



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: January 20, 2021

Re: Special Permit PB #372, 118 Holworthy Street

Submission Type: Special Permit Application

Applicant: 118 Holworthy St. Realty, LLC

Zoning District(s): Residence B

Proposal Summary: Construction of a single-family residence greater than 75 feet from the front line and to the rear of an existing single family residence and restoration of the existing single-family structure with two off-street parking spaces.

Special Permits Requested: Special Permit for more than one structure containing a principal residential use (Section 5.53.2) and Special Permit for additional window on existing non-conforming building facade (Section 8.22.2.c). *A summary of the applicable special permit findings is listed on the following page. Applicable sections of the zoning are provided in an appendix.*

Other City Permits Needed: None being sought prior to building permit

Planning Board Action: Grant or deny requested special permits.

Memo Contents: Review of area planning and zoning, comments on proposal addressing planning, zoning, and urban design.

Other Staff Reports:

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

KHALIL MOGASSABI
Deputy Director
Chief of Planning

Requested Special Permits	Summarized Findings <i>(detailed zoning text in the appendix)</i>
<p>Special Permit for more than one structure containing a principal residential use (Section 5.53.2)</p>	<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.
<p>Special Permit for additional window on existing non-conforming building facade (Section 8.22.2.c)</p>	<p>The changes, extensions, or alterations of a pre-existing nonconforming structure will not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing condition.</p>
<p>General Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or (c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or (d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or

Requested Special Permits	Summarized Findings <i>(detailed zoning text in the appendix)</i>
	<p>(e) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and</p> <p>(f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30 (see appendix).</p>

Area Planning and Zoning

The Residence B zoning district is a low-moderate density residential district which permits single-family, two-family and multi-family dwellings of a smaller scale and intensity than most other districts. The majority of lots within the Residence B zoning district contains one residential structure, though some lots (including those along Holworthy Street) contain two dwellings.

Envision Cambridge (2019) sets forth several housing goals and strategies, including increasing the City’s overall housing production, providing a variety of housing options for individuals and families, and utilizing zoning and regulatory incentives to help facilitate new housing development of different types and scales. The development of small-scale, infill development like the proposed project helps to further these goals.

Comments on Development Proposal

Consistency with Planning and Zoning

Lots along Holworthy Street are particularly narrow and deep, with typical lot dimensions being about 50 feet wide and 150 feet deep. Over the past several years, several properties along Holworthy Street have added second principal residential dwellings on the same lot as an existing residential structure. These lots include 60-62 Holworthy, 82 Holworthy, 102 Holworthy, and most recently 112 Holworthy. The lot at 118 Holworthy shares these same characteristics.

The existing building does not have the minimum required front yard setback of 15 feet (existing 6.8’) or side yard setback (4.3’), thereby making it a nonconforming structure. A special permit is required to add windows to the nonconforming front yard and side yard façades, which overlook Holworthy Street and an abutting driveway on the north side. Further, a new 2nd floor addition consisting of 158 square feet will be added to the existing structure, which does not increase the overall square footage of the structure by more than 10%, pursuant to Section 8.22.1.f.

The proposed dwelling in the rear yard will be more than 75’ from Holworthy Street and therefore requires a special permit from the Planning Board. Alternatively, the applicant could achieve additional density by either altering or demolishing/reconstructing the existing dwelling into a conforming two-family dwelling. The Applicant states that such an alternative would result in a structure that is incongruous with the existing neighborhood character, result in less overall open space, and disrupt the prevailing development pattern along Holworthy Street.

The proposed new dwelling will conform to all dimensional requirements of the Residence B district, including the required minimum open space of 40%. In order to meet the minimum off-street parking

requirements of one space per dwelling unit (2 total spaces), the existing curb cut will remain and the driveway will be lengthened providing access to a two-car accessory garage structure at the rear of the property. The plans show car parking over the permeable paved area between the driveway and existing structure. Since the proposed detached garage is accommodating the parking requirement for two cars, it is recommended to replace this paved area with vegetated landscape.

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 remains relatively unchanged. The project renderings appear quite dark, so the proposed materials and color palette should be further detailed by the Applicant as part of the continuing review process.

The landscaping is thoughtfully done, and the narrow driveway with the use of concrete pavers for the parking spaces helps to mitigate the visual impacts of hardscape areas. A surface treatment other than asphalt and more substantial plantings along the length of the driveway should be considered to further soften the visual impacts of the development and to increase the permeable surface area. A higher-Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) paving material and additional vegetation would also further the City's climate resilience goals and help mitigate urban heat island impacts.

Continuing Review

The following is a summary of issues that may be addressed further at the public hearing, or may be incorporated into conditions for continuing design review by staff if the Board decides to grant the special permit:

- All landscape details, including proposed plantings, hardscape materials, fences, exterior lighting, etc.
- Details, materials, and colors of all architectural elements.
- Acoustic screening of air conditioning condensers.
- Consider vegetated landscape in the area between driveway and existing structure.