Leahy Variance Application for 20 E Maple St

PRESENTATION TO PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

We respectfully request that the Planning & Zoning Commission grant a Special Permit as allowable by Section 7.1.B.3 of Section 3.5.D.1, 3.5.F.5, and 7.1.B of the New Canaan Zoning Regulations to allow the construction of an addition to the existing legally non-conforming current residence. Specifically, the request is to allow:

1. An additional 379 sq ft over the allowable building coverage;

2. An increase in the building height to 21 ft at mid-roof on a lot with a legally existing undersized frontage (65 ft instead of the B Residence Zone minimum front yard width of 75 ft); and

3. An approximately 1 foot increase in the first floor roof height of the legally existing non-conforming northeast corner of the existing house.

We were granted a variance of Sections 3.5.D.1, 3.5.F.5, and 7.1.B for the proposed work at the May 4, 2020 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

We are now seeking Special Permit approval of Section 7.1.B.3.b which states that any non-conforming structure in the B Residence Zone may only be enlarged if the Planning and Zoning Commission grant Special Permit approval.

SITE AND PROPOSAL:

20 E Maple St is currently an owner-occupied single family home. Our property consists of 7,621 sq ft in the B Residence Zone. The property is currently legally non-conforming as to width, frontage, backyard setback and second story side yard height. The current home's existing building coverage is 1560 sq ft. Our plan is to expand our home's coverage to 2275 sq ft, expanding the functionality of its living areas and second floor bedroom. The proposed addition will be consistent with other homes on E Maple St.

1. Request to increase the building coverage 379 sq ft over allowable due to our unusually small lot size for the neighborhood

    The lot size for 20 E Maple Street is unusually small. The lot size is 0.175 acre (7,621 sq ft). Due to this very small lot size, the allowable building coverage is only 1,896 sq ft. The planned renovation would increase our home's coverage to 2,275 sq ft which includes 250 sq ft for front and rear porch entries. Our proposed increase in coverage is still less than the 2,388 sq ft that the Town had approved for the previous owners of our house in 2001, but
Leahy Variance Application for 20 E Maple St

which the previous owners never carried out. No outward expansion of our home has occurred during our ownership or that of the previous owner.

As you can see from Photo #1 and the Google Maps Satellite Image, our house is the small green one among larger houses in the neighborhood. The proposed increase in coverage is modest but will bring the house more in character with its neighborhood without injuring or adversely affecting the enjoyment of our neighbors' properties.

Photo #1

Google Map Satellite Image
2. **Request to increase the maximum side yard height to 21 feet at mid roof**

In addition to its unusually small overall lot size, our lot does not meet the B Residence Zone minimum front yard width of 75 feet. Our home also does not sit centered within our building setback lines. We believe this is because the property lines were drawn and the land subdivided after our house was built in 1910. Because the lot's frontage is undersized, any increase in the building height is nonconforming, no matter what we do. This is unique to our property.

The existing second story is only partially usable as it exists. We are only hoping to get three reasonable sized bedrooms upstairs and this raises the roof as shown on our plans. We have kept the ridge of the roof running front to back to help keep the eaves down. The house's interior ceiling heights are all standard heights and the total building height requirement is not a problem. It is only the building height on both sides of the house that cannot meet the requirement because the lot's frontage is undersized.

3. **Request to raise the rear single story roof on the pre-existing nonconforming corner of our home**

As mentioned above, our home does not sit centered within our building setback lines because the property lines were drawn and the land subdivided after our house was built in 1910. Because of this, the back northeastern corner of our house is outside the setback line and is nonconforming. Our proposed renovation would increase this nonconformity by raising the first floor roof a little over 1 foot. This would allow us to make the interior ceiling height of this section of the house to be all one height, greatly increasing the interior functionality of the house without making any exterior change to the house that impacts our neighbors at all.

Please refer to the architectural drawing of the north exterior elevation of the house on the next page.
Leahy Variance Application for 20 E Maple St

**Drawing:** Architectural drawing of the north exterior elevation of the house. Hand drawn section shows the existing non-conforming corner of the house. This drawing shows what the existing non-conforming corner of the house will look like with the roof raised a little over 1 foot from its current existing height.

---

**SPECIAL PERMIT CRITERIA:**

8.2.B.4. Special Permit Criteria

a) **Suitable Location for Use**
   
   There will be no change between the existing and proposed use. The lot will remain a single family dwelling and there will be no increase in the intensity of that use.

b) **Appropriate Improvements**
   
   Our plans will have no adverse effect upon our neighbors since none of our proposed improvements will hinder or discourage our neighbors' use and development of their lands and buildings. Our proposed plans will not result in the addition of any signs, exposed artificial lights, colored lights of any nature, flashing lights, loudspeakers or any other noise making devices.
Leahy Variance Application for 20 E Maple St

We have lived in this house for almost 14 years and have spent a considerable amount of that time contemplating the best way to expand and renovate this house in order to increase its functionality and attractiveness for a single family. In addition, we want to greatly improve its curbside appeal for the neighborhood. We explored many design options with our architect before settling on the proposed plans which give the house a traditional farmhouse look that will be eminently appropriate and suitable for the small-town charm of the neighborhood and village.

c) Suitable Transportation Conditions
Since our proposed plan does not change the existing use of the lot and will remain our single family dwelling, these improvements will cause no adverse change in the safety of the street nor will they increase the current traffic patterns or vehicular circulation.

We do not anticipate any change to the current driveway which is currently used for parking our vehicles since this house does not have a garage.

d) Adequate Public Utilities and Services
The provisions for water supply, sewage disposal, and storm water drainage of the renovated house will remain the same as for the current house and will conform to accepted engineering practices and comply with all standards of the appropriate regulatory authority. Fire, police and emergency service access will remain the same.

e) Environmental Protection and Conservation
We intend to preserve as many of the existing trees on the property as we can, especially the large magnolia tree in the front yard.

f) Long Term Viability
Since we propose to continue this site as a single family home, it will be maintained accordingly with annual and seasonal maintenance typical of any single family home.

g) Plan of Conservation and Development
Our proposed renovation does not conflict with the purposes of the Regulations set forth in Section 1.2, and promotes the goals, objectives, policies, or recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development, as amended. Indeed, we believe our proposed renovation helps to conserve and protect the character and value of the neighborhood and town. We have reviewed our plans with all our neighbors and they have sent in letters of support.

We respectfully request that P&Z grant our application for a Special Permit. We believe that our proposed renovation will help to conserve, protect and promote the character and value of the neighborhood and town.