

Department of Planning and Zoning

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TO: Design Advisory Board
FROM: Scott Gustin
DATE: April 28, 2015
RE: 15-0938SD, 380 Colchester Ave

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Zone: RL Ward: 1E
Owner/Representative: Nathaniel Hayward

Request: Change of use of primary dwelling from 2 residential units to 3 residential units.
Subdivision of property into 3 separate lots.

OVERVIEW:

The applicant is requesting approval for a minor 3-lot subdivision. Two new vacant building lots would result from the subdivision. The existing duplex would be retained and expanded for conversion to a triplex. The existing dual curb cut driveway would be reconfigured into two separate shared driveways. The property is relatively large at 1.43 acres, but much of it is wooded slope down to Riverside Avenue to the west. A similar subdivision was approved at 366 Colchester Avenue in 2012. As this subdivision would result in just 3 lots, it is eligible for combined preliminary/final plat review per Sec. 10.1.7 of the CDO. Note that conversion to a triplex will require conditional use review as part of the subdivision application.

This proposal underwent sketch plan review with the Development Review Board on July 15, 2014. Comments from the DRB centered on traffic safety (especially sight lines along Colchester Avenue) and reduction of pavement around the would-be triplex.

ARTICLE 6: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STANDARDS

Part 1, Land Division Design Standards

Sec. 6.1.2, Review Standards

(a) Protection of important natural features

The subdivision itself will have no impact on important natural features. The two new lots (2 & 3) extend into the wooded portions of the site and, particularly on lot 3, down the slope. Proposed building envelopes reflect only the minimum required setbacks. More definitive building envelopes reflecting site sensitivities such as the steep slopes should be defined to better guide eventual development on these two lots.

Much of the property, including all of the slope, is wooded. As required the project plans depict clearing limitations and specimen trees (i.e. > 30" caliper). While specimen trees are noted, it appears that they will all be removed within the overall clearing area. Doing so is discouraged. Some of the specimen trees need to be removed to clear the building site. It appears, however, that some of the identified specimen trees could be retained. Specimen trees should be retained insofar

as possible, and a tree protection plan must be submitted as part of any construction plan for development of either new lot.

(b) Block size and arrangement

Not applicable.

(c) Arrangement of Lots

Lots 2 and 3 will be regularly shaped rectangular lots. The built area of lot 1 will be regularly shaped as well; however, it will have a large rear appendage consisting of the unbuildable slope. Lot sizes vary widely along Colchester Avenue. The proposed lots would be within the established size range.

(d) Connectivity of streets within the city street grid

While no new streets are proposed, the new lots will access Colchester Avenue with shared driveways. Given the grades onsite and the curvature of Colchester Avenue along the properties' frontage, adequacy and safety of vehicular access onto the street is a concern. The proposed driveway locations will be subject to review and approval by the Department of Public Works. Comments from DPW have not yet been received but are anticipated prior to review by the Development Review Board.

(e) Connectivity of sidewalks, trails, and natural systems

Not applicable.

Part 2, Site Plan Design Standards

Sec. 6.2.2, Review Standards

(a) Protection of important natural features

See Sec. 6.1.2 (a) above.

(b) Topographical alterations

Much of the property slopes. Immediately along Colchester Avenue, the grade slopes downward from south to north. Further back, the property slopes to the west, down to Riverside Avenue. The existing duplex and proposed addition sit on a comparatively level portion of the site and will require only modest grading. More significant cut-and-fill is associated with the reworked driveways. The general topography of the site, however, will remain as it presently is.

(c) Protection of important public views

There are no important public views from or through the property.

(d) Protection of important cultural resources

The property is not included in the city's map of archeologically sensitive areas, nor does it contain any specific archaeologically significant site points.

(e) Supporting the use of alternative energy

No alternative energy is incorporated into the project design. The proposed addition and subdivision; however, do not preclude such utilization in the future.

(f) Brownfield sites

The property is not included on the Vermont DEC Hazardous Site List.

(g) Provide for nature's events

A progressive stormwater management system is proposed. A series of bio-retention areas (i.e. rain gardens) will be created. These areas will capture stormwater runoff and infiltrate a portion of it into the ground. Runoff that does not infiltrate will at least receive treatment in the rain gardens prior to discharging into the city stormwater system. Review and approval by the Conservation Board and the Stormwater Administrator will be required.

An erosion prevention and sediment control plan has been provided. Retention of sediment onsite is particularly important on this sloped site adjacent to a sloping roadway. As with the stormwater management plan, the erosion prevention and sediment control plan is subject to review and approval by the Conservation Board and the Stormwater Administrator.

Sufficient room remains available onsite for seasonal snow storage.

(h) Building location and orientation

Building location and orientation remains unchanged. The duplex presently faces Colchester Avenue. Upon addition and conversion to a triplex, it will continue to face Colchester Avenue with its well-defined front entry. The conversion to a triplex involves an addition to the side and rear of the building. The proposed construction will not affect the present building location and orientation.

(i) Vehicular access

The duplex is presently served by a half-circle driveway with two curb cuts on Colchester Avenue. As proposed, the two curb cuts would be retained, but the driveway would be replaced with two separate driveways. Although no buildings are to be constructed on lots 2 and 3 as part of this application, the two new driveways are intended to provide access to them. They will also provide access to the triplex. The shared driveway between lot 3 and lot 1 (the triplex) is necessary and provides sufficient access to both. The shared driveway between lot 1 and lot 2 may not need to be shared or be as large as presently proposed. Moving this driveway entirely onto lot 2 would provide the necessary access to lot 2 while also enabling the deletion of substantial asphalt from the plan. This arrangement would; however, require a parking waiver for the triplex. As proposed, 3 parking spaces will be provided in the attached garage with room for 3 more in the driveway up to the garage. The parking standards under Article 8 prohibit counting the parking spaces in a tandem arrangement such as this and would result in needing a 3-space parking waiver. In practice; however, 6 spaces would be provided (3 in the garage and 3 in the driveway). If this option is pursued, construction of the driveway on lot 2 need not occur until a home is constructed on the lot. In any event, the proposed sight lines (demonstrated with clear sight triangles on the plans) will be reviewed by the Department of Public Works.

(j) Pedestrian access

A new front walkway will be installed to connect the existing front entry to the public sidewalk.

(k) Accessibility for the handicapped

Handicap access to the residence is feasible. Accessibility will be as required by the ADA as administered through the city's building code.

(l) Parking and circulation

Surface and structured parking will be provided. The driveway configuration as presently proposed demonstrates sufficient room for vehicles to turn around and avoid backing out onto Colchester Avenue. The proposed triplex will require 6 parking spaces (2 per unit). As proposed, 3 of these spaces will be provided for in the garage and another three will be provided for in surface parking spaces on the shared driveway between lots 1 and 2. As noted in criterion (i) above, removal of these 3 surface spaces is recommended. As a matter of practice, 3 surface spaces are available in the other driveway leading up to the garage.

(m) Landscaping and fences

Proposed landscaping is centered on the proposed rain gardens. A mix of water-tolerant shrubs and perennials will be planted within the gardens. The proposed landscaping is a relatively rare example of functional green space. It will serve to beautify the site while also contributing to improved water quality.

(n) Public plazas and open space

No public spaces or open space are included in this proposal.

(o) Outdoor lighting

No outdoor lighting details have been provided. Presumably, the garage doors and new rear entry will be illuminated. Proposed outdoor lighting fixtures must be depicted on the project plans, and specification sheets must be provided.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design

No new utilities are evident in the project plans. Existing utility lines will continue to serve the proposed triplex. No provision for trash and recycling is evident. A development of this relatively small size will likely utilize totes, but confirmation is needed.

Part 3, Architectural Design Standards

Sec. 6.3.2, Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment

1. Massing, Height, and Scale

The proposed addition is set to the side and rear of the existing building. Along Colchester Avenue, the proposed addition is fairly narrow and steps down the slope. Stepping down provides a distinct separation between the original and new construction and serves to break up the overall massing of the residence. The bulk of the addition is located behind the existing home and will be minimally visible from the street. Even so, the mass and scale of this rear addition is consistent with that of the existing home. Height of the addition is appropriately lower than that of the existing home.

2. Roofs and Rooflines

The addition will have a gable roof, consistent with that of the existing home. Orientation remains consistent along Colchester Avenue and is rotated 90 degrees for the rear addition.

3. Building Openings

Windows in the existing home will be replaced with clad wooden units. These same windows will also be installed in the addition. Fenestration is consistent throughout.

(b) Protection of important architectural resources

The existing duplex is not included on any historic register. The proposed renovation and addition will not adversely impact Burlington's important architectural resources.

(c) Protection of important public views

See 6.2.2 (c) above.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge

As noted above, the location and orientation of the residence will remain unchanged. It has a well-defined front entry, and a new front walkway will be constructed to link with the public sidewalk. The circular driveway will be removed, thereby opening up green space to serve as a front lawn and rain gardens. The addition is set to the side and rear of the existing home. It will not adversely impact the street edge of the home.

(e) Quality of materials

The vinyl siding on the existing home will be removed, and the wooden clapboards and trim underneath will be repaired and repainted. As noted previously, the existing windows will be removed and replaced with clad wooden units. The new addition will be clad in fiber cement clapboards and trim. Matching clad wooden windows will be installed, as will matching standing seam metal roofing. PVC fascia will be installed along the eaves. The proposed materials are high in quality and durability. Note that materials for the rear steps are not specified and must be.

(f) Reduce energy utilization

The proposed addition and renovations must comply with the current energy efficiency requirements of the city and of the State of Vermont.

(g) Make advertising features complimentary to the site

No advertising features are included in the proposal.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design

No vents or utility meters are evident on the elevation drawings. Such items must be depicted and located on secondary elevations.

(i) Make spaces safe and secure

Building entries should be illuminated. Lighting details are needed as noted above.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Review and forward to the Development Review Board subject to the following conditions:

1. Definitive building envelopes, avoiding the steep slopes, should be defined on lots 2 and 3.
2. Specimen trees should be retained insofar as possible, and a tree protection plan should be submitted as part of any construction plan for development of lot 2 or 3.
3. Driveway locations and sight lines should be evaluated by the Department of Public Works.
4. The shared lot 1 & 2 driveway should be shifted entirely onto lot 2, and the accompanying 3 surface spaces for the triplex should be eliminated. Construction of the lot 2 driveway should take place only upon construction of a home on lot 2.
5. Outdoor lighting details are needed. Lighting fixture locations need to be indicated, and fixture specification sheets need to be provided.

6. Provision for trash and recycling should be noted.
7. Materials for the rear steps should be noted.
8. Utility meter and vent locations should be noted on the elevation drawings and placed on secondary elevations.