- Gideon Schreiber, *Director of Planning and Zoning*; William Downie, *Senior Planner – Housing*; Matthew Neubacher, *Planner*; Hannah Jury, *Administrative Specialist – Zoning*.

PRESENT, REMOTE:

MEMBERS- Gregory Girard, *Alternate Member*.

STAFF- Antonio Mancini, *Zoning Enforcement Officer*

ABSENT:

No Members or Staff Absent.

On Wednesday evening, March 25, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Administration Building, the Zoning Board of Appeals held a public hearing. The meeting and public hearing were conducted in a 'hybrid' format with options for public participation both in-person and via remote means, in accordance with applicable law.

Chair SantucciRozzi opened the meeting at approximately 7:00pm. She introduced staff, noted the members in attendance, and reviewed the agenda.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES

VOTE

The motion to approve February 25, 2026, meeting minutes was made by Member Ferris and seconded by Member Dale. The motion was approved 5-0-1 in a roll call vote with Member(s) Heep, Ferris, Dale, Baker, Alternate Member(s) Odamah and Girard voting in favor, and Chair SantucciRozzi abstaining due to absence at the previous meeting.

2. CASES

A. 53 FULLER RD

Member Ferris read the legal notice, and Chair SantucciRozzi invited the applicant to present the project to remove existing nonconforming rear deck and replace it with 2-story enclosed addition and rear stair within the established footprint.

PRESENTATION

David Giuliano, Architect, and Alexandra Gamache, Project Manager reviewed plans and elevations for the project. The Architect and Project Manager explained how the project improves utilization, habitability, and safety of the

property, and highlighted that they perceive the proposed changes to be modest and consistent with the design of the existing structure.

BOARD INQUIRY

ALTERNATE MEMBER GIRARD - Confirmed that the new siding of the addition will be consistent with existing siding. Rosemont Design noted that no significant modifications to the landscape are planned, and the rationale for the overall project is to (1) provide ensuite bathroom and laundry areas for both first and second floor units; (2) remove and replace non-conforming and hazardous egress stair.

ALTERNATE MEMBER ODAMAH - Asked whether comments from abutters have been received, to which there were none.

MEMBER BAKER - Asked about replacement of the fence, to which there is no intent to remove or replace the entire fence. Member Baker raised concerns about the exposed foundation and suggested vertical plantings. Chair SantucciRozzi noted that the rendering may not be accurate because the pavement of the driveway runs along the foundation, and they are likely unable to plant there. Member Baker clarified with the Architect that the second story window will not be replaced to be consistent with all other windows, it was just rendered as such, and the rear windows will align with the rest of the windows in the house. A typo was flagged on the application form, which states that the front setback will change from 16.6' to 15.6', the Architect clarified it will stay 15.6'.

MEMBER DALE - Stated that the elevation of current conditions for the rear of the house is inconsistent with the existing design features of the house. Besides inconsistencies, Member Dale stated it appears to be a reasonable addition.

MEMBER FERRIS - Clarified the siding is vinyl rather than wood, and all trees will remain. Considering roofing, the Architect stated that a transition detail and new shingles will be added for the addition, and Member Ferris requested roofing be as consistent as possible with existing shingles. Member Ferris also clarified that the attic will not be habitable.

CHAIR SANTUCCIROZZI - emphasized the importance of ensuring consistency between renderings, elevations, and plans. Chair SantucciRozzi raised concerns with parking, she noted the existing nonconforming driveway on Walcott Rd will lose area in depth to the proposed stairwell addition, thus increasing the nonconformity. 17' is needed for the depth of the car, and 5' is needed between the back of the car and the sidewalk. Staff stated that one parking space would likely be lost, and one retained. To ensure vehicles do not block the sidewalk, the Board added a condition that the Petitioner must work with Staff to either identify a by-right modification to the driveway or return for an additional Special Permit Finding.

VOTE

Member Ferris motioned, and Member Heep seconded, for conditional approval of the Special Permit Finding under WZO §4.06(a) to construct an enclosed addition within the existing rear yard setback. The petition was approved 5-0 with Members Ferris, Heep, Dale, Baker, and Chair SantucciRozzi voting in favor.

72 MOUNT AUBURN STREET

Chair SantucciRozzi abstained from the following hearing. Acting Chair Heep reopened the public hearing for 72 Mt Auburn St at approximately 7:37 p.m.. Attorney Morris distributed printed copies of the presentation to Staff and Members of the Board.

PRESENTATION

Architect Bennie Ber introduced the project team, reviewed the agenda for their presentation, and comments from the previous meeting. They clarified changes made to the pergola, that it is recessed by 2'. Plantings near the garage entrance and exterior lighting were specified. They provided higher levels of detail for the materials, including 2 types of cladding in colors of pine and coastal white, and the fire rated smoke colored wall for the party wall. They reviewed electric vehicle capacities and turning radius diagrams for the parking garage.

BOARD INQUIRY

ACTING CHAIR HEEP – Clarified that only change to exterior structure/massing was the pergola.

MEMBER FERRIS – Appreciated the response to previous comments and that the siding is dimensional and complementary. He asked about what the window frames will be, to which the Architect responded the aluminum clad windows will be surrounded by bronzed colored PVC trim, consistent with the transition between the cladding materials. The Architect confirmed roof shingles of existing house will stay the same, and that a rear door should be added under the roof overhang rather than a window. Member Ferris asked staff about who may be responsible for adding murals or beautification of transformers, to which Staff replied as it is municipal property, the arts and culture planner may do so, or an easement from the public way may be arranged.

MEMBER DALE – Appreciated the changes made.

MEMBER BAKER – Clarified discrepancies in elevations between the previous presentation and newest one, and the Architect discussed changes made to interior floor plans with the bay from the second floor up being extended by 6", which does not impact the rear yard. The Architect confirmed the foundation material as brick veneer and the copper clad trim and noted the change of the material of the garage door for ventilation and visibility. She discussed that the lower portion of the building is what people interact with the most, so special care must be made to the design of this area. Member Baker raised concerns that the plantings are misrepresented in the renderings, and the landscape plan was not updated. Furthermore, because they are all deciduous, which would not animate Watertown Square to the extent she hopes for.

ALTERNATE MEMBER ODAMAH – Member Odamah appreciated changes made, and clarified the role of the party wall, suggesting that murals may be commissioned to improve the blank wall. He also noted the potential of a roof deck.

ALTERNATE MEMBER GIRARD – Echoed the concerns of plantings as expressed by Member Baker, considering species and seasonality. He noted the importance of the site as a transition into historic Watertown and Watertown Square as an area of future, more modern development.

ACTING CHAIR HEEP – Emphasized the comments made concerning landscaping, raising concerns with the inconsistencies between the landscape plan and renderings.

Staff noted, along with Member Ferris, the difficulty in depicting living, dynamic details such as plants. Renderings are more so a tool to interpret architectural plans, and may not necessarily correspond to a certain representation of how the building will interact with the site and dynamic factors (such as people, plants, seasons, time). Staff noted that honoring native plantings would encourage seasonal plants.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Staff read a public comment, which requested explanation for which building code will be followed and for trash pickup and storage details. Architect Ber responded that the most up-to-date building code will be followed, and Staff clarified that trash storage and pick-up will be organized and dealt consistent with the common practices of the City.

FINAL DELIBERATIONS

Regarding landscaping, members noted that plantings are misrepresented and inconsistent between the Landscape Plan and Architectural Plan renderings. Members also noted that there were few evergreen plantings, and expressed concern regarding the appearance of the site during late fall and winter. Members raised concerns regarding trash and recycling pickup, suggesting revisions to condition no. 8 to ensure owners are held accountable for waste management in perpetuity. The Board discussed ensuring landscape plans reflect a dynamic mix as conveyed in the renderings and deferred to Staff to develop a condition requiring a minimum range (25 to 35 percent) of evergreen landscaped area. The Board emphasized the need to allow flexibility for professional discretion in landscaping and the future construction of a patio on the northeast side of the historic structure.

VOTE

Member Ferris motioned and Member Dale seconded to approve the request for a 7-unit multifamily project in a new building and the 1-unit preservation/conversion of the historic structure in the Mount Auburn Historic District with conditions as discussed regarding the landscape and trash. The motion was approved 4-1, with Members Ferris, Dale, Alternate Member Odamah, and Acting Chair Heep voting in favor and Member Baker opposed.

MINUTES APPROVED:-----