

August 27, 2023

Dear Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals,

We are the homeowners of 218 Pleasant Street, and together with our neighbors, we strongly oppose the project being proposed at 212 Pleasant Street. We expressed many concerns earlier when Nellie and Mark first submitted a request for a special permit back in February. We have attempted to communicate with them multiple times since then, and still, we haven't received information for all of the changes they are proposing or answers to our concerns. We were the ones to suggest a meeting when we found out they submitted a new request to the ZBA. We are very frustrated that the plans have not changed and that they are unable to provide information to reassure us that our homes and properties will not be harmed.

Our home is on the right side of 212 Pleasant Street and like the cottage, it is also waterfront property. We live on a tight cul de sac that we share with 212, 214, and 216 Pleasant Street and all of our homes are very close to one another. So close we can hear one another's conversations if we leave our windows open! We treasure our home because of Spy Pond, wildlife, and natural beauty and because of the good relationships we've built with the residing neighbors.

The distance from the proposed house to our property is concerning. On the application, it says the right side yard distance from the existing cottage to our property line is 20' 9" and with the addition this will go down to 15' 6". However, when we zoom into the proposed plot plan, we see 13' 6" as the distance from the proposed house to our property (See Attachment A). We'd like to know what is the correct distance? When we are dealing with a very tight space where we are all living very closely, a difference of 2' is a big deal. We would like this figure corrected in the application as well as in the Department of Planning Community Development's memo to the ZBA dated March 24, 2023. We do not feel confident that the application to the ZBA represents the plans correctly.

That's why we also want to understand Nellie and Mark's plans for the backyard. We do not know where they are building retaining walls or where they are flattening the land. This has big impacts on us. Both of our pond-front properties are very steep and fragile. 212 Pleasant Street's backyard already has a big erosion hole. Any changes to 212 Pleasant Street's yard because of building new foundations and retaining walls and filling and removing the dirt could have serious consequences in terms of how water flows and soil erodes on our property. We want to make sure the plans include all of the changes and are reviewed by an engineer. We asked for an engineering plan to reassure us that our home and land will not be harmed. None has been provided.

The application says there is parking for two cars at the cottage and this will remain the same. However, if you visit and drive there in person, you will see how only one car can park in the space. Only one car has been parked at the cottage with previous owners. There is not enough space to turn around so that you can park two normal cars and exit with your car facing forward.

There has been a lot of trouble caused by parking two cars there. Drivers are reversing down the shared driveway and then using 214 Pleasant's or 218 Pleasant's driveway to turn around. Nellie's and Mark's tenants damaged our driveway with a UHaul truck doing this. More importantly, this change in traffic is dangerous to our families, especially our young children who play outside.

We would like to see the plans for how they are changing the parking area at 212 Pleasant Street. We cannot tell from the existing and proposed plans how it is being enlarged from 480 square feet to 638 square feet. We find this square footage only on calculations of open space but not on plot plans (Attachment B). We have had a survey done and we want to know the bigger parking area is not on our property or blocking 216 Pleasant's easement. We also want to understand what changes to the land will have to be made to make room for the much larger parking space. We are concerned that the applicant cut down a protected tree to create more space. Another worry is how changing the parking area with permeable materials could impact our home. We want an engineer to review complete plans so we are not worried about the water in the ground damaging our property and foundation.

In the architect's plans, the large addition will have a side porch and steps off the right of the house. We are not sure whether they meet the minimum yard requirements in the bylaw (5.3.9. Projections into Minimum Yards). There are no dimensions for the porch and steps provided in the drawing but it looks like the porch will go out about 5' and including the steps, about 7.5' from the house. We see what might be the side porch on the proposed plot plan but not the steps that go towards our property line. See Attachment C. We would like a clear drawing and measurement to know whether the porch and steps go into the 10' setback required from our property line, and if so, whether they meet regulations.

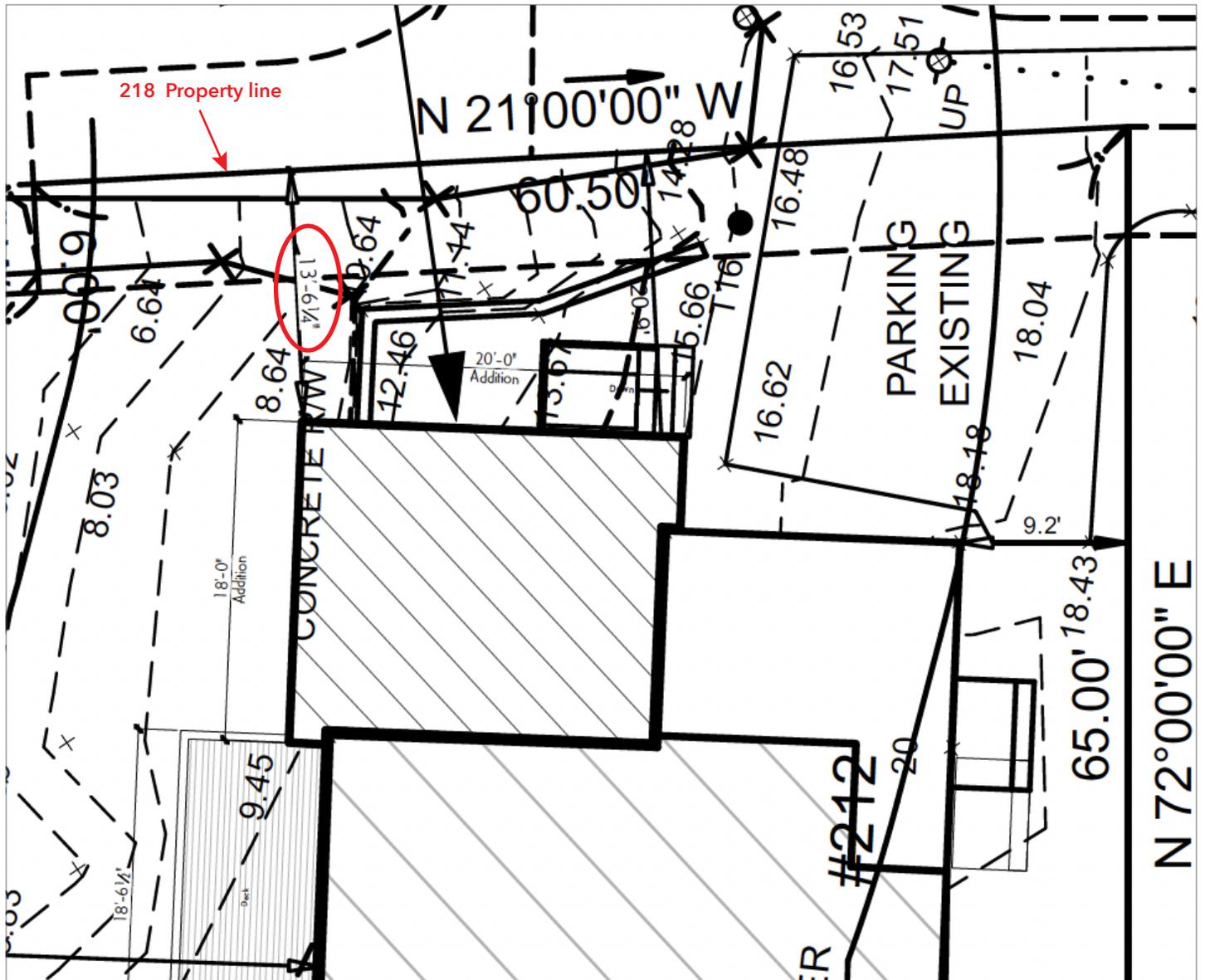
Again, this is a small and unique neighborhood. A cozy 1-bedroom cottage belongs here, not a large 3,300 square feet, 4-bedroom house. Our light, air, and views will be blocked, there will be more noise, less privacy, and less enjoyment in living here. There is potential risk to our properties, health, and safety.

We cherish our forever home. We got married in our backyard, and our son, Kadir, just celebrated his first birthday here. We ask the ZBA to request that Nellie and Mark respect the unique characteristics of our neighborhood and provide details and complete information that show it will not be a detriment to our homes, families, and well-being.

Ibrahim & Show Isik
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ATTACHMENT A

Drawing C1.1 Proposed Site Plan submitted by Applicant (magnified)



ATTACHMENT B

Supporting Calculations and Documents submitted by Applicant (excerpt)

REVISED 7-27-2023

Calculation of Open Space, Usable and Landscaped			
	Existing Sq Ft	Proposed Incl on Existing Footprint	% of total lot
Gross Floor Area	1,648	3,293	
Total Lot Square Footage			6,800
Not Useable			
House Footprint	822.00	1,176.00	
Parking Area *	480.00	638.00	
Steps to side door **	36.00	49.00	
Steps to front door	12	24	
Shed	80	80	
Total Not Uusable	1,430	1,967	28.93%
Open Space (back yard)			
Area not included in usable open space	2,652	2,652	
Usable Per Rober Survey	1,159	1,159	17.04%
As % of GFA	70.33%	35.20%	
Open Space, Landscaped			
Rear Deck	0.00	146.00	
Front Walkway	50.00	36.00	
Walkway to side steps	0.00	11.50	
Semi-pourous patio	0.00	225.00	
Steps to Pond	360.00	360.00	
Side and Front yard, Landscape strips	1148.75	243.25	
Total Open Space, Landscaped	1,559	1,022	15.03%
As % of GFA	94.58%	31.03%	

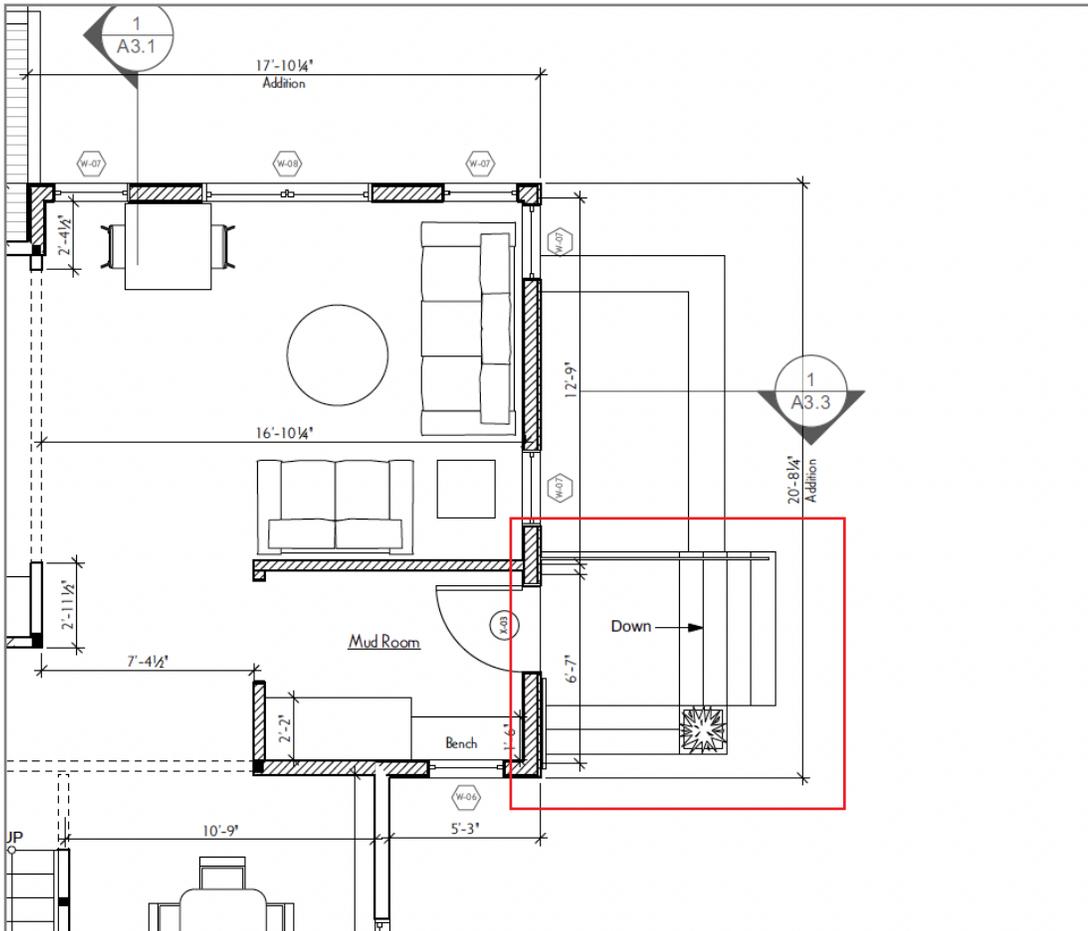
ATTACHMENT C

Dimensional Regulations in All or Multiple Districts (excerpt from Zoning Bylaw)

5.3.9. Projections into Minimum Yards

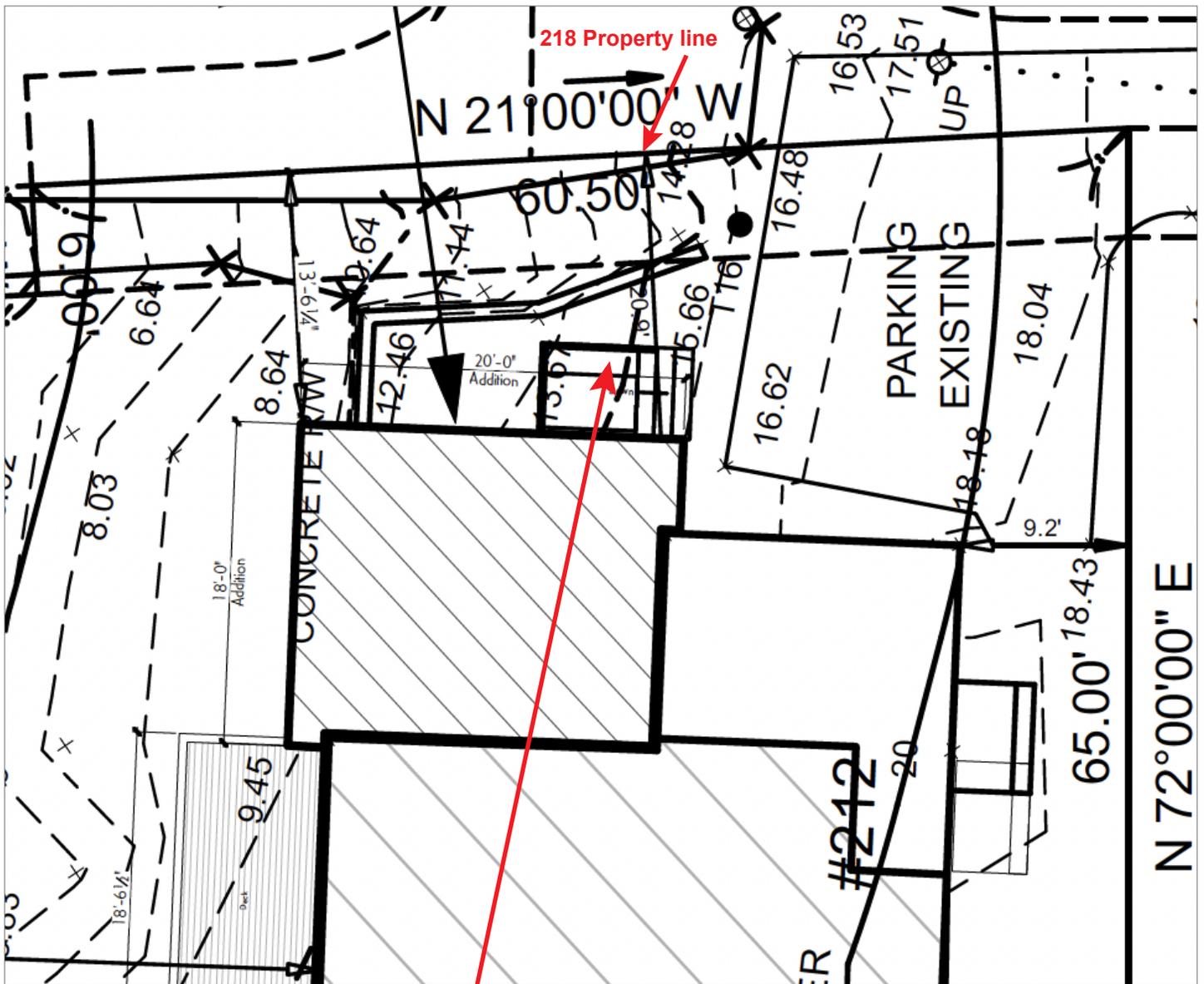
- A. Projecting eaves, chimneys, bay windows, balconies, open fire escapes, porches, and enclosed entrances not more than 25 square feet in floor area or more than one story high which do not project more than three and one-half feet beyond the line of the foundation wall may extend beyond the minimum yard regulations otherwise provided for the district in which the structure is built. Porches and enclosed entrances larger than that allowed above may extend into the minimum yard regulations otherwise provided for the district by special permit.
- B. Unenclosed steps, decks, and the like, which do not project more than 10 feet in the front yard, or more than five feet in the side yard beyond the line of the foundation wall may extend beyond the minimum yard regulations otherwise provided for the district in which the structure is built. Unenclosed steps, decks, and the like which do not project more than 10 feet into the required rear yard and are not closer to the lot line than half the size of the required yard, may extend beyond the minimum yard regulations otherwise provided for the district in which the structure is built
- C. Second story additions within the required front yard setback may extend no more than one foot beyond the existing building wall.
- D. Porches, decks, steps, and landings in the required setback are not considered to be within the foundation wall and may not be enclosed, extended, or built upon except by special permit.

Drawing A1.1 Proposed 1st Floor Plan submitted by Applicant



ATTACHMENT C (cont.)

Drawing C1.1 Proposed Site Plan submitted by Applicant (magnified)



Is this drawing of side porch? Does it include steps going out towards 218's property line?

What is distance from porch and proposed steps to 218 property line?