

Schoolhouse Rocks, LLC
45 Main Street
Mattapoisett, MA 02739

September 26, 2023

Via Email Only: sraposo@wareham.ma.us

Town of Wareham
Zoning Board of Appeals
Attn: Chairman and Board Members
54 Marion Road
Wareham, MA 02571

RE: SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST FOR VARIANCE
APPLICANT: Schoolhouse Rocks LLC
PROPERTY: 1073 Main Street, Wareham, MA 02576

Dear Chairman and Board Members:

We are the owners of the property located at 1073 Main Street, W. Wareham, Massachusetts, which was formerly known as the West Wareham School. This property is an oversized building with 4,200 square feet on each floor, and is located in the Multi-residential 30 (MR30) District, and would make a great location for residential units. After hiring an architect and structural engineer, it was determined that 7 units could comfortably fit in this unique and historic building. This building meets every zoning requirement for a 7-unit building, except for land area, as follows:

ZONING: MR30

	Zoning Requirement	Current Condition
Frontage	250'	286' +/-
Front setback	30'	80' +/-
Side setback	20'	80' +/-
Rear setback	20'	150' +/-
Max Building cov	25%	Approx 5%
Area	45,000 sf for 2 family + 30,000 sf for additional units	1.89 acres or 82,328 sf

We are requesting a variance from the area requirements for this multi-unit project. As the Supreme Judicial Court stated:

“[G.L. c. 40A, s. 10]... authorizes a board of appeals to grant a variance with respect to particular land where it ‘specifically finds (a) that owing to circumstances relating to the soil

conditions, shape, or topography of such land ... and especially affecting such land ... but not affecting generally the zoning district in which it is located, (b) a literal enforcement of the provisions of the ordinance or by-law would involve substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the petitioner or appellant, ... (c) that desirable relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and (d) without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent or purpose of such ordinance or by-law.” Warren v. Zoning Bd. of Appeals of Amherst, 383 Mass. 1, 9 (1981).

As stated this is an old historic building that is oversized and has been in existence for over 100 years. It is a solid structure that is in great shape but no longer serves a purpose as a school for the Town of Wareham. Since the property is located in a residential district, and with the housing crisis at an all time high, it makes the most sense to utilize this large building to its maximum capacity. With 4,200 square feet on each floor, including an attic with 16’ at its center peak, we are looking at 12,600 square feet of space. Renovating such a large building is a financial hardship by itself. However, to demolish this building would be a hardship to the Town as it would remove a historic building that is beloved by so many of the residents of Wareham, and is an icon. Even though the Town no longer had a use for it, it continues to hold fond memories for the residents of the Town. The historic value of this building, and its sheer size, is an opportunity for this Town to maintain the character of the Town while also allowing a multi-unit use for the building.

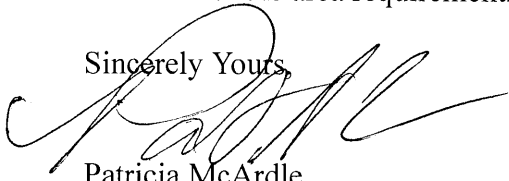
It is important to note: We are not expanding the footprint of this building, we are simply using the space in existence in its current state. Whether we put 3 units or 7 units in this building, the footprint does not change.

This would not be a detriment to the neighborhood. As stated, this is a residential neighborhood. The parking would remain in the rear of the building. With the development, the grounds would be cultivated, unlike its unkept condition right now. Further, it would keep with the character of the neighborhood and add value by restoring a long-loved building.

The intent of the bylaws is to control the density of building sprawl on a piece of land for new construction. Since we are remaining within the footprint of an oversized building that existed prior to the adoption of the zoning bylaws, we are not undermining the intent of overusing a site. The size and shape of the building, and parking lot will remain the same.

We have received a lot of positive support for creating a multi-unit residential building while preserving the exterior look of this building. We hope we can honor those requests and obtain a variance for the area requirements so to avoid the hardship of renovating this oversized building.

Sincerely Yours,



Patricia McArdle
Ernest DeBonise
Veronica DeBonise
Schoolhouse Rocks LLC