

To: John Gunn, Chair, and the City of Beacon Planning Board

Date: March 8, 2018

Re: **1181 North Avenue Subdivision and Special Permit**

I have reviewed the February 27, 2018 Subdivision and Special Permit applications, February 26, 2018 Short EAF Part 1, February 27, 2018 Infiltration and Inflow Investigation letter from Hudson Land Design, February 27, 2018 Subdivision Plat, and a 5-sheet Special Permit Application, dated February 27, 2018.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to subdivide a 0.74-acre parcel with one existing office building into two lots for the construction of a new office building. The parcel is in the R1-7.5 district and the Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone, which allows office uses by Special Permit from the City Council.

Comments and Recommendations

1. For the Short EAF question 12, the State Historic Preservation Office website lists the adjacent Bogardus-Dewindt House parcel to the west on the National Register of Historic Places, but not this parcel. However, any Unlisted action substantially contiguous to a National Register site is a Type I action under SEQR and requires a Full EAF.
2. The Subdivision Plat should be labeled Preliminary at this stage of the review process, a scale should be noted, and the major trees over 8 inches should be identified by diameter and species.
3. Section 223-12 H requires that “[w]ithin any residence district, no part of any dwelling or other structure housing a main use...shall be erected on that part of a lot where the lot width is less than the minimum requirements for the district in which it is located.” The proposed building is located on a front section of Lot 2 that does not meet the minimum 75-foot lot width standard, and Lot 1 with the existing structure is only 74 feet at the front building line. A new building could be placed in the wider rear portion of the proposed lot, perhaps designed similar to a carriage house behind the historic building.
4. The parcel size numbers in the Schedule of Regulations Table and Sheet 1 Site Plan do not match the Existing Conditions Survey on Sheet 2. The property survey should be stamped and signed before approvals. The Schedule of Regulations Table has an incorrect number for the Lot 2 proposed rear yard.
5. The Sheet 1 Site Plan should depict the building setback dimensions at the closest points to the existing and proposed property lines. It should also more accurately show the adjacent house to the north in relation to the side property line.

6. Since this parcel is in the Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone, the Board will have to adopt a Certificate of Appropriateness consistent with Chapter 134, Historic Preservation. Generally, additions or new buildings in historic districts should not be more prominent than the adjacent historic structures. The proposed new building is set forward on the lot, slightly closer to the sidewalk, with a recessed rather than projecting front porch. It is also approximately 46 feet wide compared to the 30-foot-wide adjacent historic structures. The renderings on Sheet 3 make the building appear much farther back than the Site Plan measurements. Once the initial plan issues have been addressed, the design should be referred to the Architectural Review Subcommittee.
7. The parking spaces should be a full 9 feet wide and the adjacent walkway should be at least 5 feet wide. As shown, the cars can extend over the curb and block the narrow 3.75-foot walkway. The parking space closest to the street could be relocated next to or in the garage, providing better visibility at the parking lot entrance. The Board may want to request two ADA spaces for the two buildings, given the overflow street parking on Tompkins Avenue.
8. The new plantings along Tompkins Avenue in the Landscape Plan feature five small trees that only grow to 15-30 feet high. Since there are no overhead wires on this side of the street, I suggest 3-4 taller and regularly spaced street trees that will in time provide a canopy framing the street. The new trees flanking the parking lot should be at least 3-inch caliper and the replacement magnolia tree should be included on the Plant List.
9. The plan should include lighting fixture and sign details. The Board could consider a new sidewalk along the Tompkins Avenue side of Lot 1.
10. Professional offices with up to 10 employees are allowed in the Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone by Special Permit from the City Council, although the standards seem targeted toward conversions of existing historic structures rather than separate new construction. Once the Board is in generally satisfied with the Site Plan, it should issue recommendations to the Council on the Special Permit.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

John Clarke, Beacon Planning Consultant

c: Tim Dexter, Building Inspector
Jennifer L. Gray, Esq., City Attorney
Arthur R. Tully, P.E., City Engineer
John Russo, P.E., City Engineer
Aryeh Siegel, Project Architect