

MEETING NOTES\*  
REGULAR MEETING of the ROSS ADVISORY  
DESIGN REVIEW GROUP  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2010, 7:00 P.M.  
Ross Town Hall

1. Commencement.

Jim Kemp, Chair, could not call the meeting to order since a quorum of ADR Members was not present. Noreen Slivon was present. Elise Semonian, senior planner, was also present.

2. Approval of Minutes for October 2010.

No minutes were approved.

3. Open Time for Public Expression.

There was no public comment.

4. 88 Wellington Avenue, After-the-Fact Variance, Design Review, Hillside Lot Permit No. 1809

Steve and Chris Simpson, 88 Wellington Avenue, A.P. No. 72-121-17, R-1:B-10 (Single Family Residence, 10,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size), Medium Low Density (3-6 units per acre). After-the-fact request for design review, hillside lot permit and variances associated with converting the existing basement area to a family room, which would add 480 square feet of floor area to the nonconforming residence. The project would involve 35 cubic yards of cut to lower the floor of the basement to comply with building code requirements for habitable space. Total floor area of 2,123 square feet is proposed.

Lot area	4,648 sq. ft.	
Existing Floor Area	35.3%	
Proposed Floor Area	45.7%	(20% permitted)*
Existing Lot Coverage	26.4%	
Proposed Lot Coverage	26.4%	(20% permitted)
Existing Impervious Areas	55.8%	
Proposed Impervious Areas	56.8%	

*The existing residence is nonconforming in setbacks.*

*\*The Town Engineer has calculated the slope of the site as 29.2%, the project falls under the hillside lot regulations because the site is partially within Slope Stability Zone 3. A maximum of 423 square feet of floor area is permitted under the current Hillside Lot Ordinance.*

*\*Town Council Resolution 1694 requires three members of the Advisory Design Review Group for a quorum. As only two members were present, the Advisory Design Review Group did not hold a formal meeting. These meeting notes summarize the informal discussion of the two members present.*

Project architect John Clarke was present for the property owners and briefly described the intent of the project, which is to create legal habitable space in a basement area. The owners cannot legalize the existing space for living space without the modifications proposed, including lowering the floor. Two French doors would be the only visible change from the exterior.

Jim Kemp and Noreen Slivon provided the applicant with comments on the proposal. Mr. Kemp explained that the findings for the variances and the policy issues regarding new basement floor area must be discussed by the Council and are not under the purview of ADR. Ms. Slivon noted that this site has ample parking and no major exterior changes are proposed.

The two ADR group members (Kemp, Slivon) made the following recommendations to the applicant:

- Applicant must clearly demonstrate in a graphic or calculated way that the basement room will meet the requirements for habitable space under the current building code (dimensions, light, air, ventilation).
- The applicant should modify the location of the French doors so that they work with the exterior architectural design, not just the internal space.

5. **33 Winship Avenue, Variance and Design Review No. 1808 (Semonian)**

Chris and Mary Ann Neumann, 33 Winship Avenue, A.P. No. 72-153-09, R-1:B-10 (Single Family Residence, 10,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size), Medium Low Density (3-6 units per acre). Design review and variances associated with a remodel of the main and lower levels of the residence. The project includes excavation and construction to bring existing finished areas within the lower level up to building code requirements for habitable space. The existing residence is nonconforming in setbacks and is located in the north side yard (15 feet required, 8 feet existing and proposed), south side yard (15 feet required, 10.5 feet existing and proposed), and rear yard (40 feet required, 31 feet existing and proposed). The project would allow the approximately 6' by 30' stairwell and atrium addition at the rear of the residence, approved after-the-fact in 2006, to be incorporated into the main floor plan and to be reconstructed if necessary. The applicants propose to enclose part of the front porch for an entry. The project would involve 78 cubic yards of cut to lower the elevation of the lower floor. Staff calculates the existing floor area to be 2,135 square feet (including the one-car garage). Total floor area of 2,819 square feet is proposed.

Lot area (approximate)	5,500 square feet
Existing Floor Area Ratio	38.8%
Proposed Floor Area Ratio	51.2% (20% permitted)
Existing Lot Coverage	32.3%
Proposed Lot Coverage	32.3% (20% permitted)
Existing Impervious Areas	39.8%
Proposed Impervious Areas	39.8%

Rich Hoertkorn, Lagunitas Avenue resident and representative for the applicants, briefly explained the project. The applicants are proposing to widen the garage door and create storage

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area to encourage the garage to be used for parking. They would bring the existing finished spaces up to code requirements, including the addition of new windows. A laundry room is proposed so that they may relocate the laundry area that is currently in a closet. They are seeking to maintain a traditional exterior for a 1920's bungalow, but bring the interior up to modern standards. They noted that the prior owner removed windows that formerly enclosed the porch and they would like to enclose the space to prevent damage from water intrusion.

Neighbors Kevin and Dyanne Howley questioned how much of the house had been improved without permits, areas now proposed as living space. They thought the size of the house should be carefully considered for this small site. They did not believe there were ever windows in the front porch. They thought the density was being expanded too much. They believed engineering and architectural plans should be required. The parking should be reviewed. Impacts from lighting should be considered. They questioned the fairness of permitting this site to have a higher FAR percentage than their site.

Neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson indicated that they have lived in the neighborhood since 1974. They are concerned with excavation. They noted that 2 big pipes have been added to drain on the driveway that they did not recall before. They said that water comes off the hill and bubbles up from the ground. They suggested the applicants wait a year and look at the site drainage. Mr. Hoertkorn indicated that an engineer had inspected the house and found no sign of water damage and the prior owner added drains when she extended the house. He indicated there is no evidence of any moisture in the basement.

Noreen Slivon commented that the Town should consider some limits to additional basement floor area, particularly when a structure is already over the permitted floor area for a site. She also noted that window additions are also something that need to be considered. If a structure is conforming in setbacks, window addition and placement is not as significant as in cases when the windows are within the allowed setbacks. The Town should be sensitive to the new windows required for this project, which would be within setbacks. Ms. Slivon felt that adequate and upgraded parking access should be a condition of approval for basement projects (here widening the garage door and restructuring the front porch).

Jim Kemp was concerned that the plans show an unsophisticated design solution and appear to have been drawn by someone with no architectural design experience.

The two ADR group members (Kemp, Slivon) made the following recommendations to the applicant:

- Applicants must address the drainage issue.
- Applicants must clearly demonstrate in a graphic or calculated way that the basement rooms will meet the requirements for habitable space under the current building code (dimensions, light, air, ventilation).
- The applicant should modify the design of the garage door and front porch to make a more symmetrical entry and better accommodate the wider garage door.
- Elevations should be revised to reflect all windows and doors on the floor plan and all windows that may be required to meet habitable space requirements.

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6. Discussion of potential modifications to the town zoning regulations regarding finished attics and basements.

The two members present did not discuss basements and attics.