



Planning Department

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sherry Dong
Chairwoman, City of Boston Board of Appeal

FROM: Tharika Lecamwasam
Regulatory Planning & Zoning

DATE: October 29, 2025

RE: Planning Department Recommendations

Please find attached, for your information, Planning Department recommendations for the November 06, 2025 Board of Appeal's Hearing.

Also included are the Board Memos for:
51 to 53 Brookline AV Boston 02215

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.



Case	BOA1759609
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-08-06
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	72 Leyden ST East Boston 02128
Parcel ID	0101809000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	East Boston Neighborhood EBR-2.5
Zoning Article	53
Project Description	Addition of a half bathroom to the first floor common area in an existing three-unit residential building
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Use Forbidden

Planning Context:

The site is located in a residential neighborhood in East Boston. The surrounding properties are two- to three-unit buildings. The proposed project is an internal renovation that would be within the existing building footprint of a three-unit, four-story building.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project seeks relief for one zoning violation. The site is an existing three-family residential building in a two-family residential zone. The proposed design does not increase unit count, and the internal renovation does not impact the urban fabric of the street. The City has a vested interest in retaining existing housing units as an anti-displacement strategy; the use violation is recommended for relief.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1759609, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1772272
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-09-04
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	364 Main ST Charlestown 02129
Parcel ID	0202546000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Charlestown Neighborhood 3F-2000
Zoning Article	62
Project Description	Proposed project would extend the existing livable space into the property's basement; the newly finished basement will include a new mechanical room.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive CFROD Applicability

Planning Context:

Charlestown's residential core is characterized by continuous blocks of brick rowhouses, many dating back more than a century. These consistent, masonry buildings accommodate a mix of housing types ranging from single-family to small multi-family dwellings. Main Street functions both as a neighborhood commercial corridor and a principal north-south route through Charlestown. The subject property, 364 Main Street, was constructed in 1870 and currently operates as a single-family residence on a residential block of Main Street composed of uniform, red-brick, three-story buildings with basements visible through sidewalk-level windows set in concrete bases.

The proposed project involves no exterior alterations and maintains the property's existing single-family use. The scope is limited to finishing the basement to extend the existing livable area, resulting in a modest increase in FAR.

Although 364 Main Street lies within the Coastal Flood Resiliency Overlay District (CFROD), the proposed work does not meet the threshold that requires CFROD review under Article 80; the district's objectives provide critical planning context. The CFROD is mapped in areas that are vulnerable to future flooding under sea level rise; this property and below grade spaces like a basement are particularly vulnerable to this risk.



Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project results in one dimensional violation related to excessive FAR. The project proposes the creation of 680 square feet of living space in the currently unfinished basement, increasing the property's FAR from 1.8 to 2.3.

The 3F-2000 Subdistrict permits a maximum FAR of 2.0, and many adjacent properties already approach this threshold, with reported FAR values ranging from 1.8 to 1.9. While the proposed FAR increase constitutes a minor dimensional violation and would not alter the visual or physical character of the block, a variance is not recommended for this violation because of the expansion of livable area below grade at any area at risk for future flooding.

Although the proposal does not expand the building footprint, the planned basement conversion introduces new occupiable space below the Design Flood Elevation. The CFROD is intended to protect occupants and structures from flood risks associated with sea level rise and climate change. In order to protect current and future residents from the impacts of sea level rise and flooding, the Planning Department does not support the creation of new residential space below the DFE.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1772272, The Planning Department recommends DENIAL WITHOUT PREJUDICE on account of FAR violations due to proposed living space below the Design Flood Elevation. Proponent should consider a project that does not include living space below the Design Flood Elevation.

Reviewed,

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Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1783484
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-09-26
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	100 City Hall PZ Boston 02108
Parcel ID	0302897000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Government Center/Markets Sears Crescent Protection Area
Zoning Article	6-4
Project Description	The proponent is seeking the removal of petitioner-only provisos established in 2013 that allowed for a then conditional use to include a restaurant with takeout. The proposed project will include renovating the restaurant and adding outdoor seating for up to 8 patrons.
Relief Type	Conditional Use
Violations	Other Protectional Conditions

Planning Context:

The proposed is an exempt property in the Sears Crescent Protection Area of the Government Center/Markets Zoning District. Directly within City Hall Plaza, this parcel is subject to Article 45 of the zoning code. The proposed project sits less than 100 feet from the Government Center MBTA Station headhouse, and is integrated into the plaza design with retail facing north towards the landing zone where people exit from the Green and Blue Lines. Other commercial retailers within the Sears Crescent Building include Dunkin Donuts and Wishing Cup; banking establishments such as Commonwealth Bank, Citizens Bank, and a LibertyX Bitcoin ATM; an escape room, and general office uses.

Cocobeat, the current retailer occupying 100 City Hall Plaza is a locally-owned small business health-food cafe that offers smoothies, juices, and light fare like avocado toasts, granola, and quinoa bowls.

Zoning to implement the recommendations of PLAN: Downtown, which was recently passed by the Zoning Commission on October 22, 2025, removes takeout as a Conditional Use, making it Allowed as part of the Restaurant Use.

Zoning Analysis:



The refusal letter calls out Article 6-4, Other Conditions Necessary as Protection. Article 6-4 mentions special conditions that could include: front, rear, or side yards that exceed the minimum; lacking screening of parking areas from adjoining areas; modification of exterior features; limiting the size, number of occupants, method of operation, and extent of facilities; regulation of traffic features; or off-street parking beyond the minimum. This text was amended last in 2024 and has streamlined guidance for conditional approval, none of which are explicitly mentioned in the existing proviso. Removal of the proviso is warranted on the basis that it is in conflict with other, newer portions of the code.

Article 45-14 of the zoning code regulates the Government Center/Market District ground floor uses and includes things like Bakeries and Pastry Shops, Cafes, Diners, Delicatessen stores, and other restaurants, not including take-out uses except as allowed in Section 45-14.3(u). A retailer like Cocobeat constitutes an Allowed Use under the current zoning code.

Section 45-14.3(u) states that Allowed Accessory Uses for the purpose of food service include, sale over the counter, wholly incidental to a use listed under Section 45-14.3, of food or drink prepared on premises for off-premises consumption, provided that such use is accessory to a hotel or restaurant use if, as so sold, such food or drink is ready for take-out. The addition of outdoor seating represents an accessory use to an existing Allowed Restaurant and take out use in this area, and is, too, allowed by the zoning code.

The conditional use to change occupancy to include restaurant with takeout was approved for this proponent with the following provisos:

- That the use extend only to Cocobeat
- That all paper products display the name and logo of the establishment
- That a solar-powered compacting trash receptacle be provided that is consistent with the existing street furniture
- That deliveries not be made during peak traffic hours of 7:00-9:00am and 4:00-6:00pm
- That garbage be stored in appropriate rodent-proof facilities and put out for pick up one half hour before collection

-That plans with particular attention to signage be submitted to the BRA for design review approval

BOA1783484

2025-11-06

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Relief by way of removal of this proviso poses no adverse effects to the property and surrounding community pursuant to the conditional use criteria in Article 6-4. The proposed would continue to be subject to the Specific Design Requirements laid out in Section 45-16 and 45-17. The removal of “petitioner only” provisos and extensions of nonconforming takeout uses was recently completed as a part of recent zoning reforms.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1783484, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

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Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1702910
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-03-25
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	93 Charter ST Boston 02113
Parcel ID	0301976000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	North End Neighborhood MFR
Zoning Article	54
Project Description	Add a staircase connecting the existing roof deck to the top of the existing headhouse and add metal railing around the top of head house.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Roof Structure Restrictions

Planning Context:

The Restricted Roof District: North End Neighborhood ensures that new development does not overwhelm the existing residential fabric of Boston's North End. Roof decks are incredibly common structures on immediately surrounding buildings, even those a full story taller than 93 Charter St. Roof decks range in size from small rectangular structures with fencing around them to completely finished roofs, and often have prominent head houses to provide access to the roof level. The proposed project here takes advantage of 93 Charter St.'s existing head house to maximize activated open space on the property.

The subject parcel has immediate proximity, within 100', to both Copp's Hill Terrace and Copp's Hill Burying Ground.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project incurs one dimensional violation due limitations placed on building and roof structure height from the Restricted Roof District: North End Neighborhood. In an MFR Zoning Subdistrict, building height is limited to 55'. Currently, the bottom of the existing head house sits at 54'-1" and the metal railing is proposed at a minimum of 3'-6" bringing the maximum height of the building to approximately 58'. The proposed project creates a minor dimensional violation relative to the allowed maximum of 55'. The proposal does not touch the



existing building or alter the current height; the only portion that will exist above the 55' maximum height is fencing around the existing head house.

This proposal will not negatively impact any of the surrounding streets or open space with shadows, and is highly contextual with the heights seen from buildings in the immediate vicinity, many of which have habitable roof structures at parallel heights. Despite the minor dimensional violation this proposal creates, the overall design aligns with and does not exceed any heights already seen from the immediate surrounding buildings.

The proposed project site sits within 100 feet of multiple parks, but due to the setback of the roofdeck towards the rear of the property is likely not visible from those parks. If the Parks Department determines the roof deck is visible, they may complete design review under the terms of the Parks design review ordinance.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1702910, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen O'Neil".

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1759889
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-08-06
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	18 Rutland SQ Roxbury 02118
Parcel ID	0402712000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	South End Neighborhood MFR
Zoning Article	64
Project Description	Roof Deck Erection
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Roof Structure Restrictions

Planning Context:

The proposed project would be building a roof deck on top of an existing four-story single-family home. No new work will be done below the roof deck. The home is a rowhouse that shares walls with similarly massed rowhouses neighboring it. Many of the neighboring homes presently have roof decks. The site is located in the South End Historic District and would require South End Landmarks Review.

Zoning Analysis:

Section 64-34 provides the regulations for roof structures and expresses a conditional use permit would be required for the erection of a roof structure that would have human occupancy. The proposed would be built in a similar sizing and format to the neighboring roof decks remaining in context with the neighborhood. The roof deck will have appropriate setbacks to limit visibility from the street at 15 ft and from the rear yard of the property at 5 ft. The entrance to the roof deck will be 22 ft from the street facing edge and 17 ft from the rear edge in line with city recommendations.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1759889, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL W/ PROVISIO that plans be approved by the Landmarks Commission.



Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

Reviewed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen O'Neil".

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1742622
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-06-27
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	917 E Broadway South Boston 02127
Parcel ID	0604292000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	South Boston Neighborhood MFR
Zoning Article	68
Project Description	Change occupancy from office to single unit, including finishing the basement.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Roof Structure Restrictions Side Yard Insufficient Rear Yard Insufficient Parking or Loading Insufficient

Planning Context:

The project is located at the eastern end of East Broadway in a dense, primarily residential neighborhood in the City Point area of South Boston. It is located on a corner lot one block west of Marine Park on Pleasure Bay. The surrounding buildings are generally two to three stories tall, contain multiple units, are tightly packed, and form a consistent street wall.

The project proposes converting an existing commercial building into a single-family residential building with limited renovations to the exterior facades, interior first and second floor living spaces, and basement. The Boston ISD Zoning Code Refusal letter includes reference to an "addition on top of the garage and extending the second floor to connect with the addition," however, this work has been removed from the scope of the project. Exterior work on the project is limited to replacing the existing windows and doors. This exterior work also includes removing the commercial storefront that faces the corner of E. Broadway and P Street and replacing it with a masonry wall and new windows to match the other existing windows on the E. Broadway facade. The project will maintain its front door facing E. Broadway.

The project has an existing garage on site with an existing curb cut on P Street that is outside the scope of this project and will remain unchanged. The project does not propose any additional parking on site, however, Go Boston 2030 and citywide transportation planning goals support a "dramatic shift in mode choices" away from single occupancy vehicles and set out a goal to "decrease the amount of Boston commuters driving alone by 50%." Furthermore, the



draft South Boston Transportation Action Plan notes that walking is "the most common choice of transportation to reach shops, restaurants and open spaces" by residents in the South Boston study area.

Given that the project isn't changing the building's overall size or footprint, nor is it making significant changes to its appearance, it is appropriate for this area and context.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project is located in an MFR Subdistrict of the South Boston Neighborhood District. Per Article 68 Section 29, this lot is subject to the rooftop structures restrictions of the neighborhood article; however, the project removed the scope of work that included renovations to the rooftop of the garage and the expansion of the second floor. The project does propose replacement of the existing skylight with a new one; however, this is not a "roofed structure designed or used for human occupancy, access (except as allowed in the following paragraph), or storage" nor is it a "roof structure, headhouse, or mechanical equipment normally built above the roof and not designed or used for human occupancy". As such, since there are no existing rooftop structures nor any new ones proposed, the project does not violate this element of the Code.

Per Article 68 Section 33, Table G, residential projects that do not qualify as affordable housing must provide 1.5 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit. This project proposes no additional off-street parking spaces. Given that this is a continuation of the existing condition, and providing additional parking would require demolition of the historic structure, relief is recommended.

Per Article 68 Section 8, Table D, projects in an MFR subdistrict must provide a minimum side yard of three feet and a minimum rear yard of twenty feet. The existing primary structure provides a four-foot side yard on the P street side of the lot and a seven-foot-six-inch side yard where it abuts a neighboring property. The existing primary structure is also located twenty-three feet and six inches away from the rear lot line. The project has an existing garage on site that is not part of the project. Section 68-34 allows for accessory structures to be located within side and rear yards if they are "no more than fifteen feet (15) in height, or nearer than four (4) feet to any side or rear Lot line, or closer than sixty-five (65) feet to the front Lot line." The garage is only eleven feet tall; however, it is located within one foot of the site lot line, one foot four inches from the rear lot line, and forty-three feet and five inches away from the front lot line, thus failing



to comply with all three requirements of the Section 68-34 exemption. However, because both the primary and accessory structures exist, the accessory structure is not of a significant height, and no significant exterior changes are proposed; this project is appropriate for the area and context.

Plans reviewed are titled "917 E Broadway", prepared by Of Possible, LLC, and dated May 15, 2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1742622, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

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Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1750660
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-07-21
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	78 Harbor View ST Dorchester 02125
Parcel ID	1303171000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood 2F-5000
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Add a 10 foot curb cut for access to paved side setback that will be converted into a driveway
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Usable Open Space Insufficient Parking Design and Maneuverability

Planning Context:

The proposed project would add a curb cut to the front of the property that would allow access for tandem parking in the currently paved side setback for the one unit building on the parcel. Tandem parking with no side yard is extremely common in this area, with both neighboring properties utilizing the parking strategy that this project proposes. The proposed curb cut will not interfere with any street trees, utility poles, fire hydrants, or any other feature located within the sidewalk area.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project has two zoning violations. The first is due to "Off-Street Parking and Loading Requirements," which in this case is referring to the placement of the parking area within the front yard of the property. Normally, this is not allowed under the zoning code. However, Zoning Code Article 65 Section 42 states: "If a Lot is located in a Residential Subdistrict, a total of two (2) accessory parking spaces serving residential uses on such Lot may be located in that portion of the Front Yard that lies between the Side Yard and the Front Lot Line, provided that the total width of such Front Yard area used for parking does not exceed ten (10) feet." This project is proposing a driveway of 10 feet total, meeting this requirement. This is an incorrect violation and should be disregarded.



The second violation is in regards to the minimum required open space. The code requires a minimum open space of 750 square feet. The existing structure is already under this requirement. Including the proposed driveway space, there is a total of around 700 square feet. By converting this area to a driveway, which does not count towards open space, there would be a total open space of 330 square feet. However, this does not reflect the built reality of the neighborhood. Many of the buildings in the area take up the majority of their lot, with drive lanes on the side and small rear yards. Almost none of the structures in the surrounding area would meet this requirement if permitted today. This reflects a disconnect between the zoning code and the built reality of the neighborhood and is a sign of potential necessary zoning reform. In addition, this lot is smaller than its neighboring lots by almost one-third. This unique lot size constitutes a hardship for the proponent, as they cannot utilize their land in the same way as nearby dwellings. At the same time, loss of open space is significant and should be mitigated by ensuring a permeable driveway that minimizes stormwater impacts and better invites use of the driveway as open space for the occupants.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1750660, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL W/ PROVISIO that plans be submitted for design review with attention to increasing the permeability of the driveway.

Reviewed,

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Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1710454
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-04-17
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	118 Bowdoin ST Dorchester 02121
Parcel ID	1401324001
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood 3F-5000
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Internal renovation adding bathrooms, a kitchen, mechanical rooms, fire safety, and an accessibility lift to finish the basement
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive

Planning Context:

The proposed project site is in a residential neighborhood comprised of mostly 2-, 3-, and 4-plus unit buildings equidistant from amenities on Bowdoin Street and Geneva Ave. The existing site is a three-story church building that was previously granted zoning relief to redevelop the pre-existing single-story church building. The proposed project aims to add necessary components to the basement that will be crucial to the function of the building.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project is seeking relief for one zoning violation for exceeding the maximum required Floor Area Ratio. Article 65 dimensional regulations require a maximum FAR of 0.5. This is not representative of the FARs that currently exist on the site or on the street. The proposed renovations make a marginal difference in FAR compared to the existing noncompliance of the current structure which has already been approved for zoning relief previously. The proposed improvements in the basement show adequate ceiling height and fire safety measures. The main entrance is on the basement level which has a walkout to the street in the front of the building, and the area is not at risk of flooding. Therefore, this violation is recommended for relief.

Plans reviewed are titled "Proposed Church Debre Menkrat St. Gabriel Church", prepared by Northcounty Group, Inc., and dated 2/25/2025.



Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1710454, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

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Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1749143
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-07-16
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	29 Aldworth ST Jamaica Plain 02130
Parcel ID	1901725000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Jamaica Plain Neighborhood 2F-5000
Zoning Article	55
Project Description	The project will add two dormers to an existing 2.5-story, two unit residential structure and build a new rear deck.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive

Planning Context:

The property is located in a residential area of Jamaica Plain with mostly single and two family residential structures that are 2.5- to 3-stories tall. Most of the structures fill a majority of their lots are closely spaced with properties to both sides.

The project will add two dormers to an existing 2.5-story, two-unit residential structure and will replace a rear porch. This is an example of the types of improvements that the Planning Department seeks to streamline through the neighborhood housing initiative by allowing minor improvements to seek approval without needing to navigate the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

Zoning Analysis:

The project is cited for excessive floor area ratio (FAR). The maximum FAR is 0.6 and the existing is 0.56. The project will increase the FAR to 0.67. There are several examples of two-unit residential properties in the area with an FAR higher than 0.67.

This project presents a case for zoning reform given the number of properties in the area with an FAR higher than what is allowed in the Zoning Code. An update to these regulations will allow property owners to invest in their property without having to navigate the ZBA process.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1749143, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.



Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

Reviewed,

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1766722
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-08-21
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	61 Lila RD Jamaica Plain 02130
Parcel ID	1902718000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Jamaica Plain Neighborhood 1F-9000
Zoning Article	55
Project Description	Project proposes a new, two-story rear addition that will replace an existing rear porch.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive Rear Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient

Planning Context:

The proposed project is located in a largely residential area of Jamaica Plain where most properties are single-unit residential with large yards. The existing structure is smaller than others in the area and the lot is much smaller with a very small back yard.

The project will demolish an existing porch and replace it with a two story addition in approximately the same footprint. The project is the type of residential improvement that the Planning Department seeks to streamline through the Neighborhood Housing initiative which will allow owners to invest in their properties without needing to zoning relief.

Zoning Analysis:

The project has been cited for Excessive Floor Area Ratio (FAR), insufficient side yard, and insufficient rear yard. The required side yard is twelve feet; no change is proposed to the existing side yards of 5.9 and 10.7 feet. The lot is 3,384 square feet and has a median depth of approximately 65 feet (rear lot line is non parallel to front lot line). In comparison, most lots in the area are at least 5,000 square feet with many larger than 10,000 square feet and are often deeper than 95 feet.

The maximum FAR allowed is 0.3 and the existing is 0.66. The proposed addition will increase the FAR to 0.76. The minimum rear yard is forty feet and the existing is 8.7 feet. The proposed



addition will decrease the rear yard to 8.3 feet while also increasing the degree of non-conformity through the additional height within the rear yard.

Although the addition will increase the degree of non-conformity, the violations for excessive FAR and insufficient rear yard are because of how small the lot is and the exceptional shallowness of the lot. The proposed improvement constitutes a reasonable use of the land while respecting the general purpose and intent of the zoning code.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1766722, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

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Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1766114
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-08-20
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	8 Preston RD West Roxbury 02132
Parcel ID	2007824000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	West Roxbury Neighborhood 1F-8000
Zoning Article	56
Project Description	The proponent plans to extend living space into the basement, which is currently unfinished. There will be a music room, living area, and gym in the renovated basement.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive

Planning Context:

The proponent at 8 Preston Road plans to extend living space into a basement that is currently unfinished. The goal is to create a flexible space for extended family use, without altering the primary structure. 8 Preston Road is a one-unit detached house located in an area of West Roxbury that transitions between the Centre Street commercial zone and a predominantly residential area. It is a short distance from Centre St - key corridors with access to bus routes and nearby commuter rail service. The houses in this area of West Roxbury are generally a mix of one and two-unit detached residences.

This extension of living space is a clear case for zoning reform. The current code lacks a clear path for homeowners to make small, interior adaptations that meet evolving household needs. Finishing an existing basement to create additional living space supports family friendly living without altering the exterior character of the neighborhood. This kind of modest, interior improvement aligns with the City's goals for more flexible, incremental housing options.

Zoning Analysis:

This proposal has triggered one zoning violation: FAR excessive.

The FAR allowed for this lot is 0.3 and the plans show the proposed FAR will be 0.49. According to the assessor's report of the existing property, the current FAR is 0.29. It is reasonable to expect that the proposed renovations will increase the FAR given that the living area will be



expanded into the basement without the lot size increasing. The proposed addition creates modest, high-quality living space that allows the property to meet the evolving needs of today's households, which include supporting family growth, multi-generational living, and aging in place. These are all priorities articulated in the City's housing and planning goals. Because the improvements to the living space are not disruptive to the neighborhood context or compromise the minimum open space, relief is recommended.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1766114, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL .

Reviewed,

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Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1721220
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-05-14
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	128 Gardner ST West Roxbury 02132
Parcel ID	2009243000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	West Roxbury Neighborhood 1F-6000
Zoning Article	56
Project Description	Proponent plans to construct a two-story, three-bedroom additional unit at the rear of 128 Gardner St.
Relief Type	Variance, Conditional Use
Violations	Lot Width Insufficient Lot Frontage Insufficient FAR Excessive Side Yard Insufficient Off street parking requirements Use: Forbidden Dimensional Regulations

Planning Context:

128 Gardner St is currently a one-unit residence in a mixed-use area of West Roxbury that primarily comprises of single-dwelling residential units, in addition to restaurants, large-footprint retail like Savers and Home Depot, child and pet care facilities, and the West Roxbury VA Medical Center in the immediate vicinity. The residence is located an 18 minute walk from the West Roxbury Commuter Rail Station. Homes in this area generally have lower lot coverage and off-street driveway parking.

The proposed project is the addition of a new construction, three bedroom, two story, attached dwelling unit in the rear of the existing one-unit home. The plans do not show existing conditions of the current home and footprint, but aerial images show a shed in the rear yard that will presumably be demolished to accommodate the additional unit.

This proposed addition appears to fall under the category of an attached ADU because it is a building that would remain adjacent to the main building. This project aligns with the City's goals to develop more housing, per Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030 (2018). The plan notes the importance of supporting "projects and planning that create additional density in locations with good transit that are affordable to the middle class". The plan also expresses the intent in



making “improvements to the permitting process to help smaller builders create more housing on small, privately-owned parcels”.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project received seven violations: lot width and frontage insufficient, side yard insufficient, FAR excessive, off-street parking requirements, forbidden use, and dimensional regulations. The provided plans do not provide any type of zoning analysis, nor dimensions of the house contextualized to the lot. This may affect the planner's zoning analysis and the Planning Department strongly urges the proponent to submit zoning analysis and details as much as possible when submitting plans, to ensure accuracy.

The lot on which 128 Gardner St is located has a frontage and width of 50 ft, but zoning in this subdistrict requires 60 ft. This is an existing nonconformity as the project does not change the lot frontage and width dimensions, therefore, relief is recommended.

The side yard required is 10 ft on either side, but plans do not show what the existing side yard measurements are. However, the plans do show that the additional unit will be 6 ft less wide than the existing unit, therefore, does not aggravate side yard violations. The violation for side yard is an existing nonconformity, and relief is recommended.

The project's proposed FAR is unknown. According to the assessor's data, the existing residence's FAR for the one unit is 0.17. FAR is not to exceed 0.4 in this subdistrict. It is reasonable to expect that the proposed renovations will almost double the FAR given that the living area almost doubles in square footage while the lot size remains unchanged. However, the proposed addition creates modest, high-quality living space that allows the property to meet the evolving needs of today's households, which include supporting family growth, multi-generational living, and aging in place. These are all priorities articulated in the City's housing and planning goals. Because the improvements to the living space are not disruptive to the neighborhood context or compromise the minimum open space, relief is recommended.

Off-street parking is also cited as a violation, though not specified for which reason. According to the assessor's data, 128 Gardner St has one parking spot, which does meet parking minimum requirements for this subdistrict. With the additional unit, zoning requires one additional parking spot. Plans do not show any details regarding parking. If no additional parking is provided, then the off-street parking minimum for this project is a violation. However, it is difficult to



accommodate an additional parking spot based on aerial images of the driveway. Currently, the driveway is used as the existing residence's off-street parking. Because tandem parking is not allowed, maneuverability would be an issue. However, aerial images show on-street parking on Gardner St. Because of the availability of on-street parking, relief is recommended.

In this 1F-6000 district, a maximum of one dwelling unit is allowed per lot, therefore a second unit is forbidden. However, this violation is in service of providing additional housing units. In particular, 3-bedroom housing units capable of accommodating families advance the City of Boston's goals to expand family-sized housing options across the city. Relief is recommended.

Lastly, this project was cited for violating dimensional regulations due to the location of the main entrance. Section 56-8 requires that "the main entrance of a Dwelling shall face the Front Lot Line." Plans show that the main entrance for this additional unit will be at the rear of the property, facing the rear lot. However, because this new unit is physically located behind the existing dwelling, which already fronts the street, it is not possible for the rear unit's entrance to face the front lot line. Its placement at the back of the lot will have no impact on the public realm, therefore, relief is recommended.

Plans reviewed are titled "128 Gardner St. West Roxbury Ma, are prepared by Help-U-Build Design Service and dated February 21, 2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1721220, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen O'Neil".

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1757994
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-08-01
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-11-06
Address	51 to 53 Brookline AV Boston 02215
Parcel ID	2100064000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Fenway Neighborhood Brookline Ave CC
Zoning Article	66
Project Description	The proposed project involves installing new electronic signage on the building's rooftop, in accordance with Section 11-7 of the Zoning Code. Relief from the Zoning Code is not required.
Relief Type	Conditional Use
Violations	Electronic Signs

Planning Context:

The site is occupied by a one-story commercial building operated by Sal's Pizza, featuring static signage mounted on the north-facing (right) wall. The proposed sign is oriented to project light away from the adjacent four-story building to the south, which is on the same side of Brookline Avenue.

Fronting Brookline Avenue, the site is located directly across from Fenway Park. On the opposite side of the street, adjacent parcels along this commercial corridor are developed with one- to two-story buildings, predominantly occupied by food and beverage establishments. The surrounding streetscape is characterized by a combination of static and electric signage associated with local commercial and entertainment uses, contributing to a dynamic visual environment and heightened pedestrian activity, particularly during event days.

On September 18, 2025, the BPDA Board reviewed this petition and authorized the following actions: (1) entering into a License Agreement with Orange Barrel Media LLC, the operator of the proposed electronic sign at 51 Brookline Avenue, for a term of one year with eight one-year renewal options; and (2) granting design review approval for the Electronic Sign permit. The board also authorized all related actions necessary to implement these approvals.



Zoning Analysis:

The project falls within the Lansdowne Street Entertainment District and requires review under Section 11-7 for comprehensive sign review.

Recommendation:

The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL W/ PROVISIO, that plans be submitted to the Planning Department for comprehensive sign review to ensure compliance with the signage design standards and complements the character of the building and surrounding context.

Reviewed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen O'Neil'.

Deputy Director of Zoning

MEMORANDUM**SEPTEMBER 18, 2025**

**TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
D/B/A BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (BPDA)
AND KAIROS SHEN, DIRECTOR**

**FROM: ERIC BOATRIGHT, SENIOR ARCHITECT
SETH RISEMAN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DESIGN REVIEW**

SUBJECT: 51 BROOKLINE AVENUE - ELECTRONIC SIGN

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests authorization for the Director to: (i) enter into a License Agreement with Orange Barrel Media, LLC as the operator of an Electronic Sign (defined below) to be located at 51 Brookline Avenue and to take such further actions described therein, subject to Orange Barrel Media, LLC, obtaining a conditional use permit for the Electronic Sign; (ii) issue the design review approval of the Electronic Sign required by Section 11-7.1(a) of the Code; and (iii) execute any and all documents deemed necessary and appropriate by the Director in connection with the foregoing actions.

ELECTRONIC SIGNAGE BACKGROUND

Section 11-7 of the Boston Zoning Code (the "Code") governs Electronic Signage within the City of Boston. Section 11-7 provides that Electronic Signs are only permitted within certain zoning districts and that zoning relief in the form of a conditional use permit must be obtained. The above referenced property is within one of the zoning districts within which electronic signs are allowed by conditional use permit.

51 BROOKLINE AVENUE

Orange Barrel Media, LLC proposes to install an electronic sign (the "Electronic Sign") on a new structure cantilevering above the building at 51 Brookline Avenue (the "Building"). This site is located within the Landsdowne Street Entertainment District. The Building currently has three legally nonconforming static signs initially

installed on its roof between 1939 and 1964. These existing signs will be removed from the Building prior to installation of the Electronic Sign. The total sign area of the three existing signs exceeds the Electronic Sign's area, resulting in an overall decrease in sign area at the Building. In accordance with section 11-7.4 of the zoning code, the Electronic Sign will display a minimum of 10% public service content, which can include thematic content reflecting its location in the Fenway neighborhood and content available for community groups and organizations. The Electronic Sign has been designed to comply with Section 11-7 of the Code.

LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR THE ELECTRONIC SIGN

Section 11-7.3 of the Code requires an operator of an electronic sign to obtain a license from the Authority in connection with operating such sign. Orange Barrel Media and the Authority have agreed upon a form of license agreement for the Electronic Sign, which form of license complies with the requirements of Section 11-7.3 of the Code.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing, BRA staff recommends that the Director be authorized to: (i) enter into a License Agreement with Orange Barrel Media, LLC pursuant to Section 11-7.3 of the Code for a license term of one (1) year with automatic renewals for additional one (1) year terms for up to a maximum of eight (8) years for an Electronic Sign to be located at 51 Brookline Avenue, and to take such further actions described therein, subject to Orange Barrel Media, LLC obtaining a conditional use permit for the Electronic Sign; (ii) issue the design review approval of the Electronic Sign required by Section 11-7.1(a) of the Code; and (iii) execute any and all documents deemed necessary and appropriate by the Director in connection with the foregoing actions.

Appropriate votes follow:

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to enter into a License Agreement with Orange Barrel Media, LLC pursuant to Section 11-7.3 of the Boston Zoning Code for a license term of one (1) year with automatic renewals for additional one (1) year terms for up to a maximum of eight (8) years for an Electronic Sign to be located at 51 Brookline Avenue, and to take such further actions described therein,

subject to Orange Barrel Media obtaining a conditional use permit for the Electronic Sign; and

FURTHER

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue the design review approval of the Electronic Sign required by Section 11-7.1(a) of the Code; and

FURTHER

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to execute any and all documents deemed necessary and appropriate by the Director in connection with the foregoing actions.



Case	BOA1769103
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-08-26
ZBA Hearing Date	2025-10-23
Address	26 Windom ST Allston 02134
Parcel ID	2200080000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Allston/Brighton Neighborhood 1F-4000
Zoning Article	51
Project Description	The applicant proposes to construct a two-story rear addition to the existing one-unit dwelling.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive Side Yard Insufficient Rear Yard Insufficient

Planning Context:

26 Windom Street is located in the 1F-4000 Residential Subdistrict of Allston-Brighton. The block is lined with small detached homes, several of which have been expanded with rear or side additions of similar scale. The existing two-and-a-half-story house sits on a 3,400 square foot lot. The proposal is to construct a two-story rear addition; the scale and form of the addition are consistent with patterns of expansion already present in the neighborhood. The site is directly adjacent to the Enterprise Research Campus (ERC) and the emerging greenway corridor, where larger-scale mixed-use and affordable housing projects are being planned. While this broader context reflects significant change at the district scale, the proposed addition at 26 Windom remains in character with the surrounding residential block.

Zoning Analysis:

The property is located within the 1F-4000 Residential Subdistrict of the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood District. A review of the proposal against Article 51 of the Boston Zoning Code has identified the following zoning issues:

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): Article 51, Section 9, and Table D establish a maximum FAR of 0.5 in the 1F-4000 subdistrict. On a 3,400 square foot lot, this allows for 1,700 square feet of gross floor area. The existing home is approximately 1,178 square feet (FAR 0.30). With the proposed



two-story rear addition, the total would rise to about 2,244 square feet (FAR 0.66), exceeding the maximum and requiring relief.

Side Yard: A 10-foot side yard is required. The project would maintain a setback of 4'-9", matching the existing structure along the property line. Relief is needed to continue this nonconforming condition.

Rear Yard: A 30-foot rear yard is required. The addition would reduce this setback to 3 feet from the rear property line. Although this is a substantial shortfall, similar conditions are common in the neighborhood, where many older homes and additions do not meet current rear yard requirements.

Given the small lot, the modest scale of the addition, and the citywide goals of housing diversification, the ZBA should consider granting relief. The project reflects the way many Allston-Brighton homes have been adapted over time and underscores the need for zoning updates that better match the built fabric of Boston's neighborhoods.

Plans reviewed: "26 Windom: Rear Addition Permit Set," prepared by Anderson Porter Design and dated May 15, 2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1769103, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen Onuf".

Deputy Director of Zoning