

June 14, 2023
(updated Aug, 02, 2023)

Town of Stow
Randall Library Renovation + Addition
19 Crescent Street

ZBA APPLICATION
SUPPORTING MATERIALS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CONTEXT

The Randall Library, designed by architect George G. Adam atop Library Hill in the town of Stow, MAI, was originally constructed in 1894. The original two-story library is distinctly Richardsonian in style, constructed of load-bearing masonry walls, with a slate roof, corner turret and primary entry arch. The Whitney Room was added in 1920 followed by a larger addition in the mid 1970's. The original library is 3,390 SF, the Whitney room added approx. 250 SF and the 1970's addition 3,800 SF, totalling 7,440 SF. The library served the Stow community well in this configuration for several decades. However, as the public library paradigm shifted through the early 2000's from a book centric model to a model offering digital resources and a variety of community amenities, the constraints of the existing building have proven problematic and restrictive, limiting the types of library services, programs and spaces offered.

SITE + BUILDING CONSTRAINTS

Location + Zoning

The site address is 19 Crescent Street and is zoned Residential (Town of Stow Assessor's Map U10, Parcel 33). The site fronts three streets (Common, Crescent and Library Hill) which are defined as front yards (30' setbacks). The remaining side of the site is defined as a side yard (25' setback).

Site Geometry

The existing site geometry is irregular and constrained, bounded by three roads: Library Hill Road on the west, Crescent Street on the North and Common Road on the south. It abuts one adjacent Crescent Street property along the eastern edge. The resulting site is widest along Library Hill Road (Approx. 100 feet) and tapers towards the southeast into an acute angle point. The available building footprint, based on the required residential front and side yard setbacks, is approx. 3,290 square feet and is very irregular and limiting in shape (Refer to attachment 1). Neither the original building nor the 1970's addition conforms with these setback requirements.

Topography

The existing site has a change in grade of approx. 11 feet from the Northeast corner to the Southeast corner further limiting the buildable options and contributing to challenging accessibility (ADA) conditions.

Parking + Access

Given the nature of the existing constrained site, parking is shoehorned onto the site and along Common Room in an ad hoc manner that is inadequate and unsafe. The lack of appropriate parking is compounded by the lack of a sidewalk along Common Road.

Building System Requirements

The existing building does not have a fire protection (sprinkler) system as it was not a building code requirement at the time of construction. However, any substantial renovations and/or additions will trigger the current building code requirement to install a sprinkler system throughout both the existing building and any proposed addition. As there is not an adequate municipal water supply to support a conventional sprinkler system an onsite cistern or storage tank will be required to provide an adequate water supply. The irregular site and available space within the existing building provides limited opportunity to locate these required elements. There is also potential PFAS contamination on site which further complicates on site storage (cistern) options and could trigger potential remediation costs. This suggests an in-building storage tank solution over a site storage (cistern) solution may be the appropriate solution, which would ultimately require additional interior space.

Additionally, the existing space allocated to mechanical (HVAC) and electrical equipment is severely inadequate both in terms of space for the necessary equipment itself and safe operational clearances around the equipment. This issue is compounded by the additional mechanical and electrical equipment that will be required to modernize the building systems and meet current building and energy codes.

Accessibility

Within the existing building there are several accessibility deficiencies and non-conforming conditions including the existing stair, door clearances and restroom clearances, among clothes. Providing comparable spaces that are fully accessible and building code compliant will require additional space.

DESIGN OVERVIEW

Summary

The existing library and site will be largely transformed into a 21st century library experience. The original building will be restored with the original library entrance reactivated as a primary entrance into the building. The 70's addition will be demolished, largely due to the structural deficiencies (inability to support book stacks on the 2nd floor) and compromised layout. A new addition will be constructed in its place with a modified footprint, providing an arrangement of spaces designed to provide a contemporary library environment with a variety of program spaces. The entirety of the

landscape will be reconsidered and rearranged providing a range of spaces from contemplative gardens to programmable terraces.

Parking, Pedestrian Safety + Accessibility

Properly sized and striped parking spaces will be provided on both the Common Road and Crescent Street sides of the street. A safe, accessible path along new sidewalks will be provided to both the historic entry on the upper level of the original building and lower level entry in the new addition. The footprint of the new addition will be pushed back slightly from Common Road (when compared to the current footprint) to provide a transitional Arrival Court between the building and street further enhancing the safe and accessible path from parking into the building.

Within the building, a new fully-accessible elevator will be provided. Additionally, all new spaces will be fully accessible and code compliant.

Variety of Program Spaces

Within the building, a variety of new program spaces will be provided. Including, among others, a dedicated Teen Space, dedicated Children's Room, and small meeting rooms for library patrons to a proper processing area and breakroom for staff. The original reading room and Whitney Room within the historic building will be restored to support quiet reading and computer use. The majority of the collection will be relocated to the lower level of the existing building.

Community Room

The largest and most prominent program addition to the library will be a new dedicated Community Room. The flexibly arranged space, approx. 30' X 18' will accommodate approximately 30-35 patrons in different configurations, including presentation, meeting or event formats. The new Community Room will be paired with an entry lobby that will serve as a small anteroom for people to gather before entering the Community Room. The entry lobby and Community Room will be arranged so that they can operate and be available for Community use after the library has closed. The Community Room will also open to the adjacent landscape courtyard for interior/exterior events.

PROJECT UPDATE

(August 02, 2023)

Following the Initial July 10th ZBA Hearing, in response to discussion and comments during that hearing, as well as general refinements as the design has been finalized and a discussion with the abutting property owner, several adjustments have been made. A summary of these adjustments are as follows:

- As a result of plan layout refinements and a reduction of interior double-height spaces, the 'bump-out' on the side-yard side of the building abutting a neighbor's property has been eliminated.
- The overall footprint of the building has been reduced by 110 SF.
- The impervious area of the site has been reduced by 510 SF. As a result, the Stormwater Management Plan has been updated and the infiltration basin has been eliminated.
- In response to abutter feedback, a tree protection plan has been developed to protect select trees that are near, or on, the side yard abutting property line.
- The proposed building mechanical system has been redesigned, resulting in smaller, less visible, and quieter outdoor components.
- The angle of the community room perimeter wall has been adjusted to be parallel to the side yard property line. As a result, the side yard setback dimension variance request has adjusted from what was previously submitted. This has been updated in the subsequent materials.

These adjustments have been incorporated into updated plan drawings, site drawings, and associated attachments noted below, as applicable.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1 - Setback Diagram (*updated, 8/3/23*)
- Attachment 2 - Existing Parking (*dated 6/14/23*)
- Attachment 3 - Lower Level Plan (*updated, 8/1/23*)
- Attachment 4 - Upper Level Plan (*updated, 8/1/23*)
- Attachment 5 - Proposed Site Plan (*updated, 8/1/23*)
- Attachment 6 - Proposed Utility Plan (*updated, 8/2/23*)
- Attachment 7 - Existing Condition Photos (*dated 6/14/23*)
- Attachment 8 - Stormwater Management Plan (*updated, 8/2/23*)
- Attachment 9 - Certified Plot Plan (*dated July 2023*)

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