

Memorandum to the Redevelopment Board

THE ATWOOD HOUSE

With respect to Arlington's heritage, removal or disruption of historic, traditional, or significant uses, structures, or architectural elements shall be minimized insofar as practicable, whether these exist on the site or on adjacent properties. - Arlington Zoning By-Law, Section 11.06 (f) (10)

The Atwood House at 821 Massachusetts Avenue, built in 1897, and occupied by prominent Arlington physician Dr. Charles D. Atwood from 1913 until 1954, unquestionably qualifies for protection under this criterion. The historical significance is particularly outlined in my second article in *The Arlington Advocate* (June 25, 2010) copy attached.

Protection of the house is prominently and repeatedly mentioned as a condition in the Environmental Design Review Permit issued by the Board on April 13, 2009. The principal part of the permit, the members will recall, was for the construction of a large CVS drugstore. This structure, it is plain to see from the street, is now nearing completion. The following are quotations from the Board's decision:

"The Atwood House will not be demolished but will remain. . . . The applicant has indicated that it wishes to *complete the permitting* of the CVS drugstore, and will return to modify the special permit when the use of the Atwood House is determined. The proposed site plan includes the Atwood House, parking spaces that are dedicated to it, and space for an addition to the rear of the structure." - page 1 (emphasis supplied)

"The Atwood House is to remain. It is important that the current design retains the Atwood House in its current location on the site, and accommodates the possible future expansion at the rear of the structure." - page 5

"The Atwood House is listed as a significant building under Arlington Town Bylaws, as is the Baptist Church next door. The applicant has stated that the Atwood House will be retained on the site, and the proposed plan reflects that." - page 7

"The Atwood House *shall remain at its present location on the site*. And reasonable and diligent efforts shall be used to maintain its present condition and prevent damage from the elements or otherwise, until it is redeveloped. (emphasis supplied) It is acknowledged that ten parking spaces behind the Atwood House are reserved for its use. It is further acknowledged that the plan of the site leaves space to accommodate a possible future expansion of the structure, and that no use of that portion of the site will preclude such an expansion." - page 10

At the end of the paragraph immediately above quoted in principal part comes an extraordinary sentence, seemingly out of the air, and in apparent contradiction to all that

has gone before: “No requests to move or demolish the house by amending this special permit will be made within 24 months of the date of issuance of this permit.”

Since the Board retains jurisdiction of the project, it should take two steps at this point:

- (1) amend the permit to strike out the last quoted sentence.
- (2) Since the permitting of the CVS drugstore has long since been competed, demand that the applicant proceed with plans for appropriate redevelopment of the Atwood House.

Respectfully submitted.

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