



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: July 17, 2019

Re: Special Permit **PB #347, 112 Holworthy Street**

This memo contains an overview of the of the proposed project at 112 Holworthy Street, the special permits being requested, and related comments.

Summary of Proposal

The proposed project consists of renovation and expanding the existing single-family residential building and constructing a second single-family detached dwelling unit on the lot with required off-street parking on the site.

Requested Special Permits

The proposed project is located on a parcel with frontage on Holworthy Street in the Residence B base zoning district. The Applicant is seeking a Special Permit to allow construction of more than one structure containing a principal residential use pursuant to Section 5.53.2 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance allows for more than one structure containing a principal residential use as-of-right in a Residence B zoning district provided all portions of all structures are located no farther than 75 feet from any street line to which the lots abut. The proposed new structure has portions that are more than 75 feet from Holworthy Street. Therefore, the proposal requires the Planning Board to issue a Special Permit if the proposal is found to meet the requirements of Sections 10.43 and 5.53.2 of the Zoning Ordinance. The project also requires a Special Permit for addition of three windows on the existing nonconforming building facade pursuant to Section 8.22.2.c of the Zoning Ordinance. The Board of Zoning Appeal would typically grant that special permit, but since the proposal requires Planning Board review, the Planning Board may grant all necessary special permits per Section 10.45.

The applicable special permit findings are summarized on the following page. Applicable sections of the zoning are provided in an appendix.

Requested Special Permits	Summarized Findings <i>(see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
Special Permit for more than one structure containing a principal residential use (Section 5.53.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of two structures on the lot will not significantly increase the impact of the new construction should it occur in a single structure, <u>OR</u> • The development of two structures will provide identifiable benefits beyond that provided by construction in a single structure, considering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extent to which preservation of a large contiguous open space in the rear of the lot or series of adjacent lots is achieved ○ Incentives to locate buildings and parking in the front half of a lot per the prevailing development pattern in the neighborhood ○ Providing an enhanced living environment for residents on the lot ○ Incentives to retain existing structures, particularly structures that are preferably preserved ○ Opportunities to reduce visual impact of parking from the public street and adjacent lots ○ Opportunities to reduce height and bulk of new construction is deeper into a lot or closer to structures on abutting lots • Conforms to general criteria for issuance of a special permit.
Special permit for additional window on non-conforming building facade (Section 8.22.2.c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The addition will not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing nonconforming use. • There is no further violation of the dimensional requirements of Article 5.000. • Compliance with parking requirements in Article 6.000.
General Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)	Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43.

Area Planning and Zoning

Lower-scale residential zoning districts, such as Residence B, are intended to allow development at the prevailing scale, density and pattern of the existing neighborhood. The neighborhood generally consists of single-family and two-family and some multi-family dwellings. Most lots contain one residential structure, although some lots contain two separate dwellings. Each of the neighboring lots at 50-52

Holworthy, 60-62 Holworthy, 82 Holworthy, and 102 Holworthy contain two residential structures in the same parcel, with a “front” building facing Holworthy Street and a “rear” building at the back of the lot. The Board recently approved similar projects at 74 Holworthy Street (PB-327) in April 2017 and at 78 Holworthy Street (PB-341) in December 2018.

Comments on Proposal

Consistency with Planning and Zoning

The lot at 78 Holworthy Street is similar in depth and width to the neighboring lots, with approximately 50 feet of frontage and 160 feet deep. The existing building does not have the minimum front setback of 15 feet and side setback of 7.5 feet on the northern side, making it a nonconforming structure. A special permit is required for the three new windows proposed on the non-conforming northern building façade, two on the first floor and one on the second floor. This façade overlooks the driveway of the abutting property. The proposal would renovate the existing building with minor modifications in the rear resulting in gross floor area (GFA) increasing from 1616 square feet to 1776 square feet, which is less than 10% of the existing GFA.

The proposed house in the rear would be more than 75 feet from Holworthy Street and triggers the special permit requirement. The as-of-right option would be to continue to use the existing building as a single-family, or to convert, enlarge, or demolish and reconstruct the existing dwelling into an attached two-family dwelling. The proposed second structure conforms to all the dimensional requirements of the district. The removal of the existing garage behind the existing building and the proposed shorter driveway would create some additional permeable area in addition to keeping the parking area compact. Thirteen mature trees along the northern and southern boundaries of the site are proposed to be retained.

Urban Design

The project proposes to preserve and renovate the existing dwelling, which while unassuming, contributes to the character of Holworthy Street. The proposed second dwelling has relatively modest proportions, which helps maintain a sense of openness between the two dwellings, and the rear yards of the adjoining lots. The contemporary massing and exterior treatment ensure that the more ornate existing dwelling, maintains prominence on the site and the streetscape is relatively unchanged. The proposed muted color palette will also help the new dwelling recede into the background of rear yards and landscaping.

The landscaping is thoughtfully done, and the pea gravel driveway with cobblestone apron and trim will allow absorption of stormwater. Opportunities to further mitigate the visual impact of the driveway and parking area, such as varying the hardscape treatment or reducing the width of the driveway as it meets the sidewalk, should be explored. Additional plantings in the front yard, or possibly a new street tree, could also help buffer the visual impacts of the parking area.

Continuing Review

The following is a summary of issues that staff recommends should be further studied by the Applicant, either in preparing revised materials if the Planning Board continues the hearing to a future date, or as conditions for ongoing design review by staff if the Board decides to grant the special permit:

- All landscape details, including proposed plantings, hardscape materials, fences, etc.
- The selection of paving materials and landscaping to minimize the visual impact of the driveway and parking area.
- Details, materials, and colors of all architectural elements.
- Location or acoustic screening of air conditioning condensers.