



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 3663 – 53 Marathon Street; Special Permit under Zoning Bylaw Section 6.1.10 (A)
(Location of Parking Spaces)

The applicant, 53 Marathon Street, LLC, seeks a Special Permit in accordance with Section 6.1.10 (A) (Location of Parking Spaces) of the Zoning Bylaw. The applicant seeks to add a second curb cut along Marathon Street to create a pervious driveway along the front façade of the two-family structure. The proposal would add two off-street parking spaces for use by occupants of unit 1. The existing curb cut on Waldo Road would remain.

Note: In addition for the request for a second curb cut, the applicant has incorrectly requested a Special Permit for a large addition. Furthermore, the legal notice for this docket also lists a request for a Special Permit under Section 8.1.3(B) of the Zoning Bylaw. Neither of these two requests applies to this proposal, as the applicant intends to demolish the existing structure on a conforming lot.

The property is on a corner lot in the R2 Zoning District. The property is nonconforming with the front yard depth. The applicant did not provide the current percentage of landscaped or usable open space, so it is unclear if the property is conforming with regard to those dimensional requirements. Because the applicant proposes to demolish the existing structure and replace it with side-by-side townhomes, the existing nonconformity would be eliminated, and the proposed percentage of landscaped and usable open space would exceed the minimum requirements.

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 R2 Zoning District through the granting of a Special Permit.

Criterion #2: Public Convenience/Welfare

This proposal would provide a second driveway and curb cut for the property and create two distinct parking areas, one for each unit in the two-family structure. It is unclear whether adding a second curb cut along Marathon Street would present a hazard to pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular safety.

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

As mentioned in Criterion #2, it is whether adding a second curb cut along Marathon Street would present a hazard to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular 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

No other property along Marathon Street or Waldo Road has two curb cuts or two driveways, although several have more prominent, larger, or sloped “park under” driveways. The proposed parking location and the proposed garage have a minimized presence, and do not dominate the façade of the structure. The driveways are located away from the principal façade of a structure or to the rear or side of the structure, and the front entry of each unit is distinct from the driveway and buffered by landscaping.¹ The proposed design would not detrimentally impact the district, nor would 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 on-street and aerial photos of the current building:

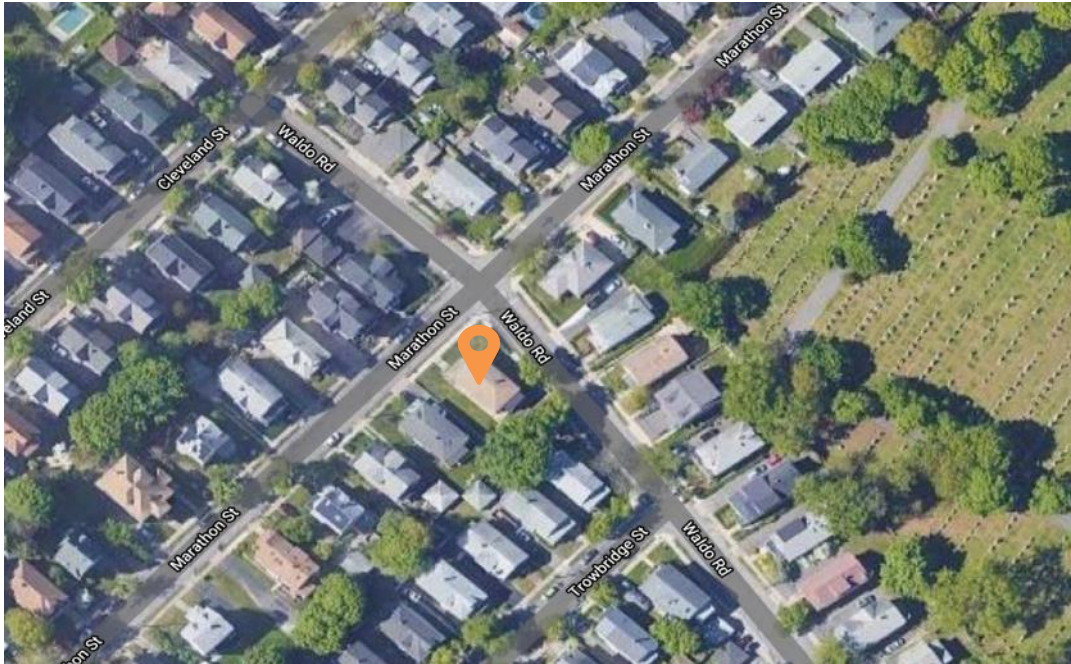


Existing Conditions as of 9/2021

¹ Residential Design Guidelines Principles A-3 (pg 22-23) and A-4 (pg 24). Accessed at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=54518>



Google Street View as of 11/2020



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

- #3629: 34-36 Newport – Applicant sought a special permit to create a second driveway along the side yard for a property in the R2 Zoning District. Approved 9/8/20 with conditions.
- #3622: 46-48 Park Ave Ext. – Applicant sought a special permit to create a second driveway along the side yard for a property in the R2 Zoning District. Approved 8/11/20 with conditions.