

April 3, 2022

Via Electronic Mail (emartinez@nantucket-ma.gov; hbackus@nantucket-ma.gov)

Nantucket Historic District Commission &
Historic Structures Advisory Board
2 Fairgrounds Road
Nantucket, MA 02554

Re: 34B Walsh Street – Application for Addition/Renovation

To Whom it May Concern:

We are abutters to 34B Walsh Street with our residence at 40 Walsh Street (for the past 25 years) and are again writing to express our serious concerns with the applicant's proposed plans to significantly renovate and add on to the existing structure. We acknowledge the applicant's submission of revised plans (3-17-2022); however, the revisions do not address in any meaningful way our serious and continuing concerns with the aggressive height, scale, and proportions of 34B Walsh to the surrounding properties. The proposed larger than existing roof walk which has moved to center on top of the proposed three-story structure only exacerbates the issues and concerns.

Importantly, we also continue to have very serious concerns with the height of the wing off the North elevation and the storage unit which faces Walsh Street (and our property), all sited a mere five feet off of the property line, per the applicant's plans. We challenge the validity of a 5-foot setback, and believe the North elevation facing Walsh Street is the true front of this structure and accordingly, should be subject to a 10" setback. We remain strongly opposed to this application.

Notably, the view pack of photographs that has been submitted [by Linda Williams] is totally inappropriate and only serves to exhibit many large houses located throughout Brant Point and fails to include the many smaller homes in the immediate and surrounding neighborhood. The photographs of the structures of these other properties referenced do not tower over other structures immediately adjacent to them across a narrow offshoot or ruin the aesthetics and historic character of the neighborhood, as would be the case with 34B Walsh as proposed. The proposed renovation/addition to 34B would negatively impact and destroy the historical aesthetic of our neighborhood. The density of the neighborhood and the unique characteristics of the specific lot at 34B Walsh Street **MUST WEIGH HEAVILY** in consideration of any proposed alteration to the existing structure.

We hereby reiterate our serious concerns with proposed addition to 34B Walsh:

- 34B Walsh Street is visible from all directions – The house is visible from Walsh Street and from the shelled public offshoot that provides egress to the property. The house is also visible from Henry Street, James Streets, Hulbert Avenue and Brant Point Road. We are planning on having the large pear tree in our back yard removed which today provides some screening of 34B from the immediate fronting section of Walsh Street. The tree has suffered storm damage. Any screening this tree now provides will soon be lost.

- We object to the massiveness of this renovation. As proposed, the aggressive height, scale and proportions of 34B Walsh would lack any harmony with the adjacent houses in this very compact area and the resulting structure would completely overwhelm and tower over nearby properties. The house would severely diminish the historical character of our beautiful neighborhood.
- Adding a full second and third story to an existing 1 ½ story structure and nearly doubling the structure's current square footage to create a massive nearly 4,000 square foot house would result in a structure that is too massive in size, height and scale and would be completely incompatible with its setting. The structure would be visually disruptive to the neighborhood. The house will have no relatedness to the abutting structures which generally date back to the early to mid-1900's, consist of 1, 1 ½ story and some 2 story homes and are all much smaller in size. All parcels in this area are small.
- To reiterate, the roof lines are too high and a large roof walk on top of an already massively high structure will only add to this excessive height issue. Notably, the existing 1 ½ story structure was built in 2002 and replaced a small cottage. The height of the existing house today was deemed appropriate for this specific parcel and this specific setting. Since then, nothing has changed that would today make a 3-story structure at this site appropriate. Quite the contrary--with the need for flood zone mitigation which pushes structures even higher, a 3-story structure at this location should not be allowed. This structure should stay a 1 ½ to 1 ¾ story structure.
- The existing structure already goes from property line to property line, and the rear which abuts conservation land is already within the wetlands buffer zone.
- The proposed wing with storage to be built off of the North elevation of the structure facing directly towards our home at 40 Walsh is too long and too high should not be allowed to be built out to 5 ft. of the property line. Notably, the only way to access the storage space is to open its doors into the architect's referenced 5 ft. setback. The doors don't work where they are.
- Clearly, 34B Walsh sits on a quirky parcel which is directly behind our house. While it has frontage linear to the shelled offshoot from Walsh Street, we not believe this alone should establish the setback requirements (front versus back and sides). While we understand that zoning is out of the jurisdiction of the HDC, we urge the HDC to make a site visit and study the orientation of this structure and include in their review the unique site considerations and what the appropriate setback requirements for the various North, South, East and West Elevations for this structure should appropriately be.
- Historically the front of 34B Walsh Street "faced" Walsh Street, with the façade of the house and entrance compatible with and aligned with the facades/entrances of two nearby houses at 34 and 34A Walsh, located along the same shelled public way; and both facing Walsh Street. When this house at 34B Walsh was rebuilt in 2002, the "front yard" of the house was reconstructed in the rear of the house to take advantage of conservation land views. While an entrance to the existing structure was included in the South elevation (rear), an entrance to the structure remained on the North elevation (front), and the structure was setback 10-12 feet from the property line to 40 Walsh.
- We submit to you that the front of this property is the area that faces Walsh Street and the back of our house. This is where the front door has been located. The very proposed design of this structure proves this point. The real entry . . . we submit "front door" is on the North Elevation. HSAB references this. They comment "the exposed trusses on the front portico should be shingled over or changed to a more simple shed roof." They are referring to the door on the North Elevation which faces Walsh Street . . .

which as proposed is the only real entry door to this house. Notably, the applicant himself on his application specifies that the doors at the rear will be sliders. The applicant is referencing the slider door on South Elevation.

- Therefore, any wing with storage area proposed for the North elevation should have to comply with a front setback requirement of 10 feet. The doors to the storage area should be approximately 12 feet from the property line, to allow it to be compliant with a 10-foot setback requirement and to also provide space for the doors to operate without encroaching on the setback.

To sum up, the revisions do not address in any meaningful way our serious and continuing concerns with this application. We urge that the scope of this renovation/addition be significantly adjusted and reduced to address our concerns. Thank you in advance for your careful review and consideration of our serious concerns with this application.

Sincerely,

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