

For Zoning Board Public Hearing on 9/24/14 at 6:00pm:

Re: 309 Wesley Street  
Appeal # ZBA14-011  
Parcel I.D. 09-09-30-131-011

We believe that Kayla Conrad has proposed a thoughtful plan for expanding her non-conforming residence at 309 Wesley St. However, we are very concerned about the proposed addition of a second driveway that did not take into account natural features just beyond the property line.

In the city staff report posted online prior to the public hearing, the city requires that 309 Wesley have 2 parking spaces following the proposed construction. On the plans posted online by the city, this problem was solved by adding a second driveway to the property off of Harbrooke Ave, very close to the corner of Harbrooke and Wesley. We think the city's parking requirements could be solved within the existing footprint of 309 Wesley's driveway and garage. We are very concerned about the proposed solution of adding a second driveway to the property.

First, the solution of adding a second driveway is not in keeping with the nature of the neighborhood, which is zoned for single family homes. All buildings in the neighborhood - including the few non-conforming 2-family structures - have only one driveway or fewer. Several houses share driveways and at least one house has no driveway at all.

In addition, we are very concerned about the placement of the proposed second driveway.

Our greatest concern:

-- The proposed second driveway would cut through the root structure of a landmark maple tree at just five feet from its base, well within its critical root zone. The tree trunk is over 34 inches in diameter (108 in. circumference), and the canopy towers over both 309 Wesley and 1303 Harbrooke - please see the attached photograph. Previous occupants of 309 Wesley built a dirt berm for a small garden in the proposed location of the second driveway because they could not plant anything directly in the ground due to the tree roots running right along the yard's surface. Cutting through the maple's roots so close to its base would be devastating to the tree, and could have major unintended consequences for the homes at both 1303 Harbrooke and 309 Wesley.

Other concerns:

-- The entrance/exit to the proposed second driveway would be very close to the corner of the oddly-angled 4-way Harbrooke/Wesley intersection.  
-- The entrance/exit to the proposed second driveway would be even closer (fewer than 20 feet) to the stop sign for that corner.

Again, we are not objecting to the proposed additions to the structure at 309 Wesley, but we think a different solution should be found to comply with the city's requirement of 2 parking spaces. We would also have no problem if the city were to waive the requirement of 2 parking spaces for 309 Wesley, as there is ample unrestricted street parking in the neighborhood.

Thank you -  
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