

Jovie Conroy  
Kyle Conroy  
27 Loring Street  
Somerville, MA 02143

May 5, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

Please consider this letter as a narrative of our proposed home renovation project at 27 Loring Street.

We have made Winter Hill our home for the past few years, and we purchased the property at 27 Loring in June 2020 with the intent of putting down roots in Spring Hill. We love the community, and we wish to update the home's floor plan to accommodate our growing family. The current layout is restrictive to modern-day living, and we are looking to create a more functional, family-friendly space that is still in keeping with the neighborhood aesthetic, with particular attention paid to increasing bedroom space and greenspace. All the changes we propose in this plan will occur within the existing footprint of the house.

We are proposing to rebuild the roof height approximately 4' 2" taller so that a full story of living space will replace the unfinished attic, as it currently exists. This will allow us to add a master suite to the home, creating more bedroom space for our growing family. Additionally, the plan proposes renovating levels 1 and 2, while leaving the lower level unfinished. The existing covered front porch will be replaced with an engaged porch and an enclosed mudroom. All design plans for the engaged porch comply with Somerville's Zoning Ordinance. Both existing chimneys will be removed, and a new stairwell is proposed from levels 0 to 3. The existing subfloors and exterior framing of the exterior walls will remain, with new finishes applied, newly framed interior walls, and all new windows and doors will be installed. The doors and windows will be up to code (as existing window heights are not) and will improve the home's insulation and efficiency. All these design changes will be done with consideration of the aesthetic of the neighborhood and our family's personal aesthetic and use in mind. Half of the existing two-car garage will be removed to create additional yard space for our growing family, and the other half will remain as a single-car garage. Finally, the driveway will be refinished with permeable pavers to achieve better water flow on site. In the future, we plan to add solar panels at the roof to create a more sustainable home.

Dimensional relief in the form of a hardship variance is requested as it relates to the third story of our home for the maximum number of stories for a detached house. We propose to increase the living space on the existing third story of the home by raising the roof from 30' 10 9/16" (2 stories) to 35' 1/4" (3 stories) against the maximum allowed height of 2.5 stories for a detached house in the NR district. This will permit us to add a master bedroom, bathroom, and closet to the home.

**A. Explain any special circumstances affecting the land or structure (related to soil conditions, shape or topography) that are unusual and do not affect other properties AND any hardship that results from these special circumstances.**

Currently, the spatial constraints of this home put a strain on our ability to comfortably grow our family in this community and within this home. It is not possible to create three bedrooms of reasonable size, along with closet space and a master bathroom, on the second story. The alternative would be to expand the footprint of the house into the backyard, which would decrease the green space and would affect the adjacent homes more adversely with the creation of additional shadows. Currently, our property achieves an optimal green score, and expanding the first floor of the home would also decrease that space considerably. We already plan to eliminate a portion of the garage to increase

the greenspace in the backyard. Adding a full third story is the only way to achieve the needed space and not encroach on the greenspace.

The changes to the third story do not affect the building's footprint and, thereby, do not change the existing soil, shape, or topography of the parcel or land. Given that this home is already a pre-existing, non-conforming structure, with an existing non-conforming roof height, this will not create any hardship for the public. The submitted plans also include shadow studies that demonstrate, again, that these changes will not create hardships for the community.

**B. Explain if and how the variance is the minimum approval necessary to grant reasonable relief to the owner AND results in a reasonable use of the land or structure.**

It is not possible to create three bedrooms of reasonable size, along with closet space and a master bathroom, on the second story. The alternative would be to expand the footprint of the house into the backyard, which would decrease the greenspace and would affect the adjacent homes more adversely with the creation of additional shadows. Currently, our property achieves an optimal green score, and expanding the first floor of the home would also decrease that space considerably. We already plan to eliminate a portion of the garage to increase the greenspace in the backyard. Adding a full third story is the only way to achieve the needed space and not encroach on the greenspace.

**C. Explain if and how the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance AND will not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.**

The goal with this project is to increase living space for our family while maintaining the neighborhood aesthetic. Given that the adjacent homes are taller than our property, raising the roof by 4 feet will not deter from the community feel in any way or be detrimental to the neighborhood or public. Again, the submitted plans also include shadow studies that demonstrate that these changes will not create hardships for the community.

Finally, while a hardship variance is not necessary for this design element, we would like to also highlight the proposed reduction to the size of the existing garage structure from two bays to a single-car garage to allow for more yard space for our family, a change that will bring our property up to the exact recommended green score. The location of the garage will not change, therefore rendering it a pre-existing, not conforming structure.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kyle and Jovie Conroy