



Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Joanne Marques
Planning Department

DATE: January 15, 2026

RE: Planning Department Recommendations

Please find attached, for your information, Planning Department recommendations for the January 22, 2026 Board of Appeals Hearing.

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



Case	BOA1795810
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-11-05
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-01-22
Address	115 Baldwin ST Charlestown 02129
Parcel ID	0201343000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Charlestown Neighborhood RH-2000
Zoning Article	62
Project Description	Proposal includes second-floor interior renovations and addition of a new main roof structure with a steeper slope to support construction of new front and rear roof dormers.
Relief Type	Variance,Conditional Use
Violations	Roof Structure Restrictions Height Excessive (ft)

Planning Context:

115 Baldwin Street is located in a RH-2000 (Row House Residential) Subdistrict of the Charlestown Neighborhood Zoning District, an area established to preserve and reinforce the neighborhood's historic rowhouse fabric. Baldwin Street is characterized by a cohesive streetscape of 2.5- to 3-story red brick rowhouses, typically featuring either steeply sloped roofs with front and rear dormers or flat roofs accommodating roof decks. While the street's natural grade creates a stepped visual condition from building to building, overall building heights remain consistent along the street. While the existing 2.5-story, single-family rowhouse sits at the edge of both the RH Subdistrict and the Charlestown Neighborhood Zoning District, its mid-block location reinforces the importance of maintaining continuity in scale, form, and architectural features across Baldwin Street.

The project site is also located within the Charlestown Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD) and is subject to the Restricted Roof District: Charlestown Neighborhood. The NDOD is intended to protect the established scale, pedestrian quality, and architectural character of Charlestown's residential neighborhoods, recognizing rowhouses as both a defining historical feature and critical component of the neighborhood's housing stock. Roof Structure Restrictions require a Conditional Use Permit for projects that alter the profile or configuration of an existing roof or mansard where human occupancy or use is proposed, ensuring that changes to



Charlestown's historic roofline remains contextually appropriate and do not adversely affect the public realm.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project incurs one dimensional violation under Article 62-7 and requires a Conditional Use Permit in accordance with Article 62-25. The dimensional violation relates to Maximum Building Height (Feet), which is limited to 35 feet in the RH-2000 Subdistrict. The existing structure is already noncompliant at 36'-2 1/2", and the proposed adjustment to the roof slope increases the overall height to 38'-2 1/2" in support of the proposed dormer configuration. This represents a minor extension of an existing nonconformity and results in the height of 115 Baldwin Street aligning with the existing 38'-2 1/2" height of the adjacent and connected structure at 111 Baldwin Street. While this alignment introduces a modest interruption in the stepped appearance created by the street's natural grade, the resulting roof form, particularly as visible from the public way, is consistent with roof slopes and profiles found throughout Baldwin Street. The proposed height and roof form remain compatible with the established character of the street and the surrounding RH-2000 Subdistrict, supporting the granting of relief.

A Conditional Use Permit is required under Article 62-25 for the construction of one front and one rear dormer, replacing the existing two front dormers and single rear dormer. Pursuant to Article 6-3, the Board may grant a Conditional Use Permit where the proposed use is appropriate for the site, does not adversely affect the neighborhood, and does not create a nuisance. The proposed front dormer is consistent in design and scale with dormer patterns found on surrounding rowhomes and will not negatively impact the pedestrian experience along Baldwin Street. However, the proposed rear dormer's design is highly inconsistent with comparable rear dormers in the immediate area, as it occupies a substantially larger portion of the rear roof and disrupts the established rear dormer pattern seen along the street and especially across adjacent structures. To ensure the proposed addition remains contextually designed and satisfies the criteria of Articles 62-25 and 6-3, Planning Department Design Review is recommended prior to the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit.

The project is subject to design review under the Charlestown NDOD, pursuant to the criteria outlined in Article 28-5, as it proposes exterior alterations to the roof form that are visible from the public way. Planning Department design review is therefore required to ensure that the proposed changes are consistent with the NDOD's guidance and responsive to the historic character of the surrounding rowhomes.

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Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1795810, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO/S: that plans be submitted to the Planning Department for design review.

Reviewed,

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1806137
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-12-15
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-01-22
Address	57 Emerson ST South Boston 02127
Parcel ID	0602980000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	South Boston Neighborhood MFR/LS
Zoning Article	68
Project Description	Change of use from existing one-unit to two-unit residence. Renovate and finish the existing basement and erect a new third story addition. Construct new rear decks for levels one and two, and build a private roof deck. No change to the existing building footprint is proposed.
Relief Type	Conditional Use, Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive Side Yard Insufficient Roof Structure Restrictions

Planning Context:

This recommendation relates to one half of a proposed alteration to the existing semi-attached residential structure at 57-59 Emerson Street in South Boston. The other portion of the project is tied to a separate permit number (BOA1806141), as each half of the structure sits on its own parcel. Because both share the same context and project scope, their recommendations should be considered in combination.

The proposed project sits in an established residential portion of the Telegraph Hill area of South Boston. Its immediately surrounding context consists of a mix of two- and three-story structures, with residential land uses ranging from single-unit to multi-unit. Just south of the site, along East Broadway, you can find a more mixed-use context with a variety of civic and commercial land uses as well as taller four- to five-story structures. The project is transit accessible with stops for the MBTA's 9 and 10 bus routes located less than a block from the site, also along East Broadway.

The project site is currently occupied by one half of a two-story, semi-attached residential structure. This half is currently being used as a single-unit residence. The proposed project seeks to renovate the existing structure, increasing its occupancy from one to two dwelling



units. It proposes to do this through the erection of a third story addition and by converting the existing basement into living space. The resulting design produces two ~1,400 square foot, dual-story, two-bedroom dwelling units. The proposed basement living space features nine foot ceiling heights and appropriately-scaled window wells that provide the space with sufficient light and air. The proposed project's design is also in keeping with the historic character of its surroundings. Sans the addition of a new rear deck, the parcel's existing site plan is proposed to remain as is, including its current no parking condition.

The project scope aligns with the area's stated planning goals: to encourage the development of medium-density infill housing, which is appropriate to the existing built environment and prevents overdevelopment (Section 68-6, 2014). It also aligns with the City's overarching housing goals which promote housing diversity, encourage adaptive reuse and the preservation of historic structures, and increase the availability of housing options (Housing a Changing City, Boston 2030 - September 2018).

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project's side yard and FAR violations are incorrectly cited on its refusal letter. Both the proposed side yard (three feet required, three-and-a-quarter feet existing/proposed) and FAR (2.0 permitted, 1.6 proposed) figures are compliant with the permitted zoning allowances for the site.

The proposed project's roof structure restrictions citation is triggered by Section 68-29 of the Code, which necessitates a conditional use permit for any project proposing to alter the roofline of an existing residential structure. Because the project's addition results in a building height below the maximum permitted figure for the site, and also maintains the structure's existing building footprint, the impacts of the proposal will be negligible to the surrounding area. The structure's third-story mansard design is also contextual to the area. Additionally, roof access through a headhouse (a condition that is proposed) also triggers the need for a conditional use permit in South Boston. While a conditional use according to the zoning, it's worth noting that the headhouse condition is common to the site's existing surrounding context. The headhouse's thirty foot setback from the front roof edge also reduces its visual impacts from public right of way and on the surrounding area.

Future zoning reform in the area should look to revisit roof structure requirements, so as to better match rules with the area's existing and developing built context.



Plans reviewed titled, "57 Emerson Street, Boston, MA, 02127," prepared by Studio Cann on May 5, 2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1806137, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1806141
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-12-15
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-01-22
Address	59 Emerson ST South Boston 02127
Parcel ID	0602981000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	South Boston Neighborhood MFR/LS
Zoning Article	68
Project Description	Change the use of an existing one-unit residence to two units. Renovate and finish the existing basement and erect a new third story addition. Construct new rear decks for levels one and two, and build a private roof deck. No change to the existing building footprint is proposed.
Relief Type	Variance, Conditional Use
Violations	Roof Structure Restrictions FAR Excessive Side Yard Insufficient

Planning Context:

This recommendation relates to one half of a proposed alteration to the existing semi-attached residential structure at 57-59 Emerson Street in South Boston. The other portion of the project is tied to a separate permit number (BOA1806137), as each half of the structure sits on its own parcel. Because both share the same context, project scope, their recommendations should be considered in combination.

The proposed project sits in an established residential portion of the Telegraph Hill area of South Boston. Its immediately surrounding context consists of a mix of two- and three-story structures, with residential land uses ranging from single-unit to multi-unit. Just south of the site, along East Broadway, you can find a more mixed-use context with a variety of civic and commercial land uses as well as taller four- to five-story structures. The project is transit accessible with stops for the MBTA's 9 and 10 bus routes located less than a block from the site, also along East Broadway.



The project site is currently occupied by one half of a two-story, semi-attached residential structure. This half is currently being used as a single-unit residence. The proposed project seeks to renovate the existing structure, increasing its unit count from one to two dwelling units. It proposes to do this through the erection of a third story addition and by converting the existing basement into living space. The resulting design produces two ~1,400 square foot, dual-story, two-bedroom dwelling units. The proposed basement living space features nine foot ceiling heights and appropriately-scaled window wells that provide the space with sufficient light and air. The proposed project's design is also in keeping with the historic character of its surroundings. Sans the addition of a new rear deck, the parcel's existing site plan is proposed to remain as is, including its current no parking condition.

The project scope aligns with the area's stated planning goals: to encourage the development of medium-density infill housing, which is appropriate to the existing built environment and prevents overdevelopment (Section 68-6, 2014). It also aligns with the City's overarching housing goals which promote housing diversity, encourage adaptive reuse and the preservation of historic structures, and increase the availability of housing options (Housing a Changing City, Boston 2030 - September 2018).

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project's side yard violation is an existing nonconforming dimension, not proposed to be extended by the addition of the project's third story addition (three feet required, zero feet existing/proposed). This dimension is also contextual to the area, with several other structures on this and other surrounding blocks featuring such zero-side setback conditions.

The project's proposed FAR violation narrowly exceeds the allowed maximum for the site (2.0 allowed, 2.11 proposed). While the addition of living space in the basement and third story contribute to an expanded FAR figure for the site, a significant portion of the violation can also be attributed to the fact that the building footprint of the site's existing semi-attached structure does not fall equally on each lot line. This means that square footage associated with the other half of the structure (at 57 Emerson St) is counted towards the FAR of this site, thus inflating its true figure (2.11 from 2.02). Regardless, the FAR is contextual to the area, with several surrounding sites having FARs near 3.

The proposed project's roof structure restrictions violation is triggered by Section 68-29 of the Code, which necessitates a conditional use permit for any project proposing to alter the roofline
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of an existing residential structure. Because the project's addition results in a building height below the maximum permitted figure for the site, and also maintains the structure's existing building footprint, the impacts of the proposal will be negligible to the surrounding area. The structure's third-story mansard design is also contextual to the area. Additionally, roof access through a headhouse (a condition that is proposed) also triggers the need for a conditional use permit in South Boston. While a conditional use according to the zoning, it's worth noting that the headhouse condition is common to the site's existing surrounding context. The headhouse's thirty foot setback from the front roof edge also reduces its visual impacts from public right of way and on the surrounding area.

Future zoning reform in the area should look to revisit roof structure and dimensional requirements, so as to better match rules with the area's existing and developing built context.

Plans reviewed titled, "59 Emerson Street, Boston, MA, 02127," prepared by Studio Cann on May 5, 2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1806141, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1762034
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-08-11
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-01-22
Address	774 E Broadway South Boston 02127
Parcel ID	0603558000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	South Boston Neighborhood MFR
Zoning Article	68
Project Description	Increase residential use from one to two dwelling units through interior renovation and the addition of rear balconies.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Parking or Loading Insufficient Additional Lot Area Insufficient

Planning Context:

The proposed project sits along South Boston's East Broadway corridor, on the northern edge of the Telegraph Hill and City Point boundary. Its immediate surroundings consist of a mix of two-and-a-half- to four-story structures, predominately housing residential land uses (single-unit to multi-unit). A variety of commercial land uses can be found within proximity of the site (two block radius), both west of the site on East Broadway and along L Street. These commercial uses include a Stop & Shop, several restaurants, and a variety of service establishments. Public transit options and public open space is also immediately accessible from the site, with Medal of Honor Park and stops for the MBTA's 7, 9, and 10 bus routes located on either end of the project's block.

The project site is currently occupied by an existing three-story, single-unit rowhome. The narrow lot (seventeen feet wide) also features a landscaped rear yard. Like the majority of surrounding properties, the property does not contain off-street parking. The proposed project seeks to pursue an interior renovation to the existing structure, to expand its use from one to two dwelling units. It does so by converting existing first-story living space and an unfinished garden level floor area into an independent dual-story unit. The structure's existing garden level conforms with the necessary Building Code requirements to consider it livable (two means of egress, eight foot ceiling height, etc.). Sans a new rear balcony, which replaces an existing shed in the rear yard, no exterior renovations are proposed by the project.



The project scope aligns with the area's stated planning goals: to encourage the development of medium-density infill housing, which is appropriate to the existing built environment and prevents overdevelopment (Section 68-6, 2014). It also aligns with the City's overarching housing goals which promote housing diversity, encourage adaptive reuse and the preservation of historic structures, and increase the availability of housing options (Housing a Changing City, Boston 2030 - September 2018).

Zoning Analysis:

The project's additional lot area violation is triggered by its proposed change of use, from a one to two-unit structure. While nonconforming with the area's zoning (3,000 square feet required, 2,190 square feet existing/proposed), the project's lot area per dwelling unit is contextual to the scale of the site, with several similarly-sized lots on the block already housing two and three-unit uses. Because the proposed renovation does not alter the footprint of the existing building, the net lot coverage and usable open space upon the lot is also proposed to remain. These factors render the impacts of this violation negligible to the surrounding area.

The proposed project's off-street parking violation (three spaces required, zero spaces existing/proposed) is similarly contextual to the site. Due to the site's narrow parcellation (seventeen feet wide), the creation of off-street parking upon the site could not be accommodated without the demolition of the existing historic structure. Accordingly, its existing zero-parking condition is proposed to remain. This condition is one shared by almost every lot on the project's side of the block, thus keeping the proposed project in alignment with its surroundings.

Plans reviewed titled, "Single to Two Family, 774 East Broadway, South Boston, MA 02127," prepared by Pisani + Associates Architects on October 15, 2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1762034, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.



Planning Department

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Reviewed,

Kathleen Onuta

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1776341
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-09-17
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-01-22
Address	19 Bodwell ST Dorchester 02125
Parcel ID	1502440000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood 2F-6000
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Document and legalize existing side yard awning and rear yard deck extension.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Height Excessive (ft) Rear Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient Accessory Bldg in Rear Yard

Planning Context:

The project site is on the edge of Upham's Corner and Grove Hall Areas, steps from retail and services on Columbia Road. The proposed project aims to legalize the existing rear and side yard additions. This renovation project and legalization have no impact on the physical urban landscape of the area.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project's construction has already been completed, but the legalization of the accessory structures trigger multiple zoning violations according to dimensional requirements. The dimensional violations for this project pre-date any new construction or renovation because the residential building, including its deck structure are all a part of the existing footprint. The required minimum rear yard setback is 20 feet and the required side yard setback is 10 feet. The existing yards setbacks are not clear from the site plan, but appear to allow for adequate space for light and air between buildings, and are existing nonconformities. The required maximum building height is 2.5 stories or 35 feet. While the existing 2.5 story structure is contextual, the height exceeds 35 feet and triggers a zoning violation. Additionally, the deck was flagged for being within eight feet of the principal structure. However, this is a completely sensible location for a deck, and this is a location that does not increase the footprint of the existing structure. Garage parking and outdoor area structures are contextual for residential



properties in this area. While building code review is still necessary for this structure, the zoning violations are recommended for relief.

Plans titled "19 Bodwell ST Boston MA EXTERIOR RENOVATIONS", prepared by Marco DeBarros dated April 2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1776341, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1797623
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-11-12
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-01-22
Address	27 to 29 Myrtlebank AVE Dorchester 02124
Parcel ID	1604711000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood 1F-5000
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Add dormers to an existing 2.5 story building with no change in unit count.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive Height Excessive (stories) Side Yard Insufficient

Planning Context:

The proposed project would add shed dormers to the roof of an existing two-family residential building as well as completing a currently unfinished basement. While this proposed space contains two new bedrooms, there will be no change to the two-family use currently present on the property. In addition, the front facade will change from a hipped roof to a gabled roof. The proposed project is well in line with the neighborhood character and its immediate surroundings. These dormers will create additional living space, including two bedrooms and a bathroom, while maintaining the structure's existing floor plate. The area is zoned as 1F-5000, and Myrtlebank Ave is primarily composed of single- and two-family residences. Most of the properties in this area conform to the subdistrict's dimensional regulations, such as height, as they range from 1-story to 2.5-story buildings under 35 feet tall. However, there does appear to be a discrepancy with the side yards, as many of the properties do not meet the minimum side yard requirements. Additionally, several properties along Myrtlebank Ave also have side dormers that enter the side setback territory.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project triggers three violations. The first violation is an existing non-conformity. The minimum side yard required in the district is 15 feet, while the existing building only



provides 6.4 feet. While the dormers would protrude from the existing roofline, side setback dimensions would not be changed by this alteration.

The next violation is in regard to height in stories. The proposed project's dormers would convert this building from 2.5 stories to a full three-story building. The zoning code has a maximum height of 2.5 stories in this district. The proposed addition also falls underneath the maximum height in feet allowed, pointing to its appropriate fit in the district. The proposed height would be 33.5 feet, while the zoning code allows for 35 feet. In addition, side dormers of this style are incredibly common in this area, with many similarly sized structures having similarly sized dormers, again pointing to the appropriate fit within the neighborhood context.

The final violation is in regard to FAR. The proposed alterations would increase FAR to 1.14, while the zoning code allows for a maximum of 0.5. This reflects a disconnect between the zoning code and the built reality of the neighborhood. Almost none of the nearby properties have an FAR below this threshold. The smaller lot size means that any usable building is going to sit above that threshold. This highlights the potential need for zoning reform in the area. In addition, while the FAR is increasing, the overall unit count is staying the same. While the building is getting larger, it is doing so in an established footprint without a change in occupancy. The additional square footage will come from the addition of the dormers and the finished basement area,

This recommendation is based on plans titled "Myrtlebank Renovation" prepared by Studio Sargis on 9/4/25.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1797623, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO/S: that plans be submitted to the Planning Department for design review.

Reviewed,

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1798986
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-11-18
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-01-22
Address	2 Woodworth ST Dorchester 02122
Parcel ID	1602745020
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood 2F-5000
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Document and legalize the existing extension of Unit 1 living space into basement.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive

Planning Context:

2 Woodsworth Street is located by the shore of the Neponset River in an area with 2-, 3-, and 4-plus unit residential buildings. The site is close to Morrissey Boulevard and Gallivan Boulevard which are corridors for transit and commercial uses. This area is in the Coastal Flood Resiliency Overlay District (CFROD) and FEMA Flood Map indicating express risk of flooding. Homes in this area should not expand living area below the Design Flood Elevation (DFE). The proposed project is a completely internal renovation. The finished basement at 2 Woodworth Street is an existing expansion of living area for Unit 1 in the building. The submission did not include site plans of the pre-existing conditions or plan elevations showing the basement level, so there is no way to ensure that the basement renovations inhibited safety on this flood-prone site. Based on the existing plans and the site's location in the floodplain, the below-ground basement is not recommended for use as permanent living space. However, internal renovations to habitable space such as bathrooms or closets are acceptable.

Zoning Analysis:

The property is in the Dorchester Neighborhood District within a Two-Family Residential subdistrict (2F-5000). The proposed project is to document work done by a previous owner. The basement living area's egress is a stairwell to the second (main) floor of Unit 1. This project violates one dimensional requirement for exceeding the allowed 0.5 maximum Floor Area Ratio. The property's FAR is an existing nonconformity to the regulations, and it aligns with the built reality of the neighborhood. The excessive FAR violation is related to the expansion of use



within the building rather than an increase of the building's actual footprint. This is a common nonconformity within the neighborhood and is a nonconformity that supports housing availability for growing living arrangements, thus furthering City housing goals. Zoning relief is recommended for the legalization of this property's existing extension of livable area into the basement.

Plans titled "Peter McLaughlin 2 Woodworth Street #2 Dorchester, Ma 02122" prepared by 686 Architects on 10/17/24.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1798986, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

Kathleen Onuta

Deputy Director of Zoning



Case	BOA1783344
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-09-26
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-01-22
Address	16 to 18 Bradfield AV Roslindale 02131
Parcel ID	2004656000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Roslindale Neighborhood 2F-5000
Zoning Article	67
Project Description	The proponent seeks to demolish a rear deck and build a small full bathroom in the same dimensions.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive Extension of Nonconforming Building

Planning Context:

16-18 Bradfield Ave is located in a predominantly residential section of Roslindale, a short walk from Fallon Field and approximately ten minutes' walk from Roslindale Square. One-, two-, three-unit buildings are a balanced typology in the surrounding area. Homes in the area tend to have, on average, higher lot coverage, and the home on this lot shares similar lot coverage to the abutting lots as well as those within a larger one block radius.

The proponent seeks to demolish a rear deck and build a small full bathroom in the same dimensions.

Zoning Analysis:

This proposal has triggered two zoning violations: FAR Excessive and extension of nonconforming building. The maximum FAR for this subdistrict is 0.5. The existing FAR for this building is 0.62 and the proposed FAR is 0.63. Extension of nonconforming building was triggered for the same reason - requesting relief for an addition to an existing residence that already has excessive FAR. In addition to FAR being an existing nonconformity, it is common for homes in this vicinity to have FAR that exceeds the maximum. 20-22 Bradfield Ave next door has a 0.89 FAR and 977 South St which also abuts has a 0.58 FAR. This pattern of nonconformity remains represented in a 1-2 block radius of this address. For all these reasons, relief is recommended for both violations.



Plans reviewed are titled "Certified Plot Plan located at 16 Bradfield Ave Roslindale, MA" prepared by "Boston Survey, Inc" on July 3, 2024.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1783344, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,

Deputy Director of Zoning