

DRAFT January 5, 2009

To: Mayor and Town Council  
From: Planning Commission  
Subject: Ordinance No. 2008-07 Modifying Building Coverage Standards

Based on testimony received for the Public Hearing on December 8, 2008, the Planning Commission offers the following additional information for the record and an updated recommendation for consideration by the Town Council.

Range of Building Coverage – At the Public Hearing, representatives of the Historic Preservation Commission and some other Town residents expressed concerns regarding the 40% building coverage, and how this limit, if implemented across the RR-1 and RR-2 zones, could result in too many larger homes potentially changing the character of our existing residential areas. There was also testimony received that a proposed realignment of building coverage based on lot area rather than zone is a very modest and careful way to improve the Town's ability to handle the mansionization issue. And there was testimony at the Public Hearing that we need to sustain a diversity of home sizes, specifically noting that Washington Grove offers a unique collection of smaller homes due to the smaller lots distributed throughout the Town. After the Public Hearing, there was testimony via email recommending a maximum coverage of 30% rather than 40%.

Recommendation – To respond to concerns regarding large homes yet allowing some additional flexibility for smaller lots in Town, the Planning Commission recommends the Council consider an adjusted range based on 3% steps for the RR-1 and RR-2 zones as follows:

Maximum Ground Covered by All Buildings:

- 25% coverage with lot area greater than or equal to 11,250 sq.ft.
- 28% coverage with lot area less than 11,250 sq.ft. but greater than or equal to 9,375 sq.ft.
- 31% coverage with lot area less than 9,375 sq.ft. but greater than or equal to 7,500 sq.ft.
- 34% coverage with lot area less than 7,500 sq.ft.

Incentive for Preservation – Town ordinances already contain provisions that non-complying buildings may be enlarged, remodeled, etc., provided there is no increase in the degree of non-compliance. By reducing maximum coverage from 40% down to 34%, we potentially increase the number of property owners with incentive to retain and preserve current homes.

Properties Impacted – Within the RR-2 zone, with the former limit of 40%, there will be: 34 homes with a new limit of 34%, 9 homes with a new limit of 31%, 3 homes with a new limit of 28%, and 3 homes with a new limit of 25%. Within the RR-1 zone, with the former limit of 25%, there will be: 2 homes with a new limit of 34%, 30 homes with a new limit of 31%, and 15 homes with a new limit of 28%.

Maximum Coverage for All Residential Properties –

	<u>RR-1 Zone</u>	<u>RR-2 Zone</u>	<u>RR-3 Zone</u>	<u>RR-4 Zone</u>	<u>Total</u>
25%	112	3	1	17	116
28%	15	3			18
31%	30	9			39
34%	2	34			36
Total	159	49	1	17	226

Items for Future Exploration – There was testimony that we could consider additional concepts to regulate the bulk, vertical face, and other aspects related to preservation and mansionization. The Planning Commission concludes that balancing building coverage based on lot size is a good first step, is easy to understand and implement, and may serve us well in the near term to deal with concerns for mansionization. Other items/concepts should be explored, perhaps via a special committee, and can be considered via another ordinance proposal in the future.

Record Open – For Ordinance No. 2008-07, the Planning Commission suggests leaving the record open for at least an additional month to permit further review and comment by the Historic Preservation Commission and other Town residents.