



Rockland County

Ed Day, Rockland County Executive

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

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Douglas J. Schuetz
Acting Commissioner

Arlene R. Miller
Deputy Commissioner

May 22, 2018

Spring Valley Zoning Board of Appeals
200 N. Main Street
Spring Valley, NY 10977

Tax Data: 57.62-1-19

Re: GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW REVIEW: Section 239 L and M

Map Date: 7/16/2017

Date Review Received: 5/17/2018

Item: 70 SOUTH MADISON (SV-898)

Variances to permit the demolition of an existing dwelling, and construction of a two-family residence, located on .14 acres in the R-2 zoning district. Required variances include: lot area, lot width (Madison Avenue), front yard (both streets), and side yard.

Southeast corner of South Madison Avenue and Castle Avenue

Reason for Referral:

NYS Route 45, Town of Ramapo

The County of Rockland Department of Planning has reviewed the above item. Acting under the terms of the above GML powers and those vested by the County of Rockland Charter, I, the Commissioner of Planning, hereby:

****Disapprove***

1 The subject site does not meet the minimum lot area standard of 8,500 sq. ft. required for a single-family residence, and provides only 60% of the lot area required for a two-family dwelling. The lot itself is non-conforming for width along Madison Avenue. The proposed two-family residence will require substantial yard variances to accommodate an oversized residential building on an undersized parcel. The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by similarly-sized parcels. Granting these bulk variances will set a precedent that may result in nearby property owners seeking the same relief. A doubling of the residential density in this neighborhood of non-conforming parcels will negatively impact its community character. Additional residents will generate more traffic on the local streets, leading to congestion and traffic conflicts. While two-family residences are permitted as of right in the R-2 zoning district, they are subject to stricter bulk requirements. This site is particularly deficient in meeting these more stringent standards. We recommend that the required variances be denied.

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2 Permitting development that does not comply with the applicable bulk standards can set an undesirable land use precedent and result in the overutilization of individual sites. The proposed lot area is only 60% of the required minimum. The lot width on Madison Avenue is deficient by 43%. The front yard on Castle Avenue is deficient by 35%, and is 62% deficient on South Madison Avenue. The side yard provided is 33.33% less than the required minimum. The ability of the existing infrastructure to accommodate increased residential density on undersized parcels is a countywide concern and must be evaluated. This evaluation must consider whether local roads will become more congested and the sewer system, stormwater management systems and the public water supply will be overburdened. The Village must consider the cumulative and regional impacts of permitting such development. As indicated above, only a single-family dwelling can be constructed to maintain the integrity of the zoning ordinance.

The following are additional comments and concerns that we have regarding the proposed development.

3 The application and site plan indicate the proposed structure will have two stories and a FAR of 0.65. However, the site plan shows a building footprint of approximately 2190 square feet. Assuming each story will have a gross floor area equal to the footprint, the proposed structure will have an overall gross floor area of approximately 4380 square feet, resulting in a FAR of .73 (not including the basement). Although this is an estimate, a FAR of .73 is over 12% greater than the allowed maximum FAR of 0.65. The magnitude of this discrepancy requires further attention. The applicant must positively demonstrate that the proposed structure will conform to the Village's FAR requirement; a FAR calculation must be provided on the site plan. If the FAR exceeds the allowable 0.65, the variance application must be amended and the public hearing notice must be reissued. Any application that is revised due to an increase in FAR must be sent to this department for review.

4 The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by similarly-sized parcels. Granting these bulk variances will set a precedent that may result in nearby property owners seeking the same relief. Such an increase in density would alter and negatively impact the community character in this neighborhood. The proposal shall be scaled back to more closely conform to the R-2 bulk standards.

5 The comments in the May 9, 2018 letter from the Rockland County Sewer District #1 must be met.

6 The comments in the April 5, 2018 letter from the Rockland County Department of Health must be addressed.

7 The concerns raised in the April 18, 2018 letter from the Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services must be addressed.

8 A review must be completed by the New York State Department of Transportation, any comments or concerns addressed, and all required permits obtained.

9 The Town of Ramapo is one of the reasons this proposal was referred to this department for review. The municipal boundary is approximately 495 feet west of the property line of the site, along the northern portion of Singer Avenue. As required under Section 239nn of the State General Municipal Law, the Town of Ramapo must be given the opportunity to review the proposed variances and provide any concerns related to the project to the Village of Spring Valley.

10 The use of tandem parking spaces prevents egress for vehicles blocked by other vehicles and creates an inconvenient situation for residents. This layout will encourage residents to park vehicles off-site instead of in their designated spaces and negates the purpose of on-site parking requirements. The tandem parking spaces must be reconfigured to allow independent access for all parking spaces.

11 The proposed structure does not comply with Section 255-22.H of the village zoning regulations, which prohibits impediments to visibility at intersections. This is an unacceptable hazard to motorists and pedestrians. The building must be reduced in size and reconfigured to comply with this section of the regulations.

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12 The site plan has been reduced, so is difficult to read, and accurate measurements are not possible to determine since the map is not to scale. In addition to the district information provided, general map notes should be noted.

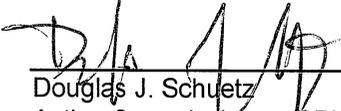
13 The application form indicates the property receives water service from United Water. The form must be corrected to Suez. In addition, Page 10 of 12 of the Application Review Form must list the required dimensions and the provided measurements so that all required variances are noted in the packet.

14 The NYS Department of State has determined that the Village is not administering or enforcing the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code in accordance with minimum standards set forth in 19 NYCRR part 1203. Given the concerns about the Village's administration and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code raised in the Executive Deputy Secretary of State's letter of July 15, 2016, the proposed residential building must be held to the requisite minimum standards and comply with all requirements of this code.

15 The proposed residential building must comply with all requirements of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. All sidewalks, stairs, decks, and window wells must be shown on the map to ensure that there is sufficient access to the building for firefighting purposes.

16 Pursuant to General Municipal Law (GML) Section 239-m and 239-n, if any of the conditions of this GML review are overridden by the board, then the local land use board must file a report with the County Commissioner of Planning of the final action taken. If the final action is contrary to the recommendation of the Commissioner, the local land use board must state the reasons for such action.

17 In addition, pursuant to Executive Order 01-2017 signed by County Executive Day on May 22, 2017, County departments are prohibited from issuing a County permit, license, or approval until the report is filed with the County Commissioner of Planning. The applicant must provide to any County agency which has jurisdiction of the project: 1) a copy of the Commissioner report approving the proposed action; or 2) a copy of the Commissioner of Planning recommendations to modify or disapprove the proposed action, and a certified copy of the land use board statement overriding the recommendations to modify or disapprove, and the stated reasons for the land use board's override.



Douglas J. Schuetz
Acting Commissioner of Planning

cc: Mayor Alan Simon, Spring Valley
New York State Department of Transportation
Rockland County Department of Health
Rockland County Sewer District #1
Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services
New York State Department of State

Anthony R. Celentano P.L.S.
Town of Ramapo

Rockland County Planning Board Members

**NYS General Municipal Law Section 239 requires a vote of a 'majority plus one' of your agency to act contrary to the above findings. The review undertaken by the Rockland County Planning Department is pursuant to, and follows the mandates of Article 12-B of the New York General Municipal Law. Under Article 12-B the County of Rockland does not render opinions, nor does it make determinations, whether the item reviewed implicates the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. The Rockland County Planning Department defers to the municipality forwarding the item reviewed to render such opinions and make such determinations if appropriate under the circumstances.*

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In this respect, municipalities are advised that under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, the preemptive force of any provision of the Act may be avoided (1) by changing a policy or practice that may result in a substantial burden on religious exercise, (2) by retaining a policy or practice and exempting the substantially burdened religious exercise, (3) by providing exemptions from a policy or practice for applications that substantially burden religious exercise, or (4) by any other means that eliminates the substantial burden.

Proponents of projects are advised to apply for variances, special permits or exceptions, hardship approval or other relief.

Pursuant to New York State General Municipal Law §239-m(6), the referring body shall file a report of final action it has taken with the Rockland County Department of Planning within thirty (30) days after final action. A referring body which acts contrary to a recommendation of modification or disapproval of a proposed action shall set forth the reasons for the contrary action in such report.