



Marc C. Laredo  
Mayor

**City of Newton, Massachusetts**  
Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459  
617-796-1120

Petition: #16-26  
Public Hearing: 1/6/26

Katie Whewell  
Acting Director

---

**PUBLIC HEARING MEMORANDUM**

DATE: January 6, 2026

TO: City Council

FROM: Katie Whewell, Acting Director of Planning and Development  
Lara Kritzer, Acting Deputy Director of Planning and Development  
Cat Kemmett, Deputy Chief Planner for Current Planning  
Zach Melcher, Planning Associate for Current Planning

SUBJECT: **Petition #16-26**, for SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL to exceed floor area ratio (FAR) and to allow three stories within a single-family dwelling at 89 Redwood Road

Materials: <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/904907>

---

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council and the public with technical information and planning analysis conducted by the Planning Department. The Planning Department's intention is to provide a balanced review of the proposed project based on information it has at the time of the public hearing. Additional information about the project may be presented at or after the public hearing for consideration at a subsequent working session by the Land Use Committee of the City Council.



**89 Redwood Road**

---

I. Project Description

**Current Use:** Single-family residential

**Zoning:** Single Residence 2 (SR-2)

**Lot size:** 12,860 square feet

**Proposal:** The petitioner proposes to raze the existing split-level dwelling to construct a new three-story single-family dwelling. The proposed construction increases the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from .27 to .50 where .35 is the maximum allowed, requiring a special permit. The proposed dwelling presents as 2.5 stories, which is the maximum allowed by right. However, the midpoint of the basement is slightly above the average grade, resulting in a three-story structure, which requires relief.

**Analysis:** The Planning Department does not have significant concerns with the request to allow a three-story structure that exceeds FAR. The work proposed complies with minimum lot area, coverage, open space, frontage, and setbacks. Although the height will be greater than what exists, the proposed height at 33.8 feet is below the maximum height of 36 feet allowed by right for this district. Planning notes that the proposed 0.50 FAR represents a notable increase over the allowable 0.35 FAR in the SR-2 district, and as this is a new construction build, encourages the petitioner to consider bringing the project closer to compliance with the allowed FAR limits. However, the proposed dwelling does not appear to be out of context with the scale and massing of the abutting homes in the neighborhood and as such the FAR and number of stories is unlikely to have a negative impact on the neighborhood.

II. Zoning Relief Requested:

For more details around the zoning analysis please refer to **Attachment A**.

<b>Zoning Relief Required</b>		
<i>Ordinance</i>		<i>Action Required</i>
§3.1.3		
§3.1.9	Request to exceed FAR	S.P. per §7.3.3
§3.1.3	Request to allow three stories	S.P. per §7.3.3

III. Criteria for Consideration per §7.3.3.:

- The proposed dwelling, which exceeds the Floor Area Ratio, is not in derogation of the size, scale, and design of other structures in the neighborhood. (§3.1.3, §3.1.9)
- The site is an appropriate location for the three-story dwelling which exceeds the FAR. (§7.3.3.C.1)
- The proposed three-story dwelling which exceeds the FAR as developed and operated will not adversely affect the neighborhood. (§7.3.3.C.2)
- There will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians. (§7.3.3.C.3)
- Access to the site over streets is appropriate for the types and numbers of vehicles involved. (§7.3.3.C.4)

IV. Project Proposal and Site Characteristics

The property at 89 Redwood Road is a 12,860 square foot lot in Newton Centre which is improved with a split-level single-family dwelling constructed in 1952. The site is relatively flat overall, with lower elevations near the driveway and a gentle rise toward the middle of the site. There is an existing stone wall that runs along the rear side lot line. The zoning of this property and surrounding lots is SR-2, and the neighborhood is primarily residential in character. The majority of the surrounding properties appear to be roughly 2 or 2.5 stories.

The petitioner proposes to raze the existing split-level dwelling to construct a new three-story single-family dwelling. As part of the proposed work, the existing driveway will be converted to lawn, and a larger driveway will be constructed to the left, leading to a two-car garage. As a result, a new 19 foot curb cut will be constructed and the original driveway access point will be replaced with a grass strip. Additionally, the proposal includes a new retaining wall running along the eastern side lot line. At its tallest point, the wall will measure 3.8 feet tall, which is marginally shorter than the allowed 4 feet in height for retaining walls. There are existing trees shown in the site plan that may be impacted by the proposed construction, and the petitioner should work with the City's Tree Warden to address any potential concerns he may identify prior to the issuance of a building permit. The petition does not include a landscaping plan.

The new structure is proposed with a gross floor area of 6,456 square feet, where the existing structure is 3,504 feet. The proposed dwelling presents as 2.5 stories and is of a similar scale to surrounding properties. However the midpoint of the basement is slightly above the average grade, resulting in a three-story structure. As a result, the FAR will

increase from 0.27 to 0.50, where 0.35 is the maximum permitted in the SR-2 district. The building height will increase from 22.5 feet to 33.8 feet, which will remain below the maximum allowable height of 36 feet. Additionally, the proposed work will result in a total increase of 898 square feet of impervious area, which requires approval by the Engineering Department for compliance with the City's Stormwater Ordinance prior to the issuance of a building permit. The work proposed complies with minimum lot area, coverage, open space, frontage, height, and setbacks.

V. Interdepartmental Review

- **Newton Historic Commission:** On January 26, 2024, the Newton Historic Commission determined that the property at 89 Redwood Road was not preferably preserved; therefore, demolition was not delayed and no further review was required (Attachment B).
- **Engineering Review:** Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the plans will be reviewed by the Department for compliance with standards outlined in the City's Stormwater Ordinance.

VI. Petitioner's Responsibilities

The petition is considered complete.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A:** Zoning Review Memorandum  
**Attachment B:** Newton Historic Commission Decision, dated 1/26/2024  
**Attachment C:** DRAFT Council Order

ATTACHMENT A



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts  
Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone  
(617) 796-1120  
Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath  
Director

ZONING REVIEW MEMORANDUM

Date: December 4, 2025  
To: Anthony Ciccariello, Commissioner of Inspectional Services  
From: Jane Santosuosso, Chief Zoning Code Official  
Katie Whewell, Chief Planner for Current Planning  
Cc: 89 Redwood LLC, Applicant  
Barney S. Heath, Director of Planning and Development  
Jonah Temple, Deputy City Solicitor  
RE: Request to exceed FAR and to allow three stories

Applicant: 89 Redwood LLC	
Site: 89 Redwood Road	SBL: 82015 0077
Zoning: SR2	Lot Area: 12,860 square feet
Current use: Single-family dwelling	Proposed use: No change

BACKGROUND:

The property at 89 Redwood Road consists of a 12,860 square foot lot improved with a single-family dwelling constructed in 1952. The petitioners propose to raze the existing structure to construct a three-story single-family dwelling exceeding the maximum FAR, requiring a special permit.

- The following review is based on plans and materials submitted to date as noted below.
- Zoning Review Application, prepared by Stella Drizin, applicant, submitted 10/27/2025
  - Existing Conditions Plan of Land, signed and stamped by Christopher C. Charlton, surveyor, dated 10/27/2025
  - Plan of Land Proposed Garage, signed and stamped by Christopher C. Charlton, surveyor and Edmond T Spruhan, Engineer, dated 10/15/2025
  - Existing floor plan, submitted 10/27/2025
  - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, prepared by Owner, dated 10/14/2025
  - FAR calculations, signed and stamped by Edmond Spruhan, engineer, submitted 10/27/2025

**ADMINISTRATIVE DETERMINATIONS:**

1. The petitioner proposes to raze the existing split level dwelling and construct a new three-story single-family dwelling. The proposed dwelling presents as 2.5 stories, however the midpoint of the basement is above the average grade, resulting in a three-story structure. Per section 3.1.3, a special permit is required to allow a three-story structure.
2. The proposed construction increases the FAR from .27 to .50 where .35 is the maximum allowed, requiring a special permit per sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.9.

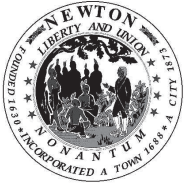
SR2 Zone	Required	Existing	Proposed
Lot Size	10,000 square feet	12,860 square feet	No change
Frontage	80 feet	85 feet	No change
Setbacks			
• Front	25 feet	28.6 feet	28.2 feet
• Side	7.5 feet	21.6 feet	19.2 feet
• Side	7.5 feet	9.2 feet	8 feet
• Rear	15 feet	56.3 feet	49.3 feet
Height	36 feet	22.5 feet	33.8 feet
Stories	2.5		<b>3*</b>
FAR	.35	.27	<b>.50*</b>
Max Lot Coverage	30%	Not provided	20.8%
Min. Open Space	50%	Not provided	65.9%

**BOLD** indicates a nonconformity

\*Relief required

1. See “Zoning Relief Summary” below:

Zoning Relief Required		
Ordinance		Action Required
§3.1.3		
§3.1.9	Request to exceed FAR	S.P. per §7.3.3
§3.1.3	Request to allow three stories	S.P. per §7.3.3



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

# City of Newton, Massachusetts

Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459

Telephone  
(617) 796-1120  
Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath  
Director

## Newton Historical Commission Demolition Review Decision

**Date:** January 26, 2024      **Application #** HRA-23-266

**Address of structure:** 89 REDWOOD RD

**Type of building:** House  
If partial demolition, feature to be demolished is

The building or structure is:

- in a National Register historic district or in a historic district eligible for listing
- individually listed on the National Register or individually eligible for listing.
- importantly associated with historic person(s), events, or architectural or social history
- historically or architecturally important for period, style, architect, builder, or context.
- in a local historic district not visible from a public way

is  **NOT HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT** as defined by the Newton Demolition Delay Ordinance.

*Demolition is not delayed and no further review is required.*

is  **HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT** as defined by the Newton Demolition Delay Ordinance (See below).

The Newton Historical Commission staff:

**APPROVES** the proposed project based upon materials submitted see below for conditions (if any).

*Demolition is not delayed, further staff review may be required.*

**DOES NOT APPROVE** and the project requires Newton Historical Commission review on this date January 25, 2024 (See below).

**Conditions:**

The Newton Historical Commission finds the building or structure:

is  **NOT PREFERABLY PRESERVED**  
*Demolition is not delayed and no further review is required.*

**Owner of Record:**  
JORGE CASTILLO

is  **PREFERABLY PRESERVED – (SEE BELOW).**

**Delay of Demolition:**

is in effect until

has been waived - see conditions

Please Note: if demolition does not occur within two years of the date of expiration of the demolition delay, the demolition will require a resubmittal to the Historical Commission for review and may result in another demolition delay.

Determination made by:

David Lewis, Chief Preservation Planner



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

# City of Newton, Massachusetts

Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459

Telephone  
(617) 796-1120  
Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath  
Director

## RECORD OF ACTION

**DATE: January 26, 2024**

**SUBJECT: 89 REDWOOD RD**

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on January 25, 2024, the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 1-6:

RESOLVED to: Find the property preferably preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:

Nancy Grissom

Voting in the Negative:

John Rice  
Anne Marie Stein  
Mark Armstrong  
Scott Friedman, Alternate  
Peter Leis, Alternate  
Doug Cornelius, Chair

Abstained:

Recused:

Title Reference:

Owner of Property: JORGE CASTILLO  
Deed recorded at: Middlesex County Registry of Deeds  
Book/Page  
Date

David Lewis, Chief Preservation Planner

Newton Historical Commission  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459  
Email: [dlewis@newtonma.gov](mailto:dlewis@newtonma.gov)  
[www.newtonma.gov](http://www.newtonma.gov)

CITY OF NEWTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDERED:

That the City Council, finding that the public convenience and welfare will be substantially served by its action, that the use of the site will be in harmony with the conditions, safeguards and limitations set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, and that said action will be without substantial detriment to the public good, and without substantially derogating from the intent or purpose of the Zoning Ordinance, grants approval of the following **SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL** to exceed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and allow three stories in a single-family dwelling as recommended by the Land Use Committee for the reasons given by the Committee, through its Chair, Councilor Andrea Kelley:

1. The site is an appropriate location for the three-story dwelling with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of .50 because the dwelling is at a scale that blends with the existing neighborhood of single-family homes. (§7.3.3.C.1)
2. The three-story dwelling which exceeds the FAR as developed will not adversely affect the neighborhood as the proposed height is below the maximum allowable height for the zoning district and complies with other applicable dimensional standards in the zoning ordinance including setbacks, lot coverage, and open space. (§7.3.3.C.2)
3. There will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians because the new driveway and curb cut will provide adequate sightlines and access for those entering and exiting the site. (§7.3.3.C.3)
4. Access to the site over streets is appropriate for the types and numbers of vehicles involved. (§7.3.3.C.4)
5. The proposed addition, which exceeds the FAR, is not in derogation of the size, scale, and design of other structures in the neighborhood, and is similar in scale to the existing homes in the neighborhood. (§3.1.3, §3.1.9)

PETITION NUMBER: #16-26

PETITIONER: 89 Redwood LLC

LOCATION: 89 Redwood Road, Ward 8, Newton Centre, on land known as Section 82 Block 15 Lot 007, containing approximately 12,860 sq. ft. of land

OWNER: 89 Redwood LLC

ADDRESS OF OWNER: 61 Brookline Street  
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

TO BE USED FOR: Single-family dwelling

RELIEF GRANTED: Special Permit per §7.3.3 to exceed FAR (§3.1.3, §3.1.9) and allow three stories within a single-family dwelling (§3.1.3)

ZONING: Single Residence 2 (SR-2)

Approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. All buildings, parking areas, driveways, walkways, landscaping and other site features associated with this special permit/site plan approval shall be located and constructed consistent with:
  - a. A site plan titled Zoning Plan Layout and Topography, prepared, signed, and stamped by Edmond Spruhan, Professional Engineer, dated October 27, 2025, and stamped by Christopher C. Charlton, Professional Land Surveyor, dated October 27, 2025.
  - b. Architectural Plans by Owner, including:
    - i. Page A3, Front Elevation, Right Side Elevation, dated 10/14/25.
    - ii. Page A4, Rear Elevation, Left Side Elevation, dated 10/14/25.
2. No building permit (other than a demolition permit) and unless otherwise specified shall be issued by the City pursuant to this Special Permit/Site Plan Approval unless all applicable terms and conditions have been complied with and the Petitioner has:
  - a. Recorded a certified copy of this Special Permit/Site Plan Approval at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds and filed proof of such recording with the City Clerk and submitted a copy with the building permit application.

- b. Obtained a written statement/sign off from the Planning Department that confirms the Building Permit plans are consistent with plans approved in Condition #1 including all dimensional requirements.
3. No certificate of occupancy (temporary or final) shall be issued by the City pursuant to this Special Permit/Site Plan Approval unless all applicable terms and conditions have been complied with and the Petitioner has:
  - a. Filed with the building permit record statements by a registered architect (or professional engineer) and a professional land surveyor (or professional engineer) certifying compliance with Condition #1, including FAR.
  - b. Submitted final as-built survey plans in digital format, stamped and signed by a professional land surveyor or professional engineer, as applicable.