

## Department of Planning and Zoning

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### MEMORANDUM

**To:** The Design Advisory Board  
**From:** Mary O'Neil, AICP, Senior Planner  
**RE:** ZP16-0406CA, 69 Scarff Avenue  
**Date:** October 13, 2015

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**File:** 16-0406CA/CU  
**Location:** 69 Scarff Avenue  
**Zone:** RL **Ward:** 5S  
**Date application accepted:** September 23, 2015  
**Applicant/ Owner:** Matthew & Julia Leach  
**Request:** Construct new single family home on vacant lot.  
**Estimated Construction Cost:** \$475,000.

#### Background:

- Zoning Permit 14-0831CA/CU; construct new single family home on vacant lot. May 2014. Permit relinquished May 2015.
- Zoning Permit 13-1283LL, Lot line adjustment with adjacent single family house lot at 75 Scarff Avenue. June 2013.



**Overview:** Although a previous permit was approved to construct a new single family home, that project did not advance. This is a new application with a new design for a single family residence.

Although the proposed use is a permitted use, the nonconforming lot frontage of 52.09' will require conditional use review.

**Part 1: Land Division Design Standards**

Not applicable.

**Part 2: Site Plan Design Standards**

**Sec. 6.2.2 Review Standards**

**(a) Protection of Important Natural Features:**

This is almost entirely a grassy lawn. No significant natural features have been identified.

**(b) Topographical Alterations:**

There are no notable topographic alterations proposed; the site is flat.

**(c) Protection of Important Public Views:**

There are no protected public views from this site. Not applicable.

**(d) Protection of Important Cultural Resources:**

*Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Archeological sites likely to yield information important to the city's or the region's pre-history or history shall be evaluated, documented, and avoided whenever feasible. Where the proposed development involves sites listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8(b).*

There are no historic structures or sites on this parcel. Not applicable.

**(e) Supporting the Use of Renewable Energy Resources:**

There is nothing within the application to suggest the use of wind, water, geothermal, solar or other alternative energies. Southerly exposure will enhance the proposed rooftop deck. Typical design options that would acknowledge and utilize passive solar gain (increased glazing on south facing elevations) have not been exercised. Windows there are limited.

**(f) Brownfield Sites:**

None identified. Not applicable.

**(g) Provide for nature's events:**

*Special attention shall be accorded to stormwater runoff so that neighboring properties and/or the public stormwater drainage system are not adversely affected. All development and site disturbance shall follow applicable city and state erosion and stormwater management guidelines in accordance with the requirements of Art 5, Sec 5.5.3.*

*Design features which address the effects of rain, snow, and ice at building entrances, and to provisions for snow and ice removal or storage from circulation areas shall also be incorporated.*

One door is clearly articulated; on the east side (which is presumed to be the primary entrance.) It appears there is a modest roof overhang, but difficult to tell as the door surround is dark. The applicant shall define. There may be another (sliding door?) entrance on the rear addition, first floor east side, also surrounded by dark siding and perhaps under an overhang.

The stylized roofline purposefully lacks an eave, a design feature which frequently becomes problematic in winter climates. Although the plan provides for a sleek, clean volume, water and snow issues tend to plague these designs. Eave overhangs functionally protect exterior doors, windows, and siding from rain; they shade windows when solar heat gain is unwelcome. Another advantage is that they can help keep basements and crawl spaces dry. A house lacking eave overhangs can overheat in the summer, can suffer from water entry problems at windows and doors, and can have premature siding rot.

If the applicant proposes using the roof deck in the winter, a plan for snow storage will need to be identified so it is not thrown on neighboring properties, which are approximately 5' away.

**(h) Building Location and Orientation:**

The building is a gable front orientation to the public street, referencing a typical residential orientation. The building front is aligned with the front façade of neighboring buildings, reinforcing the street edge.

The site plan has been altered from the original submitted to conform to the ordinance requirements.

The street facing garage wall is set back approximately 32' from the front property line, meeting the required 25' setback.

The garage entrance constitutes more than 50% of the width of the street facing façade; this may be permitted if the garage entrance is within a single roofline and wholly integrated into the overall design with living space above. It is a requirement that the primary pedestrian entrance offers a clear and welcoming entrance from the street. In this case, the primary entrance is not visible from the street, but wrapped around the east side under a recess. This standard state: *Principal buildings shall have their main entrance facing and clearly identifiable from the public street.* A clear and welcoming primary entrance is a requirement for allowing a street facing garage wall to utilize more than 50% of the building front, as this project proposes.

This standard also requires that each bay of the garage shall have a separate entrance door of no more than 10' in width. As proposed, the garage door will exceed this standard.

**1. Vehicular Access:**

There is currently no curb cut to the property. A curb cut permit will be required from the Department of Public Works.

A driveway is proposed directly from Scarff Avenue, which appears likely to require the removal of 2 street trees within the right-of-way.

The driveway is proposed to meet the 18' limitation for residential driveways.

The driveway and parking area are required to meet a minimum 5' side yard setback.

**(j) Pedestrian Access:**

A walkway is proposed between the public sidewalk and the primary entrance. As noted, the entrance must be street facing and clearly identifiable from the street.

**(k) Accessibility for the Handicapped:**

This is not a requirement for a single family home, but encouraged. Vermont “visibility” standards may apply.

**(l) Parking and Circulation:**

For a single family residence, 2 parking spaces will be required. The application proposes a two car garage, and a driveway that could accommodate tandem parking. A curb cut permit will be required from the Department of Public Works.

**(m) Landscaping and Fences:**

A landscaping plan will be required prior to review by the Development Review Board. It appears that two street trees may be removed to accommodate the new driveway. Consultation with the Department of Public Works and specifically the city arborist will be required to confirm the acceptability of the plan, and to arrange for replacement street trees that conform to the city Master Tree Plan.

**(n) Public Plazas and Open Space:**

None are required from this private parcel. Not applicable.

**(o) Outdoor Lighting:**

*Where exterior lighting is proposed the applicant shall meet the lighting performance standards as per Sec 5.5.2.*

More information about site lighting, with fixture and lumens information shall be required prior to review by the DRB.

**(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design:**

*Exterior storage areas, machinery and equipment installations, service and loading areas, utility meters and structures, mailboxes, and similar accessory structures shall utilize setbacks, plantings, enclosures and other mitigation or screening methods to minimize their auditory and visual impact on the public street and neighboring properties to the extent practicable.*

*Utility and service enclosures and screening shall be coordinated with the design of the principal building, and should be grouped in a service court away from public view. On-site utilities shall be placed underground whenever practicable. Trash and recycling bins and dumpsters shall be located, within preferably, or behind buildings, enclosed on all four (4) sides to prevent blowing trash, and screened from public view.*

*Any development involving the installation of machinery or equipment which emits heat, vapor, fumes, vibration, or noise shall minimize, insofar as practicable, any adverse impact on neighboring properties and the environment pursuant to the requirements of Article 5, Part 4 Performance Standards.*

New utility lines must be buried. All meters, mailboxes, mechanical equipment and utility connections must be identified on the site plan and/or building elevations as appropriate. Screening may be required for meters and HVAC equipment. Trash and recycling are proposed to be located within the garage.

**Part 3: Architectural Design Standards**  
**Sec. 6.3.2 Review Standards**

**(a) Relate development to its environment:**

**1. Massing, Height and Scale:**

*In low and medium density residential districts, the height and massing of existing residential buildings are the most important consideration when evaluating the compatibility of additions and infill development.*

The proposed new structure will be limited in width by the narrow lot and required setbacks. The proposed 2 ½ story gabled streetfront quickly ascends to three floors by mid-parcel, with an elongated structure significantly larger in footprint than neighboring properties.

*Buildings should maintain consistent massing and perceived building height at the street level, regardless of the overall bulk or height of the building. Buildings should maintain a relationship to the human scale through the use of architectural elements, variations of proportions and materials, and surface articulations. Large expanses of undifferentiated building wall along the public street or sidewalk shall be avoided. The apparent mass and scale of buildings shall be broken into smaller parts by articulating separate volumes reflecting existing patterns in the streetscape, and should be proportioned to appear more vertical than horizontal in order to avoid monotonous repetition.*

The modernist vocabulary eschews architectural detailing, preferring to speak as a punctuated volume with large areas of vertical sheathing. The style represented chafes as the specifics of this standard; there is little relationship with the human scale, no expressed entry, no surface articulations visible from the streetfront. The front, in fact, looks like a secondary elevation. The westerly wall remains largely undifferentiated. The easterly façade offers greater interest in the modernized pavilion announced in darker, horizontal sheathing which is referenced in the rear wing. The building appears designed with the most expressive, interesting façade facing a neighbor and the business side facing the street.



**2. Roofs and Rooflines.**

The project location is within a neighborhood of traditional domestic style architecture featuring eaves front gabled and more complex hip, dormered and shed roofs. The modern aesthetic proposed tips it hat to the gable front orientation, but evolves into a flat roofed structure by the easterly projecting pavilion and rear one story.

### 3. *Building Openings*

Windows are rhythmically placed and consistent in size within the building volume. A third floor assembly of windows and patio door are largely inconspicuous from the street, but should make available an westerly view with an evening light advantage.



As noted, entry doors are not clearly visible from the street, and one must be.

#### **(b) Protection of Important Architectural Resources:**

*Burlington’s architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Where the proposed development involves buildings listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8. The introduction of new buildings to a historic district listed on a state or national register of historic places shall make every effort to be compatible with nearby historic buildings.*

Not applicable.

#### **(c) Protection of Important Public Views:**

Not applicable.

#### **(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge:**

The austere design and the centrality of the garage dehumanizes the building front; the principal entrance invisible, there is no landscaping or porch to offer warmth and shelter, nothing to soften the harsh edge of the design from the streetfront. The lack of some formalized entrance (enclosure as a porch, shelter under eaves, visible entry) hardens the design, turning a cold shoulder to the street. In a residential neighborhood that is recognized for its ambiance, its warmth, and its traditional

neighborhood environment, this proposal stands out as abbreviated, aloof and inhospitable. Clean, yes. Inviting, no.

**(e) Quality of materials:**

*All development shall maximize the use of highly durable building materials that extend the life cycle of the building, and reduce maintenance, waste, and environmental impacts. Such materials are particularly important in certain highly trafficked locations such as along major streets, sidewalks, loading areas, and driveways. Efforts to incorporate the use of recycled content materials and building materials and products that are extracted and/or manufactured within the region are highly encouraged.*

Submission materials include consumer-oriented data from a major manufacturer. Specific cut sheets for lighting, windows and doors have not been provided. No information about proposed exterior sheathing is included, the specifics of which will be required prior to DRB review.

**(f) Reduce energy utilization:**

All new construction is required to meet the Guidelines for Energy Efficient Construction pursuant to the requirements of Article VI. Energy Conservation, Section 8 of the City of Burlington Code of Ordinances.

*New structures should take advantage of solar access where available, and shall undertake efforts to reduce the impacts of shadows cast on adjacent buildings where practical, in order to provide opportunities for the use of active and passive solar utilization.*



As noted, the design chooses not to take advantage of the available southerly exposure for passive solar gain. Similarly, the absence of roof overhangs may increase summer cooling costs (although in winter, the lack of window shading may allow more natural light, balancing the negative impact.)

Shadows are not anticipated to immediately present negative impact to adjacent properties. The third floor element is likely to cast a shadow on the garage area of 75 Scarff Avenue, not living space.

**(g) Make advertising features complementary to the site:**

No signage is proposed. Not applicable.

**(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design:**

See Section 6.2.2. (l), above.

**(i) Make spaces secure and safe:**

The proposed building must comply with all building and life safety code as defined by the building inspector and fire marshal.

**Items for the Board's consideration:**

1. At least 7 days prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall pay to the City Treasurer's Office or Planning and Zoning office impact fees as calculated by staff based on the net new square footage of the proposed development.
2. A landscaping plan will be required prior to review by the Development Review Board.
3. A lighting plan with fixture and illumination information will be required prior to review by the Development Review Board.
4. A new EPSC plan specific to this development will require approval of the stormwater engineer.
5. Setbacks will have to meet Table 4.4.5-3 of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance.
6. Driveway width is limited to 18'.
7. Each bay of the garage shall have a garage door not exceeding 10' in width.
8. The principal entry must face the street, offering a "clear and welcoming entrance."
9. A curb cut permit from the Department of Public Works is required.
10. A State of Vermont wastewater permit is required.