

Patricia S. Nelson
Attorney At Law
19 Muzzey Street, Suite 207
Lexington, Massachusetts 02421

Telephone: 781-863-8688
Fax: 781-863-2201
E-Mail: psnelson@masslaw.us

July 12, 2018

MEMORANDUM TO: Ginna Johnson, Chair
Lexington Planning Board
Town Hall, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue
Lexington MA, 02420

RE: Definitive Site Plan Application, Site Sensitive Plan

PROPERTY: 8 Adams Street, Lexington MA

OWNERS: Randall Hiller and Elaine Hiller

The following is a Memorandum in support of the Definitive Site Plan Application filed with the Planning Board on May 25, 2018 for a Site Sensitive Development on the Property creating two lots and preserving the existing 1903 home.

BACKGROUND

The current house ("Historic House") was built on the foundation of an earlier Queen Anne house (built 1888) which burned in December of 1902. (Report of Nancy Seasholes to the Historical Commission dated January 1998 ("Seasholes Report"), Form B, copy attached). The existing house at 8 Adams Street was built in 1903, designed by noted local architect Willard D. Brown and is sited on a 61,004 square foot lot, of sufficient size, shape and frontage to support a two lot subdivision if both the house and garage were removed. (See Proof Plan previously submitted.)

The Historical Commission approved the Demolition of the existing garage in October of 2016 on the grounds that the building was not structurally sound.

The Hillers presented a sketch plan to the Planning Board for its hearing on January 5, 2017, which involved demolition of two or more walls of the Historic House, demolition of the garage and construction of a new two plus story home with a footprint of 3142 square feet and a GFA of 5907 square feet.

As noted in the letter of Owner Randall Hiller, attached, the response of the Planning Board was generally positive.

In response to the comments of the Planning Board, the input of the abutter at 10 Adams Street, and the Owners personal concerns for historic preservation, the current plan:

- a) Limits exterior alteration of the Historic House to removal of only one (1) wall at the rear of the property;
- b) Reduces the height of the new home by one story, with a profile of 1.5 stories;
- c) Reduces the footprint of the new building from 3142 sq ft to 2595 sq ft.
- d) Reduces the GFA of the new building from 5907 sq ft to 4950 sq ft.

COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF Chapter 135 §6.9

The proposed project serves the following purposes of Chapter 135 §6.9 as a site sensitive development. A site sensitive development (SSD) is the development of a parcel with configurations of lots allowing flexibility and creativity in residential development through reductions in minimum lot area and frontage requirements in order to minimize site disturbance, preserve historic and sensitive natural resources, and allow for efficient patterns of construction to lower development cost.

1. The Proposed Plans show a “developmentdesigned with sensitivity to the characteristics of the site that otherwise might be limited by application of uniform, largely geometric standards”. In this case, a “by right” development is feasible but would entail the destruction of the Historic George O. Whiting/Gilmore House.
2. The proposal preserves historical and architectural features of the existing Historic House and setting.
3. By grouping the Historic House and the new house in the middle of the property (front to back) where the current structures are roughly located, both the set back with circular drive from the street and the significant amount of open space at the rear of the property are preserved.
4. The proposed designs are in keeping with the existing structures and with the livability, scale, character and economic value of the existing neighborhood as follows:
 - a) The Historic House will remain in its current location set “far back” from Adams Street as noted in the Seasholes Report;
 - b) The proposed designs retain the semi-circular carriage drive leading up to the front porch and entrance;
 - c) The changes to the exterior of the Historic House will take place at the rear of the house.

d) The new structure will be located in the approximate location of the current garage, (also set well back from Adams Street) and will be approximately the same height (within two feet) as the current garage.

e) In deference to the request of the abutter most affected by the new construction (owners of 10 Adams Street), the new house will be reduced by one story, keeping a low profile from the viewpoint of the abutters and Adams street.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

The Owners application includes the following submittals:

- Completed Application and Cover Letter
- Drainage Report and Engineering Calculations
- Cover Sheet & Locus Context Plan
- Record Conditions Plan
- Site Analysis Plan
- Property Rights Plan of Land
- Site Construction Plan
- Landscape Plan
- Site Utilities Plan
- Site Details
- Proof Plan
- Completed Application and Cover Letter
- Drainage Report and Engineering Calculations
- Cover Sheet & Locus Context Plan
- Record Conditions Plan
- Site Analysis Plan
- Property Rights Plan of Land
- Site Construction Plan
- Landscape Plan
- Site Utilities Plan
- Site Details
- Proof Plan

- Form W and Addendum
- Owner Letter

WAIVERS

The Owners request a waiver from the site coverage requirements as noted on Form W, attached, with explanations as noted therein.

CONCLUSION

For the reason stated herein and as presented in the Application and supporting documents, the Owners request that the Planning Board approve the plans for a site sensitive development be approved as submitted.

Randall Hiller
Elaine Hiller
By Their Attorney



Patricia S. Nelson
19 Muzzey Street, Suite 207
Lexington MA 02421
781-863-8688
psnelson@masslaw.us



Town of Lexington
Planning Office

Land Use, Health and Development Department
1625 Massachusetts Avenue
Lexington, MA 02420

Tel: (781) 698-4560

FORM W
APPLICATION FOR WAIVERS

Applicant: Randall Hiller and Elaine Hiller

Description of Land: 8 Adams Street, Lexington MA 02420

Type of Development: Site Sensitive Development

| Item # | Section of Development Regulations | From (the required standard): To (the proposed alternative): |
|--------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | c 135 Section 9.9. | From 6511 square feet To 7395 square feet |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

This form is to be submitted with the application for development.

In addition, §176-3.4 of the Zoning Regulations and/or §175-3.5 of the Subdivision Regulations requires:

1. a plan showing how the site would be developed if the plan complied with that provision of these Regulations and no waiver is granted; and
2. a narrative statement that explains how granting the waiver would be in the public interest and not inconsistent with the intent and purpose of the Subdivision Control Law. (Please use a separate sheet of paper.)

8 ADAMS STREET – DEFINITIVE SITE SENSITIVE PLAN

FORM W – ADDENDUM

Item #1 – The Applicants Randall and Elaine Hiller request a waiver from c. 135 section 6.9.9 on the following grounds:

1. The existing 1903 arts and crafts style home was constructed in a style that features “strong horizontal lines” and includes a “large semi-circular [covered] porch at the south end”. Because the porch is covered, it technically is included in the site coverage calculations. Were the cover to be removed, the development as a whole would meet current site coverage requirements. A photo of the porch is part of the report of Nancy Seasholes to the Lexington Historical Commission, Form B, a copy of which is submitted with Applicants’ materials. The waiver would avoid penalizing the Owners for keeping this historic feature intact.

2 A new home could be constructed with an additional story on a smaller footprint that would comply with site coverage requirements (see materials submitted herewith). Compared with the taller building, the proposed lower profile building would be more in keeping with the “strong horizontal lines” of the existing building and would present a lower profile as seen from Adams Street and the home of the abutters at 10 Adams Street.

Randy Hiller
8 Adams Street
Lexington, MA 02420

July 11, 2018

Town of Lexington Planning Board
1625 Massachusetts Ave.
Lexington, MA 02420

To whom it may concern,

I am the current owner/developer of 8 Adams Street. I have lived in the beautiful historic house on the property since 1995, and have lived in Lexington since 1988. I wanted to provide some context for my application for a Site Sensitive permit to develop a new house sharing a driveway with the existing #8 Adams.

A few years ago, in conversation with Lester Savage, it became clear to me that the size of the lot at 8 Adams could potentially endanger the preservation of the beautiful historic Willard Brown 1902 house currently on the site. The large lot has remained undeveloped in the past because the road frontage on Adams Street is insufficient to allow a second house. Lester showed me how a developer could, by removing the existing house, put a cul-de-sac on the property and create two buildable lots. The pressure to build new houses in Lexington would increasingly jeopardize the preservation of the existing historic house. I love this historic house. My father wrote a wonderful historic retrospective of the property, a copy of which currently resides at the Lexington Historical Society.

In response to this threat, I, in conjunction with Gary Larson, put together a Site Sensitive development plan to create a second lot on the property without the need to destroy the existing house by utilizing a shared driveway. In our preliminary hearing, Planning Board member Ginna Johnson said that the plan we had submitted was the first Site Sensitive Development Plan she had seen that adhered to what the Site Sensitive development code was truly written for. I was encouraged to move forward.

At the subsequent Planning Board meeting, I presented a proposed low profile house that my immediate neighbor at 10 Adams Street strongly supported. My neighbor was worried that the site coverage limitations would require us to build a 2.5 story house, which would be both less sensitive to the existing site and would obstruct his view more. After spending the past year trying to locate a developer who would carry the development plan to fruition, it became clear to me that most developers were interested in maximizing the size of the new house with very little sensitivity to my prior agreement with my neighbor or with blending with the existing house at 8 Adams Street. Hence, I have decided to develop the property myself with the help of local businesses, Colin Smith Architecture and Sramowicz General Contractors.

In this final version of our Site Sensitive Development plan, Colin Smith Architecture has created a stunning low-profile home that fits with the existing historic home on the property. He has reduced the footprint, and added architectural features that link the new home to the architectural style of the existing home designed by Willard Brown. While we have reduced the footprint of the new home from what we originally proposed, we still ask you to give us a variance on the site coverage limitations. We feel this is appropriate for three reasons: 1) our most impacted neighbor (at 10 Adams Street) has strongly requested that we limit the height of the new house. 2) Both houses (existing #8 and the proposed new low profile house) fall well within the 15% site

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coverage limitations on their respective properties for our zoning district. 3) our calculations of site coverage include the covered porch of the existing house... we feel it is important to maintain the historic character of the house and not to remove the covering roof of the existing porch in order to get under the site coverage limitations. Without the covered porch, we are well within the site sensitive site coverage guidelines.

The plan we have submitted maintains the historical character of the site with a beautiful custom home designed by local architect Colin Smith and built by local builders, Michael and Paul Sramowicz. Colin Smith's team has put together a exquisite design that adheres to the character of the existing Willard Brown house while maintaining the appeal of a low profile carriage house. This enables us to utilize the additional land on this one and one half acre lot without destroying the existing historical house.

I sincerely hope that you see the value of the Site Sensitive proposal we have submitted, and that you grant us the requested site coverage waiver. Thank so much for your time and commitment to the Town of Lexington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randall Hiller", written in a cursive style.

Randall Hiller
Owner, 8 Adams Street