Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Joanne Marques
Planning Department

DATE: November 12, 2026

RE: Planning Department Recommendations

Please find attached, for your information, Planning Department recommendations for the November 17, 2026 Board of Appeals Hearing.

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

Case	BOA1862080
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-06-16
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	85 Chandler ST Boston 02116
Parcel ID	0501062000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	South End Neighborhood MFR
Zoning Article	64
Project Description	Construct a new third-level roof deck on an existing flat roof, accessed via a roof hatch.
Relief Type	Conditional Use
Violations	Roof Structure Restrictions

Planning Context:

The property is located in the South End Neighborhood zoning district, within the MFR (Multifamily Residential) subdistrict, and is subject to the Restricted Roof District overlay under Article 64, Section 34, which is intended to protect the historic roof profiles of South End rowhouses. The surrounding neighborhood is predominantly residential, characterized by attached brick rowhouses of uniform height with flat roofs and continuous cornice lines. Several nearby properties feature low-profile roof decks set back behind existing parapets, while raised headhouses and bulkheads are uncommon along the surrounding streetscape.

Zoning Analysis:

Under Article 64, Section 34, constructing an exterior roof deck within this overlay district is not permitted as-of-right and requires conditional use approval from the Board of Appeal.

Relief is appropriate because the proposed deck has been specifically engineered to eliminate visual intrusion from the public way. As demonstrated on Sheet 1 (Site Section), a pedestrian sightline projected from the opposite sidewalk of Chandler Street over the fourth-floor mansard cornice clears well above the deck, confirming zero visibility from the street. Access is provided

through an interior flush-mounted roof hatch rather than an enclosed vertical headhouse, keeping the walking surface just 6 inches above the existing roof membrane (12-inch maximum) and utilizing an open-profile 42-inch black steel railing. The deck also sits lower than the existing roof deck on the abutting building at 79 Chandler Street, maintaining historic roofline continuity without causing adverse shadow, light, or privacy impacts on neighboring properties.

Because the property is located within the Restricted Roof District overlay, the project also requires design review and approval by the South End Landmark District Commission

This analysis is based on plans prepared by 1507 Architecture titled “PROPOSED RENOVATION 85 CHANDLER STREET BOSTON, MASS” dated April 23, 2025

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1862080, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO: that plans shall be submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission for design review .

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1808917
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-12-30
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	11 Cheever CT East Boston 02128
Parcel ID	0104755000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	East Boston Neighborhood (EBR-3)
Zoning Article	53
Project Description	The proposal seeks to construct a three-unit residential building with three residential floors, a fourth-level bonus room, bathroom, and roof deck, reusing the existing foundation and footprint.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Building Lot Coverage Excessive Permeable Area of Lot Insufficient Front Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient Rear Yard Insufficient Height Excessive

Planning Context:

11 Cheever Court is located in a predominantly residential area consisting primarily of three-family buildings, along with one- and two-family properties and some larger multifamily buildings.

Surrounding lots are generally narrow and rectangular, with buildings occupying substantial portions of their parcels and open space concentrated toward the rear. The subject lot is smaller and shallower than most nearby properties.

Under PLAN: East Boston, the property falls within a Neighborhood Residential Character Area, where the plan emphasizes preserving established residential character while supporting context-sensitive infill development.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposal received six zoning citations concerning excessive building lot coverage, insufficient permeable lot area, inadequate front-, side-, and rear-yard setbacks, and excessive building height in stories.

The property is located in the East Boston Residential-3 (EBR-3) subdistrict, where Article 53, Section 53-5.3, and Table F establish the applicable dimensional requirements. The property is a mid-block lot measuring approximately 25 feet by 39 feet, totaling 975 square feet. The proposal would construct a three-family residential building on the existing foundation footprint, with three residential floors and a fourth level containing an enclosed bonus room, bathroom, and roof deck.

For the building lot coverage and permeable lot area citations, Table F permits maximum building lot coverage of 60 percent and requires a minimum permeable lot area of 30 percent. The proposed building footprint of 772.9 square feet represents 79.3 percent lot coverage, exceeding the permitted maximum. This leaves only 20.7 percent of the lot outside the building footprint, less than the minimum area required for permeability.

For the front-yard setback citation, Table F requires a setback of 3 to 5 feet. The certified plot plan shows the existing foundation extending approximately to the Cheever Court lot line. Section 53-29.1 provides that where two or more buildings front on the same side of the same street within a block, the required front-yard setback must conform to the established building alignment. Although 5 Cheever Court appears aligned near the street lot line, the submitted materials do not establish a second qualifying building. The proposed front-yard condition therefore has not been shown to qualify under Section 53-29.1.

For the side-yard setback citation, Table F requires a minimum setback of 3 feet on each side of a detached building. The certified plot plan shows a 1.4-foot clearance adjoining 7–9 Cheever Court. The proposed building width of approximately 20.23 feet within the 25-foot lot leaves only 4.77 feet for both side yards combined, insufficient to provide the required 3 feet on each side.

For the rear-yard setback citation, Table F requires a minimum setback equal to one-third of lot depth, or approximately 13 feet. Section 53-29.10 permits a reduction for qualifying existing

shallow lots, subject to a minimum of 10 feet. The certified plot plan shows a rear clearance of approximately 0.7 feet, below both the standard requirement and the reduced minimum.

For the building-height citation, Table F limits building height to three stories and 35 feet. The drawings depict three residential floors and a fourth level containing an enclosed bonus room, bathroom, and interior stairway. Article 2 distinguishes a Story from a Story, Half, with the latter determined by specified floor-area and ceiling-area requirements. Although the drawings do not establish whether the fourth level qualifies as a half-story, even under that classification the building would comprise three and a half stories, exceeding the three-story maximum permitted by Table F. The building-height citation therefore applies regardless of the fourth level's classification.

The submitted materials also warrant clarification regarding the proposed building's placement. The certified plot plan documents the existing foundation, while the architectural drawings do not provide a dimensioned site plan establishing the proposed setbacks. The applicant should confirm the proposed building's placement within the lot.

In summary, the proposal requires relief for excessive building lot coverage, insufficient permeable lot area, inadequate front-, side-, and rear-yard setbacks, and excessive building height in stories.

The plans reviewed are titled “M. Builders, LLC - 11 Cheever Court, East Boston, MA, 02128”, prepared by Benchmark Designs, LLC and stamped for review on November 4, 2026.

Recommendation:
In reference to BOA1808917, the Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO: that revised plans be submitted to the Planning Department for design review, clearly documenting the proposed building footprint and yard dimensions and demonstrating compliance with the zoning requirements of the EBR-3 subdistrict under Article 53.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1891422
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-08-24
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	555 Bennington ST East Boston 02128
Parcel ID	0100859000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	East Boston Neighborhood EBR-4
Zoning Article	53
Project Description	The proposal seeks to convert an existing two-family building into a five-unit residential building by converting the basement and adding third and fourth floors, each accommodating a new dwelling unit.
Relief Type	Variance, Conditional Use
Violations	CFROD Roof Structure Restrictions Parking or Loading Insufficient

Planning Context:

555 Bennington Street is located in East Boston's Harbor View neighborhood along a predominantly residential section of Bennington Street. The surrounding area consists primarily of one-, two-, and three-unit buildings on narrow, closely developed lots.

Buildings typically rise two to three stories, with some featuring partially below-grade basements and windows near sidewalk level. The property is approximately 0.3 miles from Wood Island Station on the MBTA Blue Line.

PLAN: East Boston identifies Bennington Street as a corridor supporting four-story residential development while emphasizing compatibility with surrounding neighborhood character.

The property lies within the Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay District (CFROD). PLAN: East Boston identifies Harbor View as vulnerable to coastal flooding, with applicable regulations governing residential floor elevations and flood resilience.

The property also lies within the East Boston Neighborhood Restricted Roof Area, subject to Article 53, Section 53-25. Its location within 100 feet of McLean Playground requires Boston Parks and Recreation Commission approval under Boston Municipal Code Section 7-4.11.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposal received three zoning citations concerning the Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay District (CFROD), roof-structure restrictions, and insufficient off-street parking.

The property lies within the East Boston Residential-4 (EBR-4) subdistrict. Article 53, Table A permits multifamily residential uses, while Table F allows a maximum height of four stories and 50 feet. The proposed five-unit building would be four stories tall and approximately 46.5 feet high, within these limits.

For the CFROD citation, Article 53, Table A permits three to six dwelling units in EBR-4, including at the basement level, subject to Footnote (4) and Section 53-19. Although the proposal falls below the general applicability thresholds of Article 25A, Section 53-19.2 applies the residential-use restrictions of Section 25A-6, prohibiting new or expanded residential uses below the Sea Level Rise–Design Flood Elevation (SLR-DFE). The zoning viewer identifies the Sea Level Rise–Base Flood Elevation (SLR-BFE) as 19.5 feet in Boston City Base (BCB), establishing an SLR-DFE of 21.5 feet BCB.

The proposal would convert the partially finished basement into a dwelling unit. The drawings show the basement floor at an elevation of −8′-11″ relative to the first floor but do not establish its BCB elevation or identify the SLR-DFE. Compliance with Section 53-19.2 therefore remains unverified.

For the roof-structure citation, the property lies within the East Boston Neighborhood Restricted Roof Area. Under Article 53, Section 53-25.1, the proposed two-story addition above the existing roof requires conditional use approval under Sections 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4.

Section 53-25.1 requires consideration of prevailing building heights and architectural character. Although four stories are permitted in EBR-4, the addition would rise above the predominantly two- and three-story buildings nearby. Section 6-4 allows the Board to condition approval by requiring changes to building size and exterior appearance. The addition warrants consideration of its upper-level massing, including whether a greater setback from the street-facing roof edge could reduce its prominence along Bennington Street.

For the parking citation, Article 53, Table L requires one parking space per dwelling unit in buildings containing four or more units. Section 53-28.2 counts only added units for qualifying structures predating Article 53. The proposal would add three units to the existing two-family

building, requiring three parking spaces under this provision. The plans show no parking spaces.

In summary, the three zoning citations remain unresolved. The applicant should submit revised plans identifying the basement floor elevation and applicable SLR-DFE in the BCB datum to establish compliance with Section 53-19.2. The roof-structure and parking citations remain subject to the Board's determination.

The plans reviewed, titled “555 Bennington Street,” were prepared by O'Sullivan Architects, Inc., and accompanied by a zoning refusal letter dated August 19, 2026.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1891422, the Planning Department recommends DENIAL WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1905476
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-09-29
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	691 Saratoga ST East Boston 02128
Parcel ID	0100819000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	East Boston Neighborhood EBR-3
Zoning Article	53
Project Description	The proposal amends ALT1663517 to add a roof deck with guardrails to the newly constructed flat roof, accessed through a previously approved stairway headhouse.
Relief Type	Conditional Use
Violations	Roof Structure Restrictions

Planning Context:

The application at 691 Saratoga Street amends ALT1663517 to add a roof deck and guardrails to the existing flat roof, accessed through a previously approved stairway headhouse. The conversion from two to three residential units is underway.

The site directly abuts McLean Playground in a predominantly residential area of one-, two-, and three-unit buildings, alongside larger multifamily properties. Cyclomedia imagery dated May 18, 2026, shows the approved flat roof and stairway headhouse in place.

The property lies within the East Boston Neighborhood Restricted Roof Area, where Article 53, Section 53-25 regulates roof structures. Its location within 100 feet of McLean Playground also requires Boston Parks and Recreation Commission approval under Boston Municipal Code Section 7-4.11.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposal received one zoning citation concerning roof-structure restrictions. Although the refusal letter cites Article 53, Section 53-52, Section 53-25 contains the applicable provisions. The property lies within the East Boston Neighborhood Restricted Roof Area. Section 53-25.1

requires conditional use approval for rooftop construction that alters the roof profile or configuration of an existing residential building, except as allowed under Section 53-25.2.

The amendment proposes a roof deck and guardrails on the existing flat roof. ALT1663517 previously approved the flat roof and enclosed stairway headhouse. Cyclomedia imagery dated May 18, 2026, shows both structures in place.

Section 53-25.2(a) allows open roof decks subject to specified conditions. Subsection (a)(i) permits decks on flat main roofs or roofs with slopes below five degrees. The existing flat roof meets this requirement. Subsection (a)(ii) requires the deck surface to be less than one foot above the highest point of the main roof. The plans omit this vertical dimension, leaving compliance unverified.

Section 53-25.2(a)(iii) permits access through a stairway headhouse no greater than 10 feet in height, 8 feet in width, and 10 feet in length. It also requires a 10-foot horizontal setback from roof edges facing a public right-of-way. The plans show the previously approved headhouse set back 9 feet 5 inches from the Saratoga Street roof edge, seven inches below the required minimum. Although ALT1663517 approved the headhouse, its configuration remains relevant to the proposed deck's eligibility under Section 53-25.2.

Section 53-25.2(a)(iv) requires handrails, balustrades, hatches, and bulkheads to maintain five-foot setbacks from all roof edges. The proposed 42-inch guardrails meet these requirements.

Because the depicted access configuration does not satisfy Section 53-25.2(a)(iii), the proposed deck does not qualify for the allowed-roof-structure exception. It therefore requires conditional use approval under Section 53-25.1, subject to Sections 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4.

Section 53-25.1 also requires the Board to consider potential damage to the uniformity of height or architectural character of the immediate vicinity. The plans depict a roof deck approximately 10 feet 9 inches by 23 feet 9 inches. An existing rooftop terrace at 704 Saratoga Street provides a nearby example. The ZBA approved a deck-related application there in 2019, before the PLAN: East Boston zoning amendments took effect in May 2024.

Unlike 704 Saratoga Street, 691 Saratoga Street directly abuts McLean Playground, placing the

proposed rooftop elements along its immediate edge. Cyclomedia street-level imagery dated May 18, 2026, shows rooftop framing prominently visible from Saratoga Street along the playground frontage. Although the imagery does not establish the finished deck's appearance, it demonstrates the rooftop's exposure to public views.

The proposed deck and guardrails could further alter the visible roofline and affect the perceived openness of the adjoining recreational setting. Compliance with railing setbacks does not independently establish architectural compatibility. Section 6-3(b) requires the Board to find that the conditional use will not adversely affect the neighborhood. The proposed deck's scale, potential visibility, and relationship to McLean Playground raise concerns relevant to this finding. Sections 6-4(c) and (d) allow the Board to condition approval on modifications to exterior appearance and size. A dimensioned roof section and park-facing elevations would help establish deck-height compliance and assess the finished deck's visual impact.

The plans reviewed are titled “Saratoga Street Addition – 691 Saratoga Street, East Boston, MA 02128,” prepared by Designs by Oz and issued for review on July 15, 2026.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1905476, the Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1907096
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-10-05
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	44 Kilby ST Boston 02109
Parcel ID	0303845000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Boston Zoning Code SKY
Zoning Article	31
Project Description	The proponent seeks the removal of a proviso that granted a Conditional Use permit to the petitioner only.
Relief Type	Conditional Use
Violations	Removal of Take-out Proviso

Planning Context:

44-48 Kilby Street or 7 Liberty Square is located within a SKY zoning subdistrict and is regulated by the Boston Zoning Code. Skyline districts are those that the city has identified as being high-activity areas, with potential to support a vibrant mix of uses. The area is highly accessible via transit and is just a 3 minute walk to State Street station and the MBTA Orange Line. Liberty Square is also within easy walking distance of both Downtown Crossing and South Station.

Zoning Analysis:

The proponent is seeking the removal of a proviso established in 2007 that allowed for a then conditional use to include a restaurant with takeout, but which restricts the Conditional Use permit solely to this operator.

Updated zoning for the Downtown areas was codified on October 22, 2025, which made the take out use Allowed as of right for all Skyline districts. This change was made to reform outdated rules that limited establishments like cafes, bakeries, and restaurants in areas that

support lively pedestrian corridors. These changes make it easier for retail businesses to open quickly without going through the lengthy and expensive variance process.

Zoning relief is appropriate given that the updated zoning now allows for this use without stipulation.

Plans are dated February 20, 2007, and were provided by the proponent. Plans were approved by ISD on April 5, 2007.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1907096, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1887139
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-08-12
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	210 Hanover ST Boston 02113
Parcel ID	0302393000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	North End Neighborhood Hanover CC
Zoning Article	54
Project Description	Proponent seeks a Conditional Use Permit to change the occupancy from Restaurant with Accessory Office to Restaurant w/ Take-Out and Accessory Office.
Relief Type	Conditional Use
Violations	Use: Conditional (Take-Out Restaurant - Small)

Planning Context:

Located on the first block of Hanover Street, one of the North End's primary dining and commercial corridors, 210 Hanover Street currently features a vacant ground-floor restaurant space. Hanover Street is defined by continuous ground-floor activity, with numerous restaurants offering take-out options alongside traditional sit-down dining, including established neighborhood precedents such as The Daily Catch's dedicated walk-up window two blocks away.

The proponent seeks a Conditional Use Permit to incorporate take-out service into the existing restaurant use, allowing the ground-floor restaurant space to accommodate modern food service delivery and other options. Establishing a new, active restaurant tenant at a prominent location in the neighborhood reinforces an active pedestrian experience while aligning the property with established commercial patterns seen throughout the North End.

Zoning Analysis:

Pursuant to Section 6-3, adding take-out service to the existing restaurant requires the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit. Under these standards, conditional relief is granted where a

proposed use is in an appropriate location, does not negatively impact pedestrians or vehicles in the immediate vicinity, and does not create an overall nuisance. Given the lot's location along a busy commercial corridor, adding take-out to the existing restaurant use fits the immediate context and will not negatively impact foot traffic into and out of the neighborhood, and will instead directly benefit the active ground-floor seen along Hanover Street. Because this proposal meets the criteria outlined in Section 6-3, the Planning Department supports the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1887139, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

Case	BOA1837259
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-04-07
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	168 W Canton ST Roxbury 02118
Parcel ID	0400458000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	South End Neighborhood MFR
Zoning Article	64
Project Description	This project proposes interior renovations, rear facade alterations, a roof deck with two rooftop condensers, and rear first and upper story decks projecting into the rear yard. A separate garage building permit is related but has been abandoned.
Relief Type	Conditional Use, Variance
Violations	Roof Structure Restrictions Screening and buffering Rear Yard Encroachment

Planning Context:

168 West Canton Street is located in the South End Landmark District. The block is composed of residential rowhouses with a private alley. The site is less than half a mile from The Massachusetts Avenue and Back Bay MBTA stations and is within a five minute walk of MBTA bus stations serving the number 10 and 43 buses. Across West Canton Street is Hayes Park. This parcel is located in both the Coastal Flood Resilience (CFROD) and the Groundwater Conservation (GCOD) overlay districts, as well as Restricted Parking and Restricted Roof districts. The project does not trigger CFROD Resilience Review or Boston Water and Sewer Commission review, but proposed exterior facade work must be reviewed by the South End Landmarks District Commission.

Zoning Analysis:

The project requires conditional approval of the rear building extension, balcony, and roof deck per Article 64. The project also requires a variance for rooftop mechanical equipment placement per Article 64, not mentioned in the refusal letter but discussed herein.

Art. 64, Sec. 9.4: "Any Proposed Project that otherwise meets the applicable use and dimensional requirements of this Article shall be conditional if such Proposed Project involves the extension of a Town House or Row House into a rear yard, where such extension...involves the addition of a porch or balcony, other than a roof deck, above the first story." In the MFR subdistrict, the required minimum rear setback is 20 feet. The existing site condition provides a rear setback of 39 feet. Where the proposed rear building extension and balcony is proposed, an existing solarium will be removed. This building feature currently extends 15.3 feet into the rear yard, exclusive of the aforementioned rear yard setback, with a 15 square foot bay window bump out above, not extending farther into the rear yard than the first floor solarium. The proposed rear addition will extend the building's living space approximately 2.3 feet into the rear yard on each the first, second, and third stories. On the third story, a deck will extend five additional feet into the rear yard. These building and balcony extensions into the rear yard respectfully maintain the total existing footprint, redistributing solarium and bay window square footage between three stories with shallow additions. Furthermore, the proposed third floor balcony will align with the existing balcony on the neighboring property.

Art. 64, Sec. 34: "No roofed structure designed or used for human occupancy...headhouse, or mechanical equipment... shall be erected or enlarged on the roof of an existing residential building" without approval of a conditional use, considering "whether such roof structure has the potential of damaging the uniformity of height or architectural character of the immediate vicinity." Furthermore, roof deck balustrades shall be "set back horizontally at least five (5) feet from the front and rear roof edge." The proposed roof deck including balustrades will be set back appropriately, justifying approval of the proposed roof deck. However, mechanical equipment must be relocated to be further setback from the rear roof edge, as required below.

Art. 64, Sec. 33-4: "Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be set back at least five (5) feet from all roof edges." Rooftop condensers are proposed to be located no more than two feet from the rear roof edge. Due to the limited impact of the proposed work on adjacent properties,

Staff is in support of all requested conditional allowances if condensers are moved at least five feet from the roof edge.

Plans reviewed are titled "Plan of Land 168 W Canton St Boston, MA 02118," prepared by Dover Design and dated September 2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1837259, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO/S: condensers shall be moved at least five feet from the roof edge.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

Case	BOA1907336
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-10-05
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	399 Boylston ST Boston 02116
Parcel ID	0501230000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Boston Proper B-6-90a
Zoning Article	6
Project Description	Remove proviso granted to “this petitioner only”.
Relief Type	Conditional Use
Violations	Removal of Proviso

Planning Context:

399 Boylston Street is located in the Back Bay Neighborhood. It is an eleven-story building with ground floor retail, similar to and compatible with adjacent buildings within the subject block and surrounding area. The subject space is currently designed as a restaurant. The proposed project would reconfigure the space to match the needs of the new tenant without changing the use.

Zoning Analysis:

The project was flagged for violation to Article 6, subsection 4(d). The restaurant use previously was approved with a condition, as allowed by the aforementioned section of the code, which granted the restaurant use proviso to a particular petitioner. This request removes this condition to allow for a new user to remodel the existing restaurant space and operate a restaurant. Staff is in support of the removal of proviso tied to petitioner as restaurant use is appropriate and present in the subject area and should be allowed without prejudice.

Plans reviewed are titled "Mendocino Farms - Boylston St," prepared by NORR, not dated.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1907336, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1878924
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-07-28
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	68 Grampian WY Dorchester 02125
Parcel ID	1302600000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood 1F-7000
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Extend the living area into the existing enclosed rear porches, add a front porch to the third floor unit, and internally renovate the basement storage spaces.
Relief Type	Variance, Conditional Use
Violations	FAR Excessive Extension of Non Conforming Use

Planning Context:

The proposed project is an extension of living area including interior and exterior renovations to an existing three unit residential building in the Savin Hill Neighborhood. This is a fully residential neighborhood with Morrissey Boulevard state highway and Interstate-93 running north to south along the western and eastern edges. The site has direct access to Savin Hill Park and is located 0.4 miles (less than a 10-minute walk) to the Savin Hill MBTA Red Line Station. The ongoing Neighborhood Housing Zoning Initiative encourages contextually-sensitive infill development and small-scale additions to existing properties, which our current zoning code prohibits, by establishing updated dimensional controls.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed alteration project triggers one zoning violation for excessive Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Also, because the proposed project includes changes to the facade (addition of a front porch), it must undergo design review to ensure alignment with Neighborhood Design Overlay (NDOD) standards.

The maximum allowed FAR for this area is 0.4 which is not consistent with the FARs in the surrounding area. The proposed FAR is consistent with the surrounding FARs and the project increases bulk only in the rear without triggering a rear yard violation. This indicates that the proposed changes maintain the building's alignment with the context.

The FAR dimensional violation is a pre-existing condition which is contextual with neighboring sites. According to Section 9-1, existing nonconformities trigger a citation which must be approved by the Board of Appeal to be extended to this new project. The Planning Department recommends a conditional use be granted for the building's existing nonconforming FAR.

Plans reviewed are titled "PROPOSED THREE FAMILY RENOVATION 68 GRAMPIAN WAY", prepared by Choo & Company Inc., and dated 12/30/2025.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1878924, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO/S: that plans be submitted to the Planning Department for design review to ensure alignment with Neighborhood Design Overlay (NDOD) standards.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1871527
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-07-11
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	68 Clarkson ST Dorchester 02125
Parcel ID	1501805000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood 3F-5000
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Construct a new four story, four unit building with four parking spaces in the rear yard on an existing vacant lot.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Front Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient Lot Area Insufficient Lot Width Insufficient Lot Frontage Insufficient FAR Excessive Height Excessive (stories) Height Excessive (ft) Forbidden Use

Planning Context:

The project site is in the Bowdoin/Geneva area of the Dorchester neighborhood. The site has access to bus transit on Columbia Road and Bowdoin Street and is about a 15-minute walk from the Four Corners/Geneva MBTA Commuter Rail Station. There are small open space and retail/service amenities throughout the area.

The proposed project is a new four story, four unit residential building. This is a common proposal for vacant residential lots in this neighborhood. The surrounding lots are predominantly three story buildings with two to four units. The Neighborhood Housing Zoning Initiative is establishing contextual dimensional controls for small scale residential renovations and new

construction. This will legalize contextual infill development of multi-unit homes on vacant lots and eliminate outdated dimensional definitions and controls.

While the proposed project's choice of site, location, and design are suitable for the area, the proposed project needs to comply with accessibility and fire safety regulations. The entire first floor dwelling unit, any common areas, and the main entrance will need to be fully accessible due to the total unit count (4) as per ADA regulations and the building must be fully sprinklered.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed four story, four unit building violates 9 dimensional and use zoning requirements.

The proposed project is in a 3F-5000 residential subdistrict regulated by Article 65 Dorchester Neighborhood zoning. Multi-family residential uses are not allowed in Three-Family subdistricts. The proposed project is a four unit building, which is not allowed in this area but does not fall out of context with what exists in the surrounding area. The minimum allowed lot area in this subdistrict is 5,000 square feet. The proposed project site is a 4,500 square foot lot. The minimum required lot width and lot frontage is 50 feet, and the proposed lot width and frontage is 37'-6". Lot area, width, and frontage, are a pre-existing conditions which cannot and will not be changed by the project proposed. Deep, narrow lots containing three to four residential units are common in this area. Therefore, the use and lot size violations are recommended for relief.

Related to the various zoning violations for lot size, there are a number of additional dimensional violations indicating that this 4,500 square foot lot is not buildable despite the presence of similar developed lots on the block. The minimum required side yard width is 10 feet, and the proposed side yard is 3 feet wide. There is some variation among side yards in the area. However, minimal side yard on one side with a driveway leading to the rear on the other side is a common scheme that allows sufficient light and air between buildings while also providing off-street parking. The minimum required front yard depth is 15 feet, and the proposed front yard is 8'-5". Front yards range from about 5 feet to 10 feet deep on Clarkson Street. Therefore, the side yard and front yard violations are recommended for relief due to their conformity with the surrounding context.

The maximum allowed height is 2.5 stories and 35 feet. The proposed height is four stories with a sloped roof and about 39 feet high. This is the same height as the building next door at 66

Clarkson Street. The maximum allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.5, and the proposed FAR is 1.13. The maximum allowed FAR is not present in the immediate surrounding. Because the aforementioned yard and height violations are also representative of the surrounding, the bulk of the proposed building is not inconsistent with the context. Therefore, the FAR violation is recommended for relief.

Plans reviewed are titled "68 Clarkson Street", prepared by context collaborative design workshop, and dated 5/13/26.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1871527, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

Case	BOA1855660
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-05-28
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	179 to 195 Freeport ST Dorchester 02122
Parcel ID	1600011000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood Neighborhood Shopping
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Construct a solar panel covered carport above an existing open air parking lot.
Relief Type	Conditional Use
Violations	Extension of Non Conforming Use

Planning Context:

The proposed project would add an awning above an existing private parking lot owned and utilized by the neighboring business, Work Inc.. This awning will be fully covered in solar panels. This area of Dorchester is notable for its more industrial character, with large parking lots for private businesses being common in the area. This project represents an attempt to improve the quality of the site for visitors while also providing energy for the nearby business.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project is triggering a violation for an extension of a nonconforming use. The lot is utilized as a parking lot, which is forbidden within the neighborhood shopping subdistrict. This reflects a disconnect between the zoning code and the built reality of the neighborhood. The area is defined by large industrial buildings with large associated parking lots. The project fits within the established neighborhood character and presents an opportunity to improve the currently existing conditions.

Plans reviewed were titled "205 Freeport Street" Crafted by Resonant Energy dated 8/16/25.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1855660, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

Case	BOA1878927
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-07-28
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	1970 Dorchester AV Dorchester 02124
Parcel ID	1604853000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood MFR/LS
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Change use from retail to restaurant with take out component. No dimensional changes to the massing of the existing building.
Relief Type	Variance, Conditional Use
Violations	Parking or Loading Insufficient Use: Forbidden Use: Conditional

Planning Context:

The proposed project would convert a former commercial space into a sit down restaurant with a take out component. The proposed project is located near Ashmont station, with a collection of retail, commercial, and high density residential all being present within a short distance of the site. The proposed project works to fit into this context and the evolving status of Dorchester Ave in this area.

Zoning Analysis:

The two major violations for this project are in regards to its use. Large restaurants are forbidden and Take out Restaurants are conditional. However, this does not reflect the built reality of the neighborhood. Over the past twenty years, large development projects have turned the area around Ashmont station into a commercial hub while at the same time zoning was not updated. There are many restaurants and take out venues within a two block radius and this project fits within that context. This reflects a disconnect between the zoning code and the built reality of the neighborhood and zoning reform should be explored.

The proposed project is also facing a violation in regards to insufficient parking. The proposed project would require around 8 spaces while the proposed project is providing 0. However, BTD parking guidelines recommend a parking ratio of zero in this area. The surrounding context for the project supports this idea as on street parking is the predominant form in the neighborhood.

Plans reviewed were titled "Tori Japan" Created by David Hiatt Architects and dated 4-13-26.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1878927, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1881930, BOA1881950,BOA1881948 BOA1881944,BOA1881945,BOA1881946 BOA1881942,BOA1881939,BOA1881938 BOA1881937,BOA1881933,BOA1881928 BOA1881941
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-02-04
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	183 Norfolk ST 17 Dorchester MA 02124 10 Balina PL 17 Dorchester MA 02124 12R Balina PL 17 Dorchester MA 02124 7 Charles RD 17 Dorchester MA 02124 5 Charles RD 17 Dorchester MA 02124 3 Charles RD 17 Dorchester MA 02124 1 Charles RD 17 Dorchester MA 02124 183D Norfolk ST 17 Dorchester MA 02124 183C Norfolk ST 17 Dorchester MA 02124 183B Norfolk ST 17 Dorchester MA 02124 183A Norfolk ST 17 Dorchester MA 02124 183 Norfolk ST 17 Dorchester MA 02124 185 Norfolk ST 17 Dorchester MA 02124
Parcel ID	1701618000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Greater Mattapan Neighborhood 3F-5000
Zoning Article	60
Project Description	In conjunction with BOA1881928, BOA1881930, BOA1881933, BOA1881937, BOA1881938, BOA1881939, BOA1881941, BOA1881942, BOA1881944, BOA1881945, BOA1881946, BOA1881948, and BOA1881950, combine two lots to erect 12 single-unit residential dwellings with five parking spaces.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Parking or Loading Insufficient Two or More Dwelling Same Lot Additional Lot Area Insufficient Usable Open Space Insufficient Front Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient Rear Yard Insufficient

Planning Context:

The proposed project seeks to combine two lots at 183 Norfolk Street to erect 12 single-family residential dwellings with five parking spaces, in conjunction with BOA1881928, BOA1881930, BOA1881933, BOA1881937, BOA1881938, BOA1881939, BOA1881941, BOA1881942, BOA1881944, BOA1881945, BOA1881946, BOA1881948, and BOA1881950. The combined lot will be approximately 19,113 square feet. Each single-family residential dwelling will be 2.5 stories tall and contain three bedrooms. The five parking spaces will be accessible via Balina Place. This lot was previously occupied by the Full Life Gospel Center, which vacated the site in February 2025. The rear of the property was also previously used for parking.

This site abuts the MBTA Fairmount Line and is subject to the MBTA Zone of Influence requirements.

A fire lane that is 20 feet wide will be provided along this side of the property to meet Boston Fire Department's requirements for access. An additional fire lane will be provided that is 21.8 feet wide that also serves as a pedestrian walkway connecting the proposed dwellings to Norfolk Street.

While located in Dorchester, this portion of Norfolk Street is located within the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Zoning District, within a 3F-5000 subdistrict. Norfolk Street is primarily residential with buildings that range from triple-deckers, two-unit residential buildings, one-story commercial buildings, and one-story churches. This project supports the goals outlined in Housing a Changing City: Boston 2030 (September 2018) as it would increase the housing stock by building a contextually-appropriate infill housing units on an underutilized lot. Additionally, the proposed units will all be homeownership opportunities.

This project would also add affordable housing units as per Article 79 Inclusionary Zoning. Article 79 requires market-rate housing developments with seven or more units to support the creation of income-restricted housing. The project proposes to exceed this requirement by having all units at sales prices affordable to households earning no more than 100% of the Area Median Income. The applicant will need to execute an agreement with the Mayor's Office of Housing to comply with the policy.

Zoning Analysis:

Each refusal letter has seven violations: insufficient parking or loading, two or more dwellings on the same lot, insufficient additional lot area for each additional dwelling unit, insufficient open space per unit, insufficient front yard, insufficient side yard, and insufficient rear yard.

The project is proposing five parking spaces. Under Article 60, the required parking ratio for residential uses is 0.75 spaces per dwelling unit. However, in the case of affordable residential housing, no parking shall be required. Affordable residential housing is defined as projects where at least 60% of the proposed residential units are affordable to households earning at or below 100% of Area Median Income (AMI). While the proposed project will still need to execute an Affordable Housing Agreement with the Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH), it proposes that all residential units be sold at prices affordable to households earning no more than 100% of the AMI. Therefore, the project appears to satisfy the affordability threshold, this should not be considered a violation.

Under Article 60, lots within a 3F-5000 subdistrict are required to have 5,000 sf for one or two units and an additional 2,500 sf for each additional unit. In order to accommodate 12 units on one lot, the lot would need to be 30,000 sf. The proposed lot, after combination, is only 19,113 sf. However, relief is warranted because this area is characterized by smaller lots containing a variety of residential properties, such as triple deckers. For example, 181 Norfolk Street is a triple decker on a 2,435 sf lot and 179 Norfolk Street is a triple decker on a 2,366 sf lot. The proposed project would erect 12 residential home ownership buildings on a vacant lot with buildings comparable in size to existing residential properties in the area, but on a larger lot compared to the surrounding area. Therefore, relief is warranted. This is also a case of zoning reform to ensure that the dimensions align with the existing built environment.

For usable open space per dwelling unit, projects within a 3F-5000 subdistrict are required to provide 400 sf per dwelling unit or 4,800 sf total for 12 units. Although the exact amount of usable open space was not provided, the proposed project does not appear to meet this requirement, as it includes two 20-foot fire lanes and five parking spaces measuring 9' x 20'. The fire lanes are a requirement to ensure that the Boston Fire Department is able to access each unit on the site. These elements occupy a majority of the lot, limiting the area available for additional usable open space. However, each unit includes both a porch and a deck, helping to ensure that residents have access to open space and thus relief is warranted.

Within a 3F-5000 subdistrict, the required front yard is 15’ or existing building alignment, the required side yard is 10’ and the required rear yard is 30’. The project proposes a front yard of 0’, a side yard of 2.1’, and a rear yard of 20’ for the entire site. However, relief is warranted due to the overall site constraints and the proposed arrangement of the 12 residential dwellings. Because the Boston Fire Department requires access to each dwelling through 20’ fire lanes, it limits the ability to increase the proposed yard dimensions while maintaining adequate fire access and accommodating all 12 residential units. Additionally, the proposed layout maintains a minimum of 10’ between each unit.

Additionally, many properties in the surrounding area also do not meet these setback requirements. For example, 181 Norfolk Street is a triple decker on a lot that is roughly 32’ by 74’. Based on the existing site conditions, the property is estimated to have a 0’ front yard, a 5’ side yard, and a 6’ rear yard. The building occupies a substantial portion of the lot, with its front deck stairs extending to the sidewalk along Norfolk Street. Similarly, 191 Norfolk is another triple decker on a lot that is roughly 31’ by 75’, also has front deck stairs that extend to the sidewalk, reflecting an existing pattern of residential structures and entryways located close to the front lot line.

In regards to two or more dwellings on one lot, Section 60-33.11 requires that a) the distance between dwellings must be at least twice the minimum side yard, b) all buildings must meet dimensional requirements for lot area, lot width, lot frontage, usable open space, and front, rear, and side yards as if they were on separate lots, and c) no dwelling shall be built behind another unless approved by the Board of Appeal.

Relief should be granted for this violation for different factors. The first is that the proposed project is erecting 12 single-unit residential buildings onto a vacant underutilized lot. This layout would make it difficult to increase the front, side, and rear yard while ensuring adequate fire access as previously noted. Second, the proposed use is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed project would introduce 12 residential home ownership buildings on a vacant lot with buildings comparable in size to existing residential properties in the area, but on a larger lot compared to those found in the surrounding area. Third, while Section 60-33.11 requires 20’ between each unit, the project proposes 10’ between each unit to help ensure adequate air and light to each unit. Increasing this would be difficult due to the constraints imposed by the fire lane. However, the fire lane also provides both emergency and pedestrian access to the individual units. Finally, although Section 60-33.11 discourages putting

another residential dwelling in the rear of another, the current layout is necessary due to the shape of the lot. The lot is L-shaped lot, directly abuts three triple deckers on Norfolk Street and Balina Place, and directly abuts the MBTA Fairmount Line in the rear of the site. The shape of the lot limits the placement of the units while maintaining adequate spacing and the required fire access. The current layout maximizes the use of the lot while accommodating site constraints, including the fire lane, and taking into consideration the MBTA Fairmount Line at the rear of the site. Because it directly abuts the MBTA Fairmount Line, it falls within the MBTA Zone of Influence where it is subject to MBTA review. Therefore relief should be granted for this violation.

The plans reviewed are titled 183 Norfolk St_Site Plan_C1.00_20260925154751 and are dated 9/22/2026 and were prepared by Howard Stein Hudson. Additionally, plans titled ERT1809676 update refusal stam plan 10 05 2026 dated 6/15/2026 prepared by Caveney Architectural Collaborative were also reviewed.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1881930, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO/S: that plans be submitted to the Planning Department for design review with attention to the site plan to maximize open space while identifying appropriate location for trash facilities and building orientation and location of individual unit entrances.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1902016
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-09-17
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	79 to 89 Hooker ST Allston 02134
Parcel ID	2200024000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Allston/Brighton Neighborhood 2F-5000
Zoning Article	51
Project Description	The proposed project involves demolishing the existing structure under a separate permit and constructing six townhouse units, each with a one-car garage. All units will be fully sprinklered.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Off Street Parking FAR Excessive Height Excessive (stories) Side Yard Insufficient Rear Yard Insufficient Use: Forbidden

Planning Context:

The project is located at 79–89 Hooker Street in Allston, in a residential area characterized by a mix of two- and three-family homes, larger multifamily apartment buildings, and nearby commercial uses. Surrounding residential lots generally range from 2,000 to 3,500 square feet, with a variety of building sizes and densities throughout the neighborhood.

The subject property is a 10,635-square-foot corner lot, significantly larger than many of the surrounding residential properties. The proposal involves demolishing the existing structure and constructing six three-story townhouse units, each with a single-car garage. The proposed development introduces additional housing while providing a residential building type that complements the mix of housing found in the surrounding area.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project involves demolishing the existing structure and constructing six three-story townhouse units, each with a single-car garage. The property is located in the 2F-5000

Residential Subdistrict of the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood District and requires zoning relief for use, FAR, building height, front and side yard setbacks, and off-street parking.

Article 51, Section 8, Use: The proposed six-unit townhouse development is a forbidden use and requires relief. The surrounding neighborhood includes two- and three-family homes and larger multifamily buildings, making the proposed residential use generally consistent with the area's housing mix.

Article 51, Section 9, Floor Area Ratio (FAR): A maximum FAR of 0.6 is permitted, while 1.13 is proposed. The larger lot size and surrounding mix of residential building types provide context for the additional density.

Article 51, Section 9, Building Height: A maximum of 2.5 stories and 35 feet is permitted. The proposal is three stories and 35 feet, meeting the height limit in feet. Three-story residential buildings are present nearby, making the proposed height consistent with the neighborhood's character.

Article 51, Section 9, Front Yard: A minimum setback of 20 feet is required. The proposal meets this requirement along Hooker Street but provides approximately 6.6 feet along North Harvard Street at its narrowest point, requiring relief. The reduced setback reflects the corner lot configuration.

Article 51, Section 9, Side Yard: A minimum setback of 10 feet is required. The eastern side yard provides approximately 6.6 feet, requiring relief, while the southern side yard meets the requirement.

Article 51, Section 56, Off-Street Parking: A minimum of 1.25 spaces per unit is required, totaling 7.5 spaces. The proposal provides six garage spaces, one per unit, requiring relief while providing dedicated parking for each residence.

While zoning relief is required, the proposed townhouse development is generally compatible with the surrounding mix of residential uses, building heights, and densities.

Plans for 79–89 Hooker Street, reviewed by Inspectional Services on July 2, 2026, and the zoning refusal dated September 21, 2026, were reviewed in support of this recommendation.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1902016, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO/S: that plans be submitted to the Planning Department for design review with vehicular access from the rear.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1887118
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-08-12
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	87 W Seventh ST South Boston 02127
Parcel ID	0600388000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	South Boston Neighborhood MFR
Zoning Article	68
Project Description	This project proposes to add a four story addition to an existing three story building, finish and expand the existing basement, add a fourth story above the existing building, and add a roof deck to change the occupancy from three to five units.
Relief Type	Variance, Conditional use
Violations	Parking or Loading Insufficient Roof Structure Restrictions FAR Excessive Height Excessive (ft) Usable Open Space Insufficient Front Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient Rear Yard Insufficient Additional Lot Area Insufficient Forbidden Use

Planning Context:

87 West Seventh Street is located in the South Boston Neighborhood near Dorchester Avenue, on a residential street with three-story buildings and parking lots. The subject site is currently developed with a three-story, three-unit building covering half of the lot with a sizable rear yard. The proposed project will construct a building addition to the rear as well as fourth floor addition and conversion of the existing basement to living area, more than doubling the residential gross square footage on site and removing the existing rear yard.

Immediately adjacent to the subject lot on West Seventh Street as well as to the rear and rear diagonal to the site are residential buildings of the near same size and scale. The site is served

by public transportation with the MBTA bus station serving the number 11 bus route at the corner of the subject block and Broadway and Andrew MBTA Red Line Stations each half a mile from the subject site, yet sidewalk conditions in this area are unreliable. Orton Field is a highly programmed BPS park located 0.4 miles from the subject site and contains basketball courts, a baseball field, and a children's playground. The next closest public green space is Moakley Park, located 0.7 miles from the site.

The property is located within the Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay District, Restricted Roof District, and Restricted Parking overlay districts. While the project does not meet the trigger thresholds for Article 25A Resilience Review, Staff strongly recommends consideration of the Base Flood Elevation (18 feet) in relation to the site's elevation and consideration of non-residential alternative uses of areas below the DFE in the interest of life-safety.

Zoning Analysis:

This project was cited for violation to several areas including parking, height, and lot and building dimensions, all based in Article 68 and discussed in further detail below. Additionally, the proposed basement residential use is forbidden in the South Boston Neighborhood District per Article 68, Section 7, requiring the project to obtain approval of a forbidden use which, due to the site's location in the CFROD, Staff does not support.

Parking: A minimum of 1.5 parking spaces is required per dwelling unit, totaling 7.5 parking spaces required. No parking is present today for the existing three units, and no parking is proposed with the building addition. While in violation to the Zoning Code parking minimums, this is in line with BTD's guidelines. Staff is in support of a variance to the minimum parking requirement on this site based on its proximity to the bus line and MBTA Red Line stations.

Height: The existing building on the subject site is 35 feet tall. The proposed fourth-story addition will bring the height to 51 feet, 11 feet above the maximum height of 40 feet. Furthermore, the site is located in a Restricted Roof District, requiring consideration for light and/or air flow restriction to adjacent structures and/or the restriction of views from roofs, windows, doors, or balconies. Because adjacent buildings are no taller than the subject site, the only anticipated, potential negative impact of granting the requested 51 feet is additional shadow cast to the rear of the subject site. Presently, buildings to the rear are approximately 70 feet away, but the proposed rear building addition will reduce this setback to approximately 30 feet.

Lot and Building Dimensions: Article 68, Tale D sets forth the following dimensional requirements: maximum FAR of 2, minimum additional lot area of 6,000 square feet, minimum usable open space of 1,000 square feet, and minimum front, side, and rear yard setbacks of 5, 3, and 20 feet respectively. The existing parcel at 1,621 square feet is average to large for the subject area. The existing building currently is nonconforming to front and side yard setbacks, but provides an ample rear yard and open space. Furthermore, the existing FAR is 1.8, under the maximum allowed FAR of 2. The proposed building addition will increase the FAR to 4.2, worsen the additional lot area per unit requirement non-conformity, bring the rear yard setback and open space into non-compliance.

Staff believes that while there is opportunity to expand the existing building on the subject site, the proposed addition is out of scale with the surrounding development. Staff is in support of approval of a combination of the requested variances at a lesser degree than those proposed in this request. Given the site's location within CFROD and prohibition of residential uses in basements due to concern for life-safety, Staff believes additional height is appropriate to build additional residential gross floor area upward rather than downward. However, the applicant should, at a minimum, reduce the rear massing of the building addition and maintain the required rear setback of 20 feet.

Plans reviewed are titled "Renovation - Multi-Family 87 West Seventh Street, Boston, MA," prepared by Stefanov Architects and dated July 2026.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1887118, The Planning Department recommends DENIAL WITHOUT PREJUDICE. The applicant should consider Staff comments and redesign the building addition in a manner that respects future flood risk and considers open space, setbacks, and massing impacts.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1800300
ZBA Submitted Date	2025-11-21
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	51 Buttonwood ST Dorchester 02125
Parcel ID	1303307000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Dorchester Neighborhood 3F-5000
Zoning Article	65
Project Description	Combine two parcels into a new parcel, demolish the current single-family home, and replace it with a 11 unit multifamily building.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive Height Excessive (ft) Height Excessive (stories) Rear Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient Front Yard Insufficient Parking or Loading Insufficient Use: Multifamily (Forbidden)

Planning Context:

The proposed project would combine two existing lots into one new lot in order to construct a new 11 unit multifamily building. There is currently a 2.5 story residential building that will be demolished in order to facilitate new construction.

The project is located in Dorchester, at the nexus of the Polish Triangle and the Little Saigon neighborhoods near the nexus of Columbia and Dorchester Ave. This area is characterized by commercial and mixed-use buildings along Dorchester Avenue, with dense residential development common as one moves away from the main street. The triple-decker is the predominant form of residential building both along Dorchester Ave and the surrounding neighborhood.

This area of Dorchester is well served by public transit. It is located around 500 feet from Dorchester Avenue with its active bus connections, as well as 500 feet from JFK/UMass MBTA red line station, with connections to both the Braintree and Ashmont lines.

Zoning Analysis:

The proposed project is triggering 6 separate zoning violations. The first of these violations is for use. This project is located in a 3F-D-3000 zoning district, which has multifamily residential as a forbidden use. However, this does not match the built reality of the neighborhood. There is an abundance of building typologies that exceed the zoning. Double-wide triple-deckers are common throughout the area, which contain 6+ units. More traditional multi-Family is also common, as the project sits at the intersection of two major roadways. This reflects a disconnect between the zoning code and the character of the neighborhood and is an indicator of needed zoning reform.

The next violation is due to the FAR being above the zoned maximum. The proposed project has a FAR of 2.6 while the area is only zoned for a FAR of 0.50. The zoning requirement is not reflective of the built environment of the neighborhood. The triple-decker that occupies the majority of the lot is exceedingly common in this area, with FARs well above the 0.50 maximum. If this violation were to be applied to the area, the familiar built fabric would be unrecognizable. This goes against planning goals as the preservation and construction of triple deckers is encouraged. This again highlights the need for zoning reform for the area.

The proposed project is also triggering violations for height in feet and height in stories. The proposed project is 4 stories and 50 feet while the zoning has maximums of 2.5 stories and 35 feet. This height is well out of line with neighborhood character. There are no four story buildings located within close proximity of the project. The tall multifamily building would appear out of place with its immediate neighbors. A reduction of one story will bring this closer to the existing scale while still providing dense housing.

The project is also receiving violations in regards to its front yard, side yards, and rear yards. The front yard and side yard have a minimum required depth of 15 and 10 feet respectively, while the project is proposing setbacks of under 5 feet. The rear yard has a minimum depth requirement of 30 feet, but the proposed project has a rear yard depth of 15 feet. This has led to an unsafe traffic condition along Columbia Road. Due to the shortened setbacks, the project is proposing a driveway that exits directly onto Columbia Road. This is a road that is constantly active with traffic jams present during much of the day. If the side yard was pulled back to its required depth, the driveway could be relocated to buttonwood and improve overall site circulation.

The final two violations are for insufficient parking and insufficient loading. They are providing 11 spaces when 16 are required by code, for a ratio of 1.5 spaces per unit. The project is providing 0 loading spaces while the zoning requires 1. While this is a violation, BTD parking guidelines have highlighted this as an area that contextually makes sense for a required parking ratio of 0. This project is providing well above that 0 space recommendation, and so a variance is recommended. In addition, the further potential reduction of parking spaces would allow for better site circulation and allow for cars to exit onto Buttonwood Street.

Plans reviewed were titled “51 Buttonwood St” and produced by Sousa Design architects and dated 6/10/26.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1800300, The Planning Department recommends DENIAL WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1901070
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-09-14
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	1025 to 1027 River ST Hyde Park 02136
Parcel ID	1807512000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Hyde Park Neighborhood 2F-5000
Zoning Article	69
Project Description	Erect a two-family dwelling. This relates to two as-of-right applications: one to raze an existing two-unit structure (SF1842543) and one to subdivide the existing lot (ALT1838961). This also relates to another BOA application (ERT1840327) to build a similar two-unit building on the other newly created lot.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Additional Lot Area Insufficient Height Excessive (stories) Usable Open Space Insufficient Front Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient

Planning Context:

This project is just outside of the study area for the Cleary Square Small Area Plan and rezoning, which was adopted by the BPDA board on October 15, 2026. The goals of this project include allowing the development of more housing in areas near transit and commercial resources such as Cleary Square. This project specifically is in a residential area on River Street with predominantly 2 to 3 story houses with small to medium yards and some apartment buildings. The project is 0.5 miles from the MBTA Fairmount Commuter Rail Station, 0.6 miles from the MBTA Hyde Park Commuter Rail Station, and across the street from the 24 and 33 buses on River Street.

The project is also within the area for Phase 1 of the Neighborhood Housing Zoning initiative. The goals of this project are to create clear, straightforward rules that better align with how Boston neighborhoods look today, making it easier for homeowners to renovate, put on

additions, and adapt their properties over time. Draft zoning was released for this area on July 17, 2026 as part of the Neighborhood Housing Zoning initiative.

Zoning Analysis:

This project is cited for insufficient additional lot area because the zoning requires 8,000 sq ft for two units and the proposed lot is 6,275 sq ft. However, there are many two to three family buildings on similarly sized lots in this area, meaning the zoning should likely be amended to better match existing conditions.

The project is cited for excessive height because the maximum allowed height is 2.5 stories and the building appears to be three stories. However, the building may be 2.5 stories because the top story appears to be about 50% of the area of the story below because of the rear stepback. Additionally, a three story building would be also appropriate because there are many three story buildings in the area.

The project is also cited for insufficient Usable Open Space. The Usable Open Space requirement is 1,750 sq ft per dwelling unit, or 3,500 sq ft total. However, it does have a fair amount of ground level Usable Open Space (about 2,630 sq ft) in addition to individual decks for each unit.

The project is also cited for a Side Yard violation because there are bulkheads proposed within the required 10 foot Side Yards. The bulkhead which projects further into the required Side Yard (on the East side) projects 7.7 feet into the required Side Yard and is 2.3 from the side lot line. This is not listed as one of the structures allowed in a required Side Yard in Article 2. However, these are necessary for egress and have very minimal visual impact.

The project also does not comply with the 20 ft Front Yard required along Arlington Street. However, most Front Yards along Arlington St are closer to the proposed 10 ft. This indicates that the zoning should likely be amended to better align with existing built conditions.

Plans reviewed: 1025-1027 River Street, Hyde Park, MA 02136 by MKA Architecture dated January 2, 2026.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1901070, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1901071
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-09-14
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	1029 to 1031 River ST Hyde Park 02136
Parcel ID	1807512000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Hyde Park Neighborhood 2F-5000
Zoning Article	69
Project Description	Erect a two-family dwelling. This relates to two as-of-right applications: one to raze an existing two-unit structure (SF1842543) and one to subdivide the existing lot (ALT1838961). This also relates to another BOA application (ERT184028) to build a similar two-unit building on the other newly created lot.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	Additional Lot Area Insufficient Height Excessive (stories) Usable Open Space Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient Use: conditional (ancillary parking)

Planning Context:

This project is just outside of the study area for the Cleary Square Small Area Plan and rezoning, which was adopted by the BPDA board on October 15, 2026. The goals of this project include allowing the development of more housing in areas near transit and commercial resources such as Cleary Square. This project specifically is in a residential area on River Street with predominantly 2 to 3 story houses with small to medium yards and some apartment buildings. The project is 0.5 miles from the MBTA Fairmount Commuter Rail Station, 0.6 miles from the MBTA Hyde Park Commuter Rail Station, and across the street from the 24 and 33 buses on River Street.

The project is also within the area for Phase 1 of the Neighborhood Housing Zoning initiative. The goals of this project are to create clear, straightforward rules that better align with how Boston neighborhoods look today, making it easier for homeowners to renovate, put on

additions, and adapt their properties over time. Draft zoning was released for this area on July 17, 2026 as part of the Neighborhood Housing Zoning initiative.

1029-1031 River St is proposed in the RD-4 district. The project complies with the proposed requirements in RD-4 for maximum Height (3 stories), minimum Side Yard (3 ft minimum and 15 ft cumulative), minimum Rear Yard (15 ft), minimum Front Yard (8 feet), Building Lot Coverage (35%), and Building Floor Plate (2,000 sq ft). Although the materials are not stated, it also likely meets the Permeable Area of Lot requirement of 25%, assuming the area outside of the parking and building is primarily permeable.

Zoning Analysis:

This project is cited for insufficient additional lot area because the zoning requires 8,000 sq ft for two units and the proposed lot is 6,330 sq ft. However, there are many two to three family buildings on similarly sized lots in this area, meaning the zoning should likely be amended to better match existing conditions.

The project is cited for excessive height because the maximum allowed height is 2.5 stories and the building appears to be three stories. However, the building may be 2.5 stories because the top story appears to be about 50% of the area of the story below because of the rear stepback. Additionally, a three story building would be also appropriate because there are many three story buildings in the area.

The project is also cited for insufficient Usable Open Space. The Usable Open Space requirement is 1,750 sq ft per dwelling unit, or 3,500 sq ft total. However, it does have a fair amount of ground level Usable Open Space (about 2,880 sq ft) in addition to individual decks for each unit.

The project is also cited for a Side Yard violation because there are bulkheads proposed within the required 10 foot Side Yards. The bulkhead which projects further into the required Side Yard (on the East side) projects 6.8 feet into the required Side Yard and is 3.2 from the side lot line. This is not listed as one of the structures allowed in a required Side Yard in Article 2. However, these are necessary for egress and have very minimal visual impact.

The project is cited for a conditional use of ancillary parking because the parking is accessed through the neighboring lot of 1025 to 1027 River St. This design is beneficial because it allows both projects to use the single existing curb cut.

Plans reviewed: 1029-1031 River Street, Hyde Park, MA 02136 by MKA Architecture dated January 2, 2026.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1901071, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner

Case	BOA1894474
ZBA Submitted Date	2026-08-25
ZBA Hearing Date	2026-11-17
Address	722 Truman HW Hyde Park 02136
Parcel ID	1810614000
Zoning District & Subdistrict	Hyde Park Neighborhood 1F-6000
Zoning Article	69
Project Description	Razing an existing single-unit house and constructing a new six-unit, three-story building with six parking spaces.
Relief Type	Variance
Violations	FAR Excessive Height Excessive (stories) Rear Yard Insufficient Side Yard Insufficient Front Yard Insufficient Parking or Loading Insufficient Usable Open Space Insufficient Use: Forbidden (MFR)

Planning Context:

This project is on the edge of the study area for the Cleary Square Small Area Plan, which is an ongoing planning and zoning process designed to activate Boston's neighborhood centers and produce needed housing. This project specifically is in a residential area on Truman Parkway with predominantly 2 to 2.5 story houses with varying yard sizes. There are also some larger apartment buildings in the area, including a large apartment building across the street at 735 Truman Parkway. The project is 0.2 miles from the MBTA Fairmount Commuter Rail Station and directly next to a stop for the 24 bus on Truman Parkway. It is also about 0.6 miles from the MBTA Hyde Park Commuter Rail Station and is within a half mile of the 33 and 36 bus lines.

The project is also within the area for Phase 1 of the Neighborhood Housing Zoning initiative. The goals of this project are to create clear, straightforward rules that better align with how

Boston neighborhoods look today, making it easier for homeowners to renovate, put on additions, and adapt their properties over time. Draft zoning was released for this area on July 17, 2026 as part of the Neighborhood Housing Zoning initiative.

This project will also require the approval of the Boston Parks and Recreation Commission because it is within 100 feet of a park (City of Boston Municipal Code 7-4.11).

Zoning Analysis:

Because this project is within an NDOD and proposes the erection or extension of a building with a gross floor area of three hundred (300) or more square feet, it is subject to Design Review under Article 28. Additionally, because the project is in a Greenbelt Protection Overlay District seeks to erect one or more buildings or structures having a total gross floor area in excess of five thousand (5,000) square feet, it requires a conditional use permit and review under the CPS and/or GPOD Component of Small Project Review in Article 80 of the Zoning Code.

The project does not comply with the maximum height requirement of 2.5 stories. However, the mansard roof of the third story helps the building align with the character of the 2.5 story buildings in the area. There are also precedents of other nearby, such as 690 Truman Parkway.

The project is cited for violations for Front Yard (25 ft required), Rear Yard (40 ft required), and Side Yard (10 ft required). However, Section 69-30.10 of the Code states that “For each full foot by which a Lot existing at the time this Article takes effect is less than one hundred (100) feet deep, six (6) inches shall be deducted from the depth otherwise required by this Article for the Rear Yard of such Lot.” Because this lot is 84 ft deep, the required Rear Yard is reduced to 32 ft, which the project complies with (36.42 ft proposed). Because the yard on the North-East side complies with the required Side Yard of 10 ft, the only yards that do not comply are the yards along Truman Parkway and Williams Street, which are both required to meet the Front Yard requirement of 25 ft (69-30.4). However, most buildings in the area also do not comply with this Front Yard requirement (as most Front Yards vary from around 15 ft to as low as 5 ft). This indicates that the zoning should be updated to better align with existing built conditions. Also, the proposed project would improve the existing conditions by creating a larger yard along Truman Parkway than the existing building.

The project is also cited for forbidden multifamily use. The project also does not comply with the required maximum FAR of .5. By these measures, the project is larger than most buildings in the surrounding area. However, allowing small multifamily projects is aligned with the goals of Neighborhood Housing and Squares + Streets. Additionally, the project does comply with the maximum Building Floor Plate and Building Lot Coverage proposed in the Neighborhood Housing draft, indicating that the massing is generally in line with residential conditions in this part of Boston overall.

The project proposes a parking ratio of 1.0 and therefore does not meet the minimum parking requirement of 2.0 spaces per unit (or 12 spaces total). This area has decent transit access, as exemplified by the fact that it is in a Squares + Streets plan area. Additionally, there may not be sufficient maneuverability, and the curb cut does not align with the proposed driveway. This means that there may need to be design adjustments made which could further reduce the parking. However, a lower parking ratio would still be appropriate given the area's proximity to transit.

The zoning requires 1,800 sq ft of Usable Open Space per unit, or 10,800 sq ft total for this 6-unit project. The project proposes 1,633 sq ft of Usable Open Space. 268 sq ft would be provided on balconies and 1,365 would be at-grade. Much of the at-grade space would be within the narrow front yards, making it not highly usable. The proponent should explore expanding or improving the usable open space during design review.

Plans reviewed “Proposed multifamily” prepared by “People Architects” and dated 3/12/2026.

Recommendation:

In reference to BOA1894474, The Planning Department recommends APPROVAL WITH PROVISO/S: that plans shall be reviewed by the Department of Parks and Recreation due to its location within the Greenbelt Protection Overlay District and within 100 of a park. Plans shall also be submitted to the Planning Department for design review due to its location within a Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD). Design review should include attention to ensuring permeable area and parking maneuverability and curb cut alignment. Applicant should also consider increasing or improving Usable Open Space.

Reviewed,



Senior Planner