



Town of Belmont
Planning Board

APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL PERMIT

Date: 3/2/2016

Planning Board
Homer Municipal Building
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 48 Middlecot 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 _____

See attached

on the ground that the same will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of said Zoning By-Law.

Signature of Petitioner 

Print Name NUNEICHALHATRIAN & ARTHUR HARUTYUNYAN

Address 48 MIDDLECOT ST
BELMONT MA 02478

Daytime Telephone Number 617-642 9087 - Nune
617-642 9097 - Arthur

**APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL PERMIT
ADDITION TO A NONCONFORMING STRUCTURE**

48 Middlecot SPECIAL PERMIT Application Attachment

The addition of a 2nd story to the existing 1 story property with minor extensions on the 1st floor, in the interest of creating a living area accommodating to a modern family.

We purposefully propose a project design that neither adds to existing non-conformities nor creates new ones. None of the proposed changes are non-conforming except when taking into consideration the overall scope of the project, which requires increasing the floor area space by more than the delineated 30%.

We are requesting relief in building the 2nd story; it is the component of this project that is critical in transforming this house into a modernized, family-friendly home. We are requesting approval

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PROPOSED PROJECT

The owners of 48 Middlecot St. are proposing the following renovations to their property:

- Extend existing kitchen/dining area rearwards 6.10 ft. (218 sq. ft.), allowing for the restructuring of the kitchen and dining room and the creation of a family room and pantry
- Extend the existing garage frontwards 4.6 ft. (55 sq. ft.), allowing for adequate parking space and the creation of another entrance to the house through the garage
- Add a 2nd story to the existing structure, remaining in compliance with zoning laws that allow for a maximum structure of 2.5 stories for this property

NON-CONFORMING COMPONENTS

The existing property, at the time of purchase, was only non-conforming with respect to the left side setback (9 ft. vs. the required 10 ft.). None of the proposed changes add to the existing non-conformity. The proposed 2nd story floor layout is intentionally narrower than that of its existing 1st story foundation so that it fulfills the 10 ft. side setback requirement.

In light of the new zoning amendment passed this February 4 2016, the overall proposed renovations to the property conflict with the development criteria that states:

“...proposed construction, extension, alteration, or structural change... does not increase the gross floor area of the non-conforming structure by more than 30%”

We are requesting relief for floor area additions in order to create a 2nd story to the existing property. We believe this modification is the optimal way of transforming the house into the kind of modern, single-family home that is welcomed within this close-knit, family-oriented community. We are requesting approval.

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Please see attached “The Town of Belmont, Massachusetts- Assessing Department.”

ZONING AND DIMENSIONAL COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

Please see attached “Zoning Compliance Check List.”

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MODERN FAMILY NEEDS DRIVING THE IMPROVEMENT

The features of a home, like the features of any product, need to serve a valuable purpose to its users. Home renovation is the perfect adaptability tool to update the functionality of a property, taking in consideration socioeconomic trends and cultural factors. In a small town community like Belmont, family well-being is always high priority. The fundamental premise of our home renovation proposal is to update the outdated functionality of 48 Middlecot St. to make it a place to grow a family.

The primary concern for this project is to meet an average, modern family's spatial needs. Our creative approach in doing this optimizes the structure of the existing property, enhances its curb appeal and ultimately realizes the potential of this ugly duckling house to be a unique, happily-ever-after home for a family.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The goal is to create a comfortable house for the modern family. All of the proposed changes are family-centric and aim to increase floor area space dedicated only to meeting the basic necessities of a family of 4 and accentuating shared living space.

First Floor

The property as it stands has several drawbacks, as its amenities are not up to standard for a modern family. Within the existing 1,397 square feet of living space, we have an unsuitably small kitchen and dining room paired alongside 2 small bedrooms and a corner study. The property desperately requires an updated kitchen to allow space to cook and an updated dining room (separate from the family room) to allow space to eat.

Per current traditional standards of single-family homes, the first floor typically has a kitchen, dining room, family room, formal living room, study and pantry. Our proposed changes allow for an interior redesign of the first floor to include modest-sized space for each of the aforementioned rooms. By adding only 186 square feet (approx.) of living space, we will successfully open up the flow of the area and allow for the creation of a usable kitchen, pantry and family room.

The proposed changes will be realized by extending the existing kitchen/dining room rearwards 6.10 ft. The rear setbacks will still be in compliance with zoning laws (36.6 ft. rear setback vs. 30 ft. required).

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Second floor

The addition of 1,883 square feet of living space in the 2nd floor will allow us to mirror the same open format of the updated 1st floor while better meeting a family's basic needs of privacy and comfort. The existing property blends the bedrooms with the shared living spaces on the first floor in a tight, cluttered design that does not allow for open space, comfort or privacy.

The proposed second story will feature a master bedroom, 2 separate bedrooms (presumably for 2 children) and a guest bedroom. The bedrooms will still be small relative to the average size of a single-family residence bedroom, but will be adequate in providing a much-needed sense of privacy for each family member. The cross-functionality of the additional guest bedroom is critical in our modern 21st century lives, as it is suited for overnight visitors, college students coming home or elderly relatives visiting.

Please be advised that the only non-conforming element of the existing property is the additional 1 ft. of setback in reference to the left abutter. Aware of this and adamant not to create any new non-conformity, we propose to bring in the left side setback of the 2nd story by 1.2 ft. The strategically sized 2nd story of the property will then be in compliance with the zoning laws, as it will be narrower than its counterpart footprint on the first floor.

Garage

In order to accommodate for easier and safer parking, we propose an extension to bring the garage forwards 4.6 ft. to allow for a car to park comfortably with considerable space for interior clearance. This will be especially beneficial to new drivers and/or the elderly. Again, the front setbacks will still be in compliance with zoning laws.

The idea behind this proposed change is to allow for the creation of a stairway entrance into the house directly from the garage. This feature is salient to families living in New England, and especially during the cold winters. The proposed stairway entrance will lead the family into a mudroom (the space for the mudroom is currently being used as a study).

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PERFORMANCE STANDARDS & NEIGHBORHOOD COMPARISONS

We are cognizant of the fact that one of the most heavily weighted aspects of property design and development review is the impact that the proposed renovations will have on the community at large, and especially, the neighboring properties.

Our meticulous review of the neighborhood yields the following observations for your consideration:

Scale of Building & Relation of Structures and Spaces

The vast majority of the properties located on Middlecot St. are 2+ story houses. In this way, 48 Middlecot is an outlier with its existing 1 story structure. Even with the addition of the 2nd story, the house will not look out of place in the neighborhood, as it will be facing opposite a long row of 2 story houses.

The abutter on the right side of 48 Middlecot has a 1-story property and the abutter on the left side has a 1.5 story property. Please note that the 1.5 story property on the left is located on elevated land and visually, the building height of 48 Middlecot's proposed structure will not overshadow but rather match the building height of this neighboring property. For comparison, 70 Middlecot St. (2 doors down) is a 2.5 story house with a floor area ratio of 0.45.

Overall, the proposed change is appropriate in scale and mass for the neighborhood and it doesn't cause the property to stick out as much as it allows for it to fit in.

Design of Building, Proportions

The property as proposed is a traditional colonial house. The house will have a water table at the bottom of the walls, architectural roof shingles, frieze boards along the gables and sidewalls, wide corners, an extended chimney with a brick finish and factory-applied trim around the Harvey double and triple half-moon rounded windows. Clapboard style cement board siding will be used. The house will also feature a half-moon rounded bay window in the back. The selected color for the house is a grey tone and both the color and the proportions of all the architectural elements are compatible with the colonial style and thus, the neighborhood.

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Height

Please be advised that even with the proposed addition of the 2nd story, the building height midpoint will still be well below zoning law requirements (26.6 ft. vs. required 30 ft.) as will the ridge (31.7 ft. vs. required 34 ft.).

The house has an attic with a pull down set of stairs. The attic was created exclusively as a space for utilities and will continue to function as so. There will be no future development plans for the attic.

Open Spaces, Building and Driveway Siting, Circulation

The 2 small, proposed extensions for the kitchen and garage are practical. They add to the visual amenities of the neighborhood for someone passing the site by evening out the contour lines of the house into a clean, rectangular shape. The proposed lot coverage percentage does not exceed the required 25% and the open space percentage is still well over the required 50% (proposed is 67.8%).

We are preserving the open space and plan to plant trees and flowers for enhanced aesthetics and add a patio in the backyard for added appeal. Both flights of stairs in the front and back entrance will be redone with blue stone or granite steps, metal railings and featured mosaic or brick patterns on the walls. A new sprinkler system will be installed to guarantee the lawn stays green and fresh. The driveway will be replaced with new asphalt. There will be a new, paved walkway leading to the front of the house. None of the change will impose on the surrounding walkways, drives and parking and it will still be as safe and convenient as before.

Lighting

The lights will be recessed lights, situated underneath the overhangs so that they will not be visible from the street nor will they disrupt neighboring properties.

Screening

There is a short existing fence between our property and the left abutter that will remain a buffer. There is a fence lining the backyard that will be replaced with a new one.

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Drainage

It is our understanding that we are in compliance with the Stormwater and Erosion Control By-Law. We contacted with Ara Aarakelian and he will monitor the construction and advise us if any kind of water control management work is needed.

Street Trees

There will not be any conflict with state trees, as we don't have any on the property.

Outdoor Mechanical Equipment

There will not be any mechanical equipment in the front yard.

Please note that we have already arranged to run a new gas line to the house in efforts to upgrade the heating system from oil to gas, which is significantly more environmentally friendly.

POSITIVE NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACT

This project clearly meets the standard for changes that are "not detrimental to the neighborhood." In fact, it would be servicing the needs of a family that would love to live in this neighborhood without putting them at a disadvantage. The property has a lot of potential but is currently restricted by its 1 story structural limitation. By today's modern standards, this would barely service a small family with a single child, let alone the average family of 2 parents and 2 children. Our intention with this project is not to build a luxurious home, as that would be out of character with the neighborhood; instead, we are trying to extend the look and feel of the neighborhood by creating an up to par, 2 story single family house in a prominently single family district.

Overall, we believe the proposed project meets the performance standards outlined by the Town without causing subsequent adverse effects.