

HPB21-0495 HPB PLAN REVIEW Comments Narrative

1.ZONING

a. The following variances have been requested:

i. Front yard setback for building (for construction of porch and covered parking) @ 11'-4" where 20'-0" is required.

The requested variance is in response to Staff's request that the Applicant construct the original arcaded porch, entryway, and porte-cochere that appear in the original microfilm drawings (see Historical Resource Report) but was never built. Please see Variance #1 & #2 Diagram page 5 in the Letter of Intent for plan information and Architectural Drawing Sheet EX-6 for elevation information. The impact of the arcaded porch, entryway, and porte-cochere are most visible in the 3D model scenes within the Drawing Set.

ii. Rear yard setback (for new rear addition) @ 5'-0" where 10'-0" is required

The Applicant requests a modification of the required rear yard setback from the City Code prescribed 10'-0" to 5'-0. This modification will allow the Owner the same development rights currently enjoyed by the adjacent and neighboring properties. The overall proposal will be impossible without this modification as the size of the proposed new building would be insufficient to provide an economically feasible enterprise.

iii. Average Unit Size for the new addition @ 775 (771) sq ft where 800 min is required

The Applicant requests a reduction in the minimum average "New Unit" size from 800 square feet to 771 square feet. This is the result of;

- a) A very small site (60' x 100')
- b) Meeting the current Code side yard setback requirements
- c) Maintaining the required 10'-0" separation between the historic Fourplex and the new construction.
- d) Honoring the RM-1 height restriction of three floors maximum.

With a rear yard setback variance to 5'-0" we can provide unit sizes of 802 square feet, 788 square feet, and 722 square feet, respectively (for an average of 771 square feet). See Existing and Proposed FAR shaded Diagrams on Drawing Sheets A-04 & A-05 for more detailed information.

b. The following variances are required as per the plans submitted:

i. Front yard setback for at grade parking space @ 11'-4" where 20'-0" is required

This variance is part and parcel of Staff's request that the Applicant construct the original arcaded porch, entryway, and porte-cochere that appear in the original microfilm drawings. The Porte-Cochere by its very nature is intended to provide a covered parking space, thus the necessity for this variance.

c. The dumpster enclosure is not an allowable yard encroachment.

The dumpster enclosure has been removed from the proposal and the drawings.

d. Section 142-155(a)(4)(d): One of the side setbacks of the proposed rear addition must follow the existing setback of the main structure on the site.

The bottom two floors of the proposed new building have been moved 30" to the west to align with the existing 5'-0" side yard setback of the Fourplex at the street. The third-floor side setback steps back 30" to 7'-6" as mandated by the City Code.

2. DEFICIENCIES IN PRESENTATION

a. Sheet SP-1, provide dimension for the west side setback of the proposed rear addition

The west side yard setback has been provided on Drawing Sheet SP-1

b. Provide an existing/demolition site plan indicating that the existing rear accessory building is proposed to be totally demolished.

A full site demolition plan has been provided (Drawing Sheet EX-01) indicating that the existing garage building at rear is proposed to be demolished.

c. The pitch of the corner tower element appears too steep compared to existing

The roof pitch of the existing corner tower has been reduced from 12/12 to 8/12. Although this is still steeper than what appears in the original microfilm drawings it is supported by line of site triangulation. Please see line of site section 2/A-03 in the Drawing Set.

3. DESIGN/APPROPRIATENESS COMMENTS (Recommendations)

a. Staff recommends the floor to floor heights of the new addition be reduced to the greatest extent possible.

While the Applicant appreciates the merits of reducing the overall height of the building and thus it's presence on the exterior, the floor-to-floor heights are largely a function of (a) a very small building (b) interior comfort and (c) proportion. The primary living spaces on the ground floor and second floor are approximately 20' in at least one dimension (approximately 20' x 20' on the second floor). The intent is to provide one large space in each apartment where the occupants can breathe and enjoy a space with the elegance and comfort of a slightly higher ceiling. A 20'x 20' space with an 8' ceiling gives the impression that something went horribly wrong. By the same token this small structure produces some very small rooms, and a somewhat higher ceiling helps alleviate the claustrophobic effect that a low ceiling often produces. Note Also that the 10' floor-to-floor height is consistent with the Fourplex on site.

Ultimately, until we have determined the thickness of the floor structure (wood verses concrete verses steel) it is impossible to determine the exact ceiling heights and the appropriate floor to floor heights to achieve this. Thus, the Applicant is erring on the side of caution. Nonetheless, should our proposal be viewed favorably by the Board, we pledge to continue this discussion with Staff as the building design advances.

b. Staff recommends that the driveway and walkway within the front yard be separated and that the curbcut/driveway width be further reduced.

After much careful thought and consideration, the Applicant requests that the 12'-0" curb cut be retained as proposed. Perhaps an alternate point of view- based on safety, cycles of use, and historical accuracy- could be considered.

-Safety: Reducing the curb cut to nine feet (only six inches wider than a parking space) could present issues of visibility and maneuverability in this "entrance only" scenario. Backing out of the drive, across the sidewalk, through the on-street parking lane, and into the thoroughfare could be quite challenging with such a narrow view portal and the forward position of the driver in the Automobile when backing out. Cars in South Beach tend to park to the absolute limits established by a curb cut (and then some) which would reduce visibility to an extremely narrow cone. The driver, potentially, would not be able to see traffic in the street until the automobile was halfway into the street. Retaining the twelve-foot curb cut (already reduced from the existing 20-foot existing curb per Staff recommendation) provides a "clearly" more visible, maneuverable, and thus safer design, in the Applicant's opinion.

- Cycles of Use: The interesting thing about the Cycles of Use of proposed automobiles on site is that there really are none. With only one car on site daily trips might average 2-3 at a maximum- if any. And considering the number of apartments served by the west entry walk (three total bedrooms) the frequency of pedestrians on the walkway is, likewise, very little. Even if the walk was separated and the curb cut reduced to nine feet, we would still have pedestrians using the entryway as a means to access the four other apartments (seven total bedrooms) via the east walkway.

- Historical Accuracy: If this is indeed a Mediterranean style edifice, is it not appropriate to reflect this in both form and function? Most of our great (or even lesser) Mediterranean cities make little distinction between what is street, walkway, market, plaza, etc. In the Applicant's opinion this shared use of space, overlap of function, and more fluid circulation provides a more "Mediterranean" approach to the ground plane and creates a more cohesive site composition- formally, functionally, and spatially.

Respectfully submitted by

Neal R. Deputy Architect

Florida RA# 0015514