

Description of Proposed Special Permit 55 Maple Street, Acton

In July we moved to 55 Maple Street, a small (26' x 26') single-bedroom house built in 1955, because of the attractive neighborhood and the easy commute to the schools where we teach. Currently, the single-story "cinder-block" home, though charming and cozy, does not fit in well with Maple Street's mostly older farmhouse-style homes. We propose to renovate the interior and exterior, adding a second story within the existing footprint as well as a modest deck. This will make more living space for us, adding a bedroom and an office, while also greatly improving the aesthetics of the house and bringing it in line with the architectural style of the neighborhood. We also want to bring the house up to modern building codes and make it much more energy efficient.

Like almost all of Maple and Martin Streets, which were designed in 1860 as one of America's first commuter subdivisions, our lot size and front setback do not conform to current "R-2" zoning code. So a special permit is required to add more than 15% of floor area. The lot is under 9,000 square feet, and though the front setback is more generous than most on the street, it's still only 20 feet. We propose no change to that front setback but do propose to replace the current narrow cement front step with a wider one made of composite decking. We also propose to eliminate the existing side deck and concrete patio, creating more separation between our house and the nearest neighbor's lot (20' instead of the current 13'). The proposed new back deck has an ample setback and no rear abutter (our lot backs up to the train tracks).

55 Maple Street is now a 676-square-foot single story plus a storage attic and unfinished basement used for storage and utilities. Our proposal is to add a 676-square-foot second story with a storage attic, making no changes to the basement. On the exterior, we propose to transform the cement block cottage into a colonial farmhouse with clapboard style siding, all new energy-efficient divided-lite windows and doors, and traditional trim details. Overall, this would be a very positive improvement similar to several recent and current projects here in the neighborhood of the new train station.

We are deeply appreciative of the help and advice the department staff have given during their preliminary review, and ask the board to please support our application.

Sincerely,

Chiara L. Bubin (owner) and
Dick T. Oliver (domestic partner)