



Town of Belmont
Planning Board

APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL PERMIT

Addition to a Nonconforming Structure

Date: 7/21/16

Planning Board
Homer Municipal Building
19 Moore Street
Belmont, MA 02478

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 9, as amended, and the Zoning By-Law of the Town of Belmont, I/we the undersigned, being the owner(s) of a certain parcel of land (with the buildings thereon) situated on 47 PAYSON RD. Street/Road, hereby apply to your Board for a **SPECIAL PERMIT** for the erection or alteration on said premises or the use thereof under the applicable Section of the Zoning By-Law of said Town for 6'6" X 12" DECK LOCATED AT THE REAR OF HOME ABOVE SECOND STORY.

on the ground that the same will not be substantially more detrimental than the existing nonconforming structure to the neighborhood and that it will be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood in which it is located.

Signature of Petitioner _____

Print Name TARA DONNER

Address 47 PAYSON RD

BELMONT MA. 02478

Daytime Telephone Number 617-686-1979

Tara Donner
47 Payson Road
Belmont, MA 02478

August 4, 2016

Mr. Jeffrey Wheeler
Senior Planner
Office of Community Development
Town of Belmont
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Dear Mr. Wheeler:

We are submitting a special permit application to build a small deck on the third floor of our house. This deck is within all setback lines of our property and will be over an existing flat roof of our second floor sun porch. It will be 12 feet by 6 feet 6 inches, which is smaller than the footprint of existing sun porch below it.

Before I explain why we'd like to add this deck to our house, I'd like to give you some background about our house and our family. Our house was destroyed by a large fire in September of 2015. At the time of the fire, we were sleeping. By the time the fire alarms went off, the entire width of the front of our house was engulfed in flames from floor to ceiling. We were able to get our younger daughter out of her bed and escape down the back stairs of the house with only seconds to spare. As you might imagine, this was overwhelmingly scary and traumatizing for us. We were extremely lucky that our older daughter was away from home at her first sleepover with a friend. Her bedroom was at the front of the house, right next to the source of the fire. The stairs to our attic were also at the front of the house, but luckily no one was up there in our guest bedroom/playroom that night. Had someone been sleeping in the attic, they likely would not have gotten out. We were unable to escape through the ordinary means of egress, down our front stairs and out the front of our house.

I give you this information so that you will understand that our request for a small porch on the third floor of our attic has much to do with a sense of safety and security. When we move back home when the reconstruction of our home is finished, our bedroom will be on the third floor. We originally wanted to add a second staircase to the back of the third floor to provide a second means of egress, but because of the non-conforming nature of the existing setbacks of our house we were not able to add that second staircase. However, if we have the small deck at the back of the house of the third floor, it will offer us a second means of egress and help us feel comfortable in our space knowing that we won't be trapped up there if something were to happen. We can easily keep a portable fire ladder near by, and know that if we were ever faced with another fire, we could use it on this back porch to reach safety. The peace of mind this would give us is priceless.

As the pictures we have included show, this deck is substantially spaced apart from our neighbors' houses and primarily looks out over trees. It will not allow us to see into any windows of neighbors' houses. It will be modest in size. We worked with an architect to come up with a plan that would fit the pre-fire style of our home and the existing style of the neighborhood. The finishes we have chosen for the deck will match the finishes of the street-facing front porches of our house.

We thank you for your consideration of our application and hope that you will feel that our request is modest and reasonable. We have spoken with many of our neighbors to apprise them of our request, and they also agree that this deck will not negatively impact them or the neighborhood as a whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tara Danm". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.