



TOWN OF ARLINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

To: Zoning Board of Appeals
From: Jennifer Raitt, Director, Dept. of Planning and Community Development/kl
Date: 9/8/2021
RE: Docket 3664 – 14 Nicod Street; Special Permit under Zoning Bylaw Section 5.3.9
Projections into Minimum Yards (A)

The applicant, Sean Hayes, seeks a Special Permit in accordance with Section 5.3.9 (Projections into Minimum Yards (A)). The applicant seeks to construct an addition of a front porch extending the width of a newly constructed house in the R1 Zoning District. The proposed covered entry porch is 129.6 square feet, which exceeds the maximum 25 square foot projection into a minimum yard allowable by right in the zoning bylaw (Section 5.3.9 – Projections into Minimum Yards (A)). The purpose of the project is to improve the convenience and safety of the front primary entrance to the dwelling, while also providing additional design detail to improve the aesthetics of the structure.

Note: In the application, the applicant refers to an existing porch. Upon a visit to the property and as shown in the photograph below there does not appear to be an existing porch.

The newly constructed home is conforming with all dimensional requirements of the Zoning Bylaw. The proposed porch would project forward four feet into the front yard setback, reducing it from 25.6 feet to 21.6 feet. The following is an application of the Special Permit criteria (Zoning Bylaw Section 3.3.3):

Criterion #1: Requested Use

The requested use is permitted in the R-1 Zoning District through the granting of a special permit.

Criterion #2: Public Convenience/Welfare

This proposal would improve the convenience and safety of the owner's entrance to their home.

Criterion #3: Undue Traffic Congestion/Impairment of Public Safety

There would not be an increase in traffic congestion or an impairment of public safety.

Criterion #4: Undue Burden on Municipal Systems

There would not be an undue burden on municipal systems.

Criterion #5: Special regulations

This proposal would not result in the need for special regulations.

Criterion #6: Integrity/Character of District; Detrimental to Health, Morals, Welfare

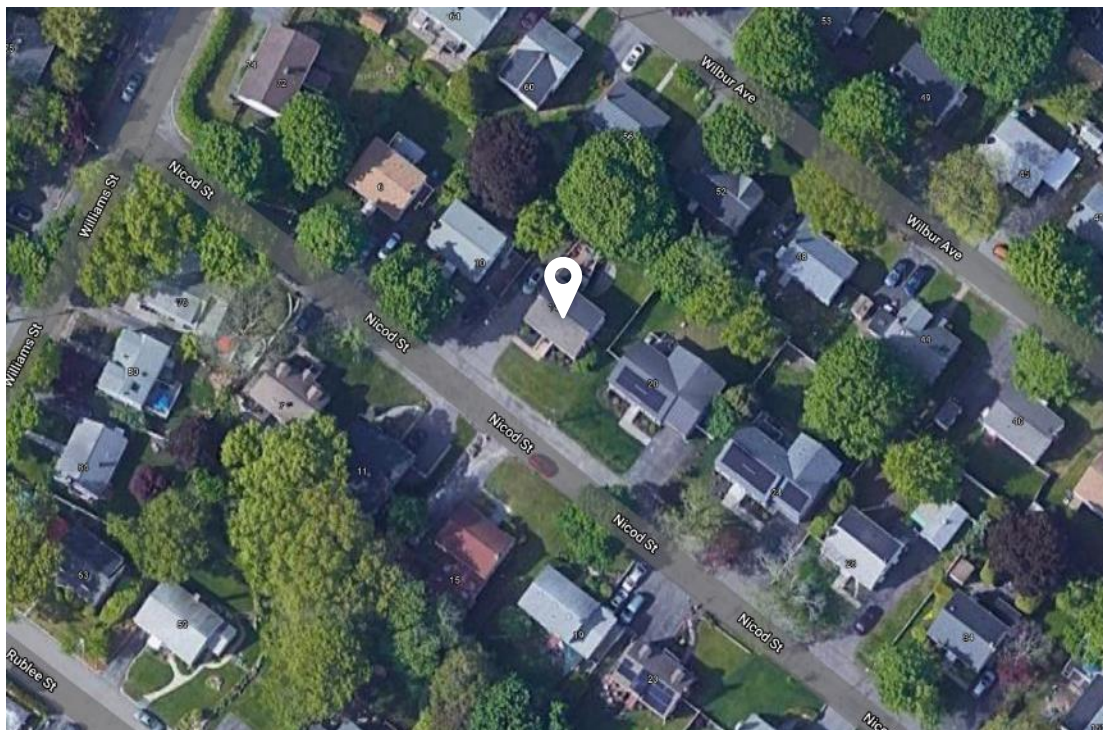
While the proposed porch exceeds the maximum square footage allowable by right, the overall proposal is not substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. Covered entries are a common feature of structures in the surrounding neighborhood, although none of the homes in the immediate area have a porch that spans the full width of the structure.

The design and massing of the newly constructed home at 14 Nicod is similar to two adjacent homes; adding the porch element will introduce human-scaled architectural variation to the overall streetscape, and add visual interest to the front façade of the structure¹. Furthermore, introducing a usable front porch will reduce the appearance of height of the new structure.² Overall, this proposal would not detrimentally impact the neighborhood character of the district or adjoining districts, nor will it be detrimental to the health, morals, or welfare of the neighbors of the property.

Criterion #7: Detrimental Excess in Particular Use

This proposal would not cause any detrimental excesses.

Below are aerial and street-based photos of the current building:



¹ Principle B-1 (pg 26) and C-1 (pg 34), Residential Design Guidelines (pg 34), available at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/54518/637472609831970000>

² Principle B-2 (pg 31), Residential design Guidelines



Recommendation:

The Department of Planning and Community Development maintains that this proposal is consistent with the Zoning Bylaw, and recommends that the Zoning Board of Appeals approve this application.

Related Dockets:

3641: 69 Epping St – Applicant sought

- #3659: 55 Sutherland Rd—Applicant sought a special permit to add a covered landing / entry porch of 49.4 square feet within the front yard setback of a two-family home in the R2 Zoning District. Approved on 7/13/21.
- #3641: 69 Epping St—Applicant sought a special permit to add a mudroom and portico within the minimum front yard setback in an R1 district, citing safety and weather concerns. Approved on 1/12/21.
- #3608: 68 Margaret St—Applicant sought a special permit to increase the size of the existing entryway to 43 square feet, citing the need for weather protection and other structures on their street with entryways larger than 25 square feet. Approved on 10/29/19.