



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: 10/6/2021
RE: Docket 3667 – 18 Heard Road; Special Permit under Zoning Bylaw Section 5.3.9
Projections into Minimum Yards (A)

The applicant, Gregory Jacobs, seeks a Special Permit in accordance with Section 5.3.9 (Projections into Minimum Yards (A)). The applicant seeks to remove the existing 25.23 square foot porch and replace it with an enclosed entry vestibule/mudroom and covered entry porch. The proposed enclosed vestibule is approximately 41 square feet, and the proposed covered landing is approximately 37 square feet, which together exceed 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, safety, and livability of the front primary entrance to the dwelling.

The lot is in the R-1 Zoning District. The existing front yard setback is 25.1 feet, which conforms with the dimensional requirements of the Zoning Bylaw except for the existing front porch, which projects approximately 4 feet 3 inches into the minimum front yard setback. The proposed entry and porch would project forward 8.5 feet into the front yard setback.

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 and vestibule exceed the maximum square footage allowable by right, the overall proposal is not substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. While there are few covered entries along Heard Rd, they are common on new construction and renovations on the adjacent Wright Street, Cypress Road, and Forest Street.

The expanded porch and vestibule will complement the style of the original structure. The proposed design provides a more proportionate entry in relationship to the front façade and adds visual interest to the structure while also improving the usability of the entry.¹ 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), B-3 (pg. 33), and C-1 (pg. 34) Residential Design Guidelines, available at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument?id=54518>



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:

- #3654: 14 Nicod St—Applicant sought a special permit to add a front porch extending the width of a newly constructed house in the R1 Zoning District, citing convenience, safety, and improved design aesthetics.
- #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.