

Ruthanne Fuller Mayor

# City of Newton, Massachusetts

Department of Planning and Development 1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459 #263-20

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Barney S. Heath Director

# **PUBLIC HEARING MEMORANDUM**

Public Hearing Date: July 7, 2020 Land Use Action Date: September 22, 2020

City Council Action Date: October 5, 2020 90-Day Expiration Date: October 5, 2020

DATE: July 2, 2020

TO: City Council

FROM: Barney S. Heath, Director of Planning and Development

Neil Cronin, Chief Planner for Current Planning

Michael Gleba, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Petition #263-20, for a SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL to raze an existing

> detached garage and construct a 4,532 sq. ft. 2.5 story addition, to allow a garage in excess on 700 sq. ft., to allow a dormer that extends the second floor wall plane vertically, to allow a dormer greater than 50% of the wall plane below it, to allow a dormer within three feet of the intersection of the roofline and main building and to create an FAR of .23 where .26 is allowed and .16 exists at 43 Prince Street, Ward 3,

West Newton, on land known as Section 32 Block 10 Lot 06, containing

approximately 27,800 sq. ft. of land in a district zoned SINGLE RESIDENCE 1. Ref: Sec. 7.3.3, 7.4, 3.1.3, 3.1.9, 3.4.2.B.1, 1.5.4.G.2.a, 1.5.4.G.2.b, 1.5.4.G.2.c of the City of

Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2017.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council and the public with technical information and planning analysis conducted by the Planning Department. The Planning Department's intention is to provide a balanced review of the proposed project based on information it has at the time of the public hearing. Additional information about the project may be presented at or after the public hearing that the Land Use Committee of the City Council can consider at a subsequent working session.



43 Prince Street

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The property at 43 Prince Street consists of a 27,800 square foot lot located on the corner of Prince Street and Sewall streets in a Single Residence 1 (SR1) district improved with a single-family residence constructed in 1885 and a detached garage.

The petitioners propose to raze the detached garage and construct a 4,532 square foot two and one-half story addition to the dwelling, creating a total of 9,116 square feet of area. As designed the proposed changes require a special permit to exceed the allowed floor area ratio (FAR), to allow an oversized garage and exceptions to regulations regarding dormer design and scale.

More specifically, as proposed the addition would increase the property's' floor area ratio (FAR) from 0.16 to 0.32, above the maximum 0.26 allowed by right, requiring a special permit pursuant to Sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.9 of the Newton Zoning Ordinance. As the addition would include an attached 867 square foot three-car garage, per section 3.4.2.B.1, a special permit is required to allow a private garage in excess of 700 square feet in area. Lastly, the dormer proposed for the attic level on the southern-facing façade of the dwelling is designed in such a way that it would vertically continue a bay on the second story without interruption into the attic, be wider than 50% of the wall plane of the story next below it and be closer than three feet from the vertical plane of the intersection of the roof and the main building end wall nearest the dormer, all characteristics that, per section 1.5.4.G.2 require a special permit.

#### I. SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

When reviewing this request, the City Council should consider whether:

- The specific site is an appropriate location for the proposed expanded single-family dwelling as designed, with a garage larger than 700 square feet (§3.4.2.B.1) and a dormer that extends the second floor wall plane vertically (§1.5.4.G.2.a), is greater than 50% of the wall plane below it (§1.5.4.G.2.b) and is within three feet of the intersection of the roofline and main building (§1.5.4.G.2.c) (§7.3.3.C.1);
- The proposed expanded single-family dwelling as designed, with a garage larger than 700 square feet (§3.4.2.B.1) and a dormer that extends the second floor wall plane vertically (§1.5.4.G.2.a), is greater than 50% of the wall plane below it (§1.5.4.G.2.b) and is within three feet of the intersection of the roofline and main building (§1.5.4.G.2.c) will not adversely affect the neighborhood (§7.3.3.C.2);
- > There will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrian (§7.3.3.C.3);
- Access to the site over streets is appropriate for the types and numbers of vehicles involved (§7.3.3.C.4); and
- > The proposed increase in FAR from 0.16 to 0.32 where 0.26 is the maximum allowed

by right, is consistent with and not in derogation of the size, scale, and design of other structures in the neighborhood (§3.1.9.A.2).

#### II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD

# A. Neighborhood and Zoning

The subject property and the surrounding neighborhood are located within a Single Residence 1 (SR1) District. The surrounding neighborhood is predominantly occupied by single-family dwellings, with exceptions being a two-family and a multi-family property and two vacant lots dispersed throughout the area (Attachments A & B).

#### B. Site

The property consists of a 27,800 square foot corner lot improved with a single-family residence located in the northern half of the parcel (near the Sewell Street frontage) and a detached garage near its southwest corner.

The lot, which slopes slightly downward about seven from south to north toward Sewell Street, contains mature vegetation, including a row of trees along the Prince Street frontage, and extensive lawn area throughout.

Vehicular access to the existing detached garage is provided by a curb cut off Sewell Street, near the northwest corner of the site, and a rather narrow driveway of varying widths that is located varying distances, ranging from around 22 to 36 feet, from the western property boundary.

#### III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

## A. Land Use

The principal use of the site is and will remain a single-family residence.

## B. Building and Site Design

The petitioners propose to raze the detached garage and construct a 4,532 square foot two and one-half story addition to the dwelling. A conically roofed turret would be constructed on one corner of the dwelling, vertically extending an existing turret upward and adding significant visual interest to the Victorian dwelling.

The proposed work would add 4,412 square feet of floor area to the dwelling, nearly doubling its size from 4,584 to 8,996 square feet. The majority of this space, 3,763 square feet, would be on the ground level with 2,841 square feet of living space added to the first floor, an additional 867 square feet within the proposed attached garage, and 175 square feet within a small proposed accessory structure (please note that this increase would be partially offset (by 701 square feet) with the removal of the existing

garage and a 120 square foot shed). The second floor and the half story above that would be expanded by 838 and 512 square feet, respectively. Altogether, as proposed, the property's calculated floor area ratio (FAR) would double, from the current 0.16 to 0.32, above the maximum 0.26 allowed by right.

The addition would not increase the measured height of the dwelling and the number of stories would remain at 2 ½.

Regarding the property's two front setbacks, the one along Prince Street would remain at 31.3 feet, in excess of the required 25 feet; the other front setback, along Sewell Street would be reduced by the proposed addition from 39.9 to 25.2 feet, just above the requirement.

The side setback along the southern property line (i.e., the boundary opposite and parallel to the property's Sewell Street frontage) would be 35 feet, considerably less than the existing 92.7 feet but approximately 22.5 feet more than the required 12.5 feet. The rear setback along the western property line (i.e., the boundary opposite and parallel to the property's Prince Street frontage) would be 25.1 feet, considerably less than the existing 49.3 feet but more, if only slightly, than the required 25 feet.

The open space on the parcel would decrease, from 81.9% to 71.2%, but remain above the required 65%.

The parcel's existing lot coverage is 12.1%. The petitioner proposes to increase it to 22.3%, exceeding the maximum 20% usually allowed by right for an old lot in the SR1 zoning district. However, as detailed in the attached zoning review memorandum, lot coverage requirements do not apply to the construction of a private garage in connection with a single- or two-family dwelling in existence on December 27, 1922. As the proposed attached garage measures 867 square feet, or 3% lot coverage, excluding the garage from the lot coverage calculation renders the total proposed countable lot coverage to 19.3%, slightly less than the maximum allowed.

Also, the petitioner proposes a dormer to the attic level on the southern-facing façade of the dwelling. As designed, the dormer requires a special permit since it vertically extends a bay on the second story without interruption into the attic and is the entire width of that entire bay (therefore wider than 50% of the wall plane of the story next below it, and its sidewall is closer than three feet from the vertical plane of the intersection of the roof and the main structure end wall nearest the dormer.

Lastly, the Planning Department notes that, per the submitted site plans, the petitioner is proposing to replace the sidewalks along the full lengths of the property's Prince and Sewell streets' frontages.

# C. Parking and Circulation

As discussed above, the petitioner proposed to raze the existing 701 square foot

detached garage and create a new attached 867 square foot three-car garage on the ground floor of the proposed addition (as it is larger than 700 square feet in area it requires a special permit). The garage doors would face, and be approximately 25 feet from, the property's western property boundary. It would be served by a bituminous paved driveway that would range between approximately 14 and 24 feet in width. The driveway would occupy much of the area between the expanded dwelling and that property boundary is currently occupied by lawn area and approximately nine mature trees, all of which would apparently be removed.

The proposed driveway would be served by a new 14-foot-wide curb cut off Sewell Street, near the northwest corner of the parcel. This new curb cut would be about 12-14 feet closer to the western property line than the existing curb cut also located on Sewell Street.

The Planning Department notes that the area of the paved driveway seems to exceed that which would likely be required for vehicles to maneuver in and out of the garage and suggests that the petitioner consider reducing the amount of paving.

# D. <u>Landscape Screening</u>

The landscape plan submitted with this petition appears to indicate that only one existing tree would remain and that a new decorative four-foot high steel fence would be installed around most of the site's periphery. It also includes references to proposed evergreen and shrub borders, hedges and, landscape walls, as well as a proposed vine arbor.

The Planning Department has some concern about the elimination of much of the existing vegetation, including the tree row along Prince Street and recommends that the petitioner provide additional details about the proposed landscape elements, including the number and types of trees and shrubs to be installed and, especially, more information about the proposed four-foot high steel fence. It further recommends that the petitioner be prepared to discuss these changes at the upcoming public hearing

#### IV. TECHNICAL REVIEW

## A. Technical Considerations (Chapter 30, Newton Zoning Ordinance):

The Zoning Review Memorandum provides an analysis of the proposal with regard to zoning (Attachment C). Based on the Memorandum, the petitioner is seeking a Special Permit per §7.3.3 of Section 30, to;

- exceed the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) (§3.1.3, §3.1.9)
- allow a garage exceeding 700 square feet (§3.4.2.B.1)

- allow a dormer that extends the second floor wall plane vertically (§1.5.4.G.2.a)
- allow a dormer that is greater than 50% of the wall plane below it (§1.5.4.G.2.b)
- allow a dormer within three feet of the intersection of the roofline and main building (§1.5.4.G.2.c)

# B. <u>Engineering Review:</u>

The proposal was reviewed by the Engineering Division and its comments are summarized in its attached memorandum (Attachment D). Among other comments, it notes that as the proposal includes a stormwater collection system to capture and infiltrate the runoff produced from the addition and a new driveway, an Operations and Maintenance Plan will be needed for the proposed system.

## C. Newton Historical Commission

On January 23, 2020, the Newton Historical Commission (NHC) waived the demolition delay based on approved plans with a condition the porch design be revised and approved by NHC staff. On June 29, 2020 NHC staff indicated the NHC would approve the current porch design. In the event the requested special permit is granted, the final plans will need NHC staff review and approval.

#### V. PETITIONER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The petitioner should be prepared to discuss and provide the additional information referred to above.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A: Zoning Map
Attachment B: Land Use Map

**Attachment C:** Zoning Review Memorandum

**Attachment D:** Engineering Division Memorandum





# ATTACHMENT B

Zoning

43 Prince St.

City of Newton, Massachusetts

# Legend









The information on this map is from the Newton Geographic Information System (GIS). The City of Newton cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information. Each user of this map is responsible for determining its suitability for his or her intended purpose. City departments will not necessarily approve applications based solely on GIS data.

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS Mayor - Ruthanne Fuller



Map Date: June 26, 2020

# ATTACHMENT C



# City of Newton, Massachusetts

Department of Planning and Development 1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459 Telephone (617) 796-1120 Telefax (617) 796-1142 TDD/TTY (617) 796-1089 www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath Director

# **ZONING REVIEW MEMORANDUM**

Date: April 29, 2020

To: John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services

From: Jane Santosuosso, Chief Zoning Code Official

Neil Cronin, Chief Planner for Current Planning

Cc: John B. Reichenbach, Applicant

Peter Sachs, Architect

Barney S. Heath, Director of Planning and Development

Jonah Temple, Associate City Solicitor

RE: Request to exceed FAR, to allow a garage with more than 700 square feet and relief from

the dimensional requirements for dormers

Applicant: John B. Reichenbach			
Site: 43 Prince Street	<b>SBL</b> : 32010 0006		
Zoning: SR1	Lot Area: 27,800 square feet		
Current use: Single-family dwelling	Proposed use: No change		

# **BACKGROUND:**

The property at 43 Prince Street consists of a 27,800 square foot corner lot improved with a single-family residence constructed in 1885 and a detached garage. The petitioners propose to raze the detached garage and construct a 4,532 square foot two and one-half story addition. The proposed changes require a special permit to exceed FAR, and for an oversized garage and dormers.

The following review is based on plans and materials submitted to date as noted below.

- Zoning Review Application, prepared by Peter Sachs, architect, dated 3/10/2020
- FAR Worksheet, submitted 3/10/2020
- Existing Site Plan, signed and stamped by Joseph R. Porter, surveyor, dated 10/22/2019, revised 12/12/2019
- Proposed Site Plan, signed and stamped by Joseph R. Porter, surveyor, dated 3/9/2020
- Architectural Plans, signed and stamped by Peter Sachs, architect, dated 2/24/2020

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE DETERMINATIONS:**

- 1. The petitioner intends to raze 701 square feet found in a detached garage and separate shed and construct a 2.5-story addition totaling 4,532 square feet, creating a total of 9,116 square feet. The existing FAR is .16, where .26 is the maximum allowed. The proposed addition results in an FAR of .33, exceeding the maximum allowed requiring a special permit pursuant to Sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.9.
- 2. The petitioners propose to raze the detached garage structure and construct an attached 867 square foot three-car garage. Per section 3.4.2.B.1, a special permit is required for a private garage in excess of 700 square feet in area.
- 3. The maximum allowable lot coverage in the SR1 zoning district for an old lot is 20% per section 3.1.3. The existing lot coverage is 12.1% and the proposed addition increases the lot coverage to 22.3%, exceeding the maximum allowed. Per section 1.5.2.D.2, the lot coverage requirements do not apply to the construction of a private garage in connection with a single- or two-family dwelling in existence on December 27, 1922. The proposed garage is 867 square feet, which equates to 3% lot coverage. Eliminating the 3% lot coverage of the garage renders the total proposed lot coverage 19.3%, which is less than the maximum allowed.
- 4. The petitioner proposes a dormer in the attic level on the southern-facing façade of the dwelling. The proposed dormer vertically continues a bay on the second story and mirrors an existing dormer on the wall plane. Per section 1.5.4.G.2.a, the roofline overhang must be continued between the dormer and the story next below so as not to appear to be an uninterrupted wall plane extending beyond two stories. The proposed dormer extends the existing second floor bay without interruption into the attic, requiring a special permit.
- 5. Per section 1.5.4.G.2.b a dormer may be no wider than 50% of the wall plane of the story next below it. The proposed dormer is the entire bay, and thus the entire wall plane of the story below, requiring a special permit.
- 6. Per section 1.5.4.G.2.c the vertical plane of the sidewall of a dormer may not be closer than three feet from the vertical plane of the intersection of the roof and the main building end wall nearest the dormer. The proposed dormer continues the vertical plane of the main building and is therefore less than three feet from the intersection of the roof and main building, requiring a special permit.

SR1 Zone	Required	Existing	Proposed
Lot Size	15,000 square feet	27,800 square feet	No change
Frontage	80 feet	202 feet	No change
Setbacks			
<ul> <li>Front (Prince St)</li> </ul>	25 feet	31.3 feet	No change
<ul> <li>Front (Sewall St)</li> </ul>	25 feet	39.9 feet	25.2 feet
• Side	12.5 feet	92.7 feet	35 feet
• Rear	25 feet	49.3 feet	25.1 feet
Max Number of Stories	2.5	2.5	No change
FAR	.26	.16	.32
Max Lot Coverage	20%	12.1%	22.3% (19.3% w/o garage)
Min. Open Space	65%	81.9%	71.2%

# 1. See "Zoning Relief Summary" below:

Zoning Relief Required			
Ordinance		Action Required	
§3.1.3,	Request to exceed FAR	S.P. per §7.3.3	
§3.1.9 §3.4.2.B.1	Request to allow a garage exceeding 700 square feet	S.P. per §7.3.3	
§1.5.4.G.2.a	To allow a dormer that extends the second floor wall plane vertically	S.P. per §7.3.3	
§1.5.4.G.2.b	To allow a dormer that is greater than 50% of the wall plane below it	S.P. per §7.3.3	
§1.5.4.G.2.c	To allow a dormer within three feet of the intersection of the roofline and main building	S.P. per §7.3.3	

# **Next Steps**

Please contact a Planner by calling 617.796.1120 to obtain a copy of the Special Permit Application. If there have been any changes made to the plans since receipt of your Zoning Review Memorandum you must inform the Zoning Code Official to ensure additional relief is not required. You will need an appointment with a Planner to file your Special Permit Application. **Incomplete applications will not be accepted.** 

# The following must be included when filing a Special Permit Application:

- 2. Two (2) copies of the completed Special Permit Application (signed by property owner)
- 3. Filing Fee (see Special Permit Application)
- 4. Two (2) copies of the Zoning Review Memorandum
- 5. Plans (Thirteen sets signed and stamped by a design professional). Each set shall contain:
  - Site Plans showing existing and proposed conditions (including topography as applicable)
  - Architectural plans showing existing and proposed conditions (including façade materials)
  - Landscape plan (as applicable)
- 6. One (1) Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Worksheet, (signed and stamped by a design professional)
- 7. One (1) copy of any previous special permits or variances on the property (as applicable)
- 8. One (1) copy of any other review/sign-off (Historic, Conservation, Tree Removal, etc. as applicable)
- 9. Two (2) electronic copes of the application with all above attachments (USB or CD)

Copies of all plans shall either be 8.5 x 11 or 11 x 17, except as requested by staff

Special Permit Sign (\$20 fee)

## Incomplete applications will delay the intake and review of your project.

Depending on the complexity of the project additional information may be requested to facilitate a full review of the application.

Has the proposed project been presented to and discussed with abutting property owners?

Y/N

# **ATTACHMENT D**

# CITY OF NEWTON Department of Public Works ENGINEERING DIVISION

# **MEMORANDUM**

To: Council Rick Lipof, Land Use Committee Chairman

From: John Daghlian, Associate City Engineer

Re: Special Permit – 43 Prince Street

Date: June 29, 2020

CC: Barney Heath, Director of Planning

Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director Lou Taverna, PE City Engineer Nadia Khan, Committee Clerk Neil Cronin, Chief Planner Michael Gleba, Sr. Planner

In reference to the above site, I have the following comments for a plan entitled:

43 Prince Street
Showing Existing Conditions
Prepared by: VTP Associates Inc.
Dated: March 3, 2020

# **Executive Summary**:

This permit entails a one-story addition to the existing single-family dwelling on a 27,800 square foot [0.63 acre] lot located on the corner of Prince Street and Sewall Street. The site is relatively flat having a high point at 169 - feet, near the southern property line and gently slopes towards the intersection of the two streets at elevation 162 - feet. The engineer has designed a stormwater collection system to capture and infiltrate the runoff produced from the addition and a new driveway, an existing detached garage will be razed to make accommodations for the new addition. However, an operations and Maintenance Plan is needed for the proposed system.

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Additionally, the plan indicates that new granite curbing and cement concrete sidewalks will be installed along the entire frontage, this will require the upgrading of the existing pedestrian curb cut [a.k.a. handicap ramp) at the corner of Prince Street & Sewall Street see below.



Finally, I recommend that the water service be updated as it dates to 1896.

# **Construction Management**:

- A construction management plan is needed for this project. At a minimum, it must address the following: staging site for construction materials and equipment, parking for construction workers vehicles, phasing of the project with anticipated completion dates and milestones, safety precautions, emergency contact personnel of the general contractor.
- 2. Catch basins within and downstream of the construction zone will be required to have siltation control installed for the duration of the project and must be identified on the site plan.

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# <u>Drainage</u>:

- 1. An Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan for the long-term maintenance of the proposed stormwater management facilities needs to be drafted and submitted for review. Once approved the O&M must be adopted by the applicant/property owner, incorporated into the deeds; and recorded at the Middlesex Registry of Deeds. A copy of the recording instrument shall be submitted to the Engineering Division.
- 2. It is imperative to note that the ownership, operation, and maintenance of the proposed drainage system and all appurtenances including but not limited to the drywells, catch basins, trench drains, and pipe(s) are the sole responsibility of the property owner(s).

#### <u>Sanitary Sewer & Domestic Water Service(s)</u>:

- 1. All new sewer service(s) shall be pressure tested in accordance to the City Construction Specifications & Standards and inspected via Closed Circuit Television CCTV inspection after installation is completed. A copy of the video inspection and written report shall be submitted to the City Engineer or his representative. The sewer service will NOT be accepted until the two methods of inspection are completed AND witnessed by a representative of the Engineering Division. A Certificate of Occupancy will not be recommended until these tests are completed to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.
- 2. With the exception of natural gas service(s), all utility trenches within the right of way shall be backfilled with Control Density Fill (CDF) Excavatable Type I-E up to within 18-inches of the asphalt binder level, after which Dense Grade Gravel compacted to 95 % Proctor Testing shall be placed over the CDF. Details of this requirement is the Engineering Division website "Standard Construction Details".
- 3. All water services shall be chlorinated, and pressure tested in accordance to the AWWA and the City Construction Standards & Specifications prior to coming online. These tests MUST be witnessed by a representative of the Engineering Division.

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4. Approval of the final configurations of the water service(s) shall be determined by the Utilities Division, the engineer of record shall submit a plan to the Director of Utilities for approval.

# General:

- 1. All trench excavation shall comply with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 82A, Trench Excavation Safety Requirements, and OSHA Standards to protect the general public from unauthorized access to unattended trenches or excavations. Trench Excavation Permit is required prior to any construction. This applies to all trenches on public and private property. This note shall be incorporated onto the final plans.
- 2. All tree removal shall comply with the City's Tree Ordinance.
- 3. The contractor of record is responsible for contacting the Engineering Division and scheduling an appointment 48-hours prior to the date when the utilities will be made available for an inspection of water services, sewer services and drainage system installation. The utility in question shall be fully exposed for the Inspector to view, backfilling shall only take place when the City Engineer's Inspector has given their approval. This note shall be incorporated onto the final plans.
- 4. The applicant shall apply for a Building Permit with the Inspectional Services Department prior to ANY construction.
- 5. Before requesting a Certificate of Occupancy, an As Built plan shall be submitted to the Engineering Division in both digital and paper format. The plan shall show all utilities and final grades, any easements and improvements and limits of restoration. The plan shall include profiles of the various new utilities including but not limited to rim & invert elevations (City of Newton Datum), slopes of pipes, pipe materials, and swing ties from permanent building corners. The as built shall be stamped by both a Massachusetts Registered Professional Engineer and Registered Professional Land Surveyor. Once the as built plan is received the Engineering Division shall perform a final site inspection and then make a determination to issue a Certificate of Occupancy. This note shall be incorporated onto the final plans.
- 6. All site work including trench restoration, sidewalk, curb ,apron and loam border (where applicable) shall be completed before a Certificate of Occupancy is issued. *This note shall be incorporated onto the final plans*.

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- 7. The contractor of record shall contact the Newton Police Department 48-hours in advanced and arrange for Police Detail to help residents and commuters navigate around the construction zone.
- 8. If any changes from the final approved design plan that are required due to unforeseen site conditions, the contractor of record shall contact the design engineer of record and submit revised design and stamped full scale plans for review and approval prior to continuing with construction.

Note: If the plans are updated it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all City Departments [ISD, Conservation Commission, Planning and Engineering] involved in the permitting and approval process with complete and consistent plans.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 617-796-1023.

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