

SECTION 27

CONVERSION OF HOUSES OF WORSHIP

27.1 Purpose of District

1. To allow for the reuse of historic houses of worship deemed Significant Buildings or Structures, as defined by the Woburn Municipal Code, in a manner that will promote economic development and provide housing in the community;
2. To encourage the preservation of houses of worship deemed to be Significant Buildings or Structures through adaptive reuse for residential purposes;
3. To provide housing for residents 55 years of age or older; and
4. To provide an alternative to traditional land subdivision in order to minimize the visual impact(s) of redevelopment and reuse on abutting properties.

27.2 Scope of Authority

A special permit may be issued for the conversion of a House of Worship on lots in the R-2 Zoning District which (1) contain a House of Worship that has been deemed to be a Significant Building or Structure by the Woburn Historical Commission using the criteria listed in Title 15, Article V, Section 15-16 of the Woburn Municipal Code, and which Significant Building or Structure was used as a house of worship within five (5) years of the date of application for a special permit under this Section, and (2) the lot has not been subdivided or reduced in size or otherwise developed for any other purpose subsequent to 1/1/2015.

27.3 Uses By Right

1. Those uses permitted by right in the underlying zoning district.

27.4 Uses by Special Permit

A Special Permit shall be required from the Woburn City Council for the following use:

1. Multi-family dwellings located entirely within the House of Worship that has been deemed to be a Significant Building or Structure by the Woburn Historical Commission as provided herein.

27.5 Dimensional and Density Regulations

Dimensional and density regulations for the “Conversion of Houses of Worship” District shall be as follows provided, however, that the City Council may grant a Special Permit to authorize relief from the existing dimensional regulations so long as such relief does not allow for additional residential units or an increase in the height of the existing structure or the footprint except to address ADA compliance.

1. Maximum Permitted Density: 1.5 dwelling units for every 1,000 square feet of the House of Worship’s first floor gross floor area.
2. Dimensional Regulations: For purposes of this Section 27, the existing House of Worship structure may be converted to a multi-family dwelling using its existing setbacks and ground coverage.
3. Maximum Building Height
 - a. No greater than the existing Structure not including appurtenant roof structures such as chimneys, service equipment, spires, flag poles and the like.

27.6 Off-Street Parking Requirements

1. At a minimum, at least 2 off street parking spaces per unit shall be provided in accordance with Section 8 of the Woburn Zoning Ordinance entitled Off Street Parking and Loading Facilities Regulations.

27.7 Required Additional Findings for Conversion of Houses of Worship

In granting a Special Permit under Section 27, the City Council must make the following additional findings and conditions:

1. That the building or structure proposed for conversion to residential use has been deemed by the Woburn Historical Commission to be a “Significant Building or Structure”. In making this finding, the Woburn Historical Commission shall use the criteria outlined in Title 15, Article V, Section 15-16 of the Woburn Municipal Code;
2. That the building or structure proposed for conversion to residential shall be restored to its’ original historic character and preserved from an historic or architectural perspective in perpetuity;
3. That conversion of the building or structure to residential use facilitates preservation or improvement of the existing character of abutting properties and the district generally;

4. That the exterior design of the building shall not be substantially altered so as to change the character and architecture of the original design;
5. The existing building footprint shall not be increased except to the extent that alterations are necessary to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act;
6. There shall be adequate provision for container(s) for collection and disposal of refuse;
7. Residents fifty-five (55) years of Age and Older:
 - a. At least fifty (50%) percent of the units shall be age restricted and occupied by at least one person who is fifty-five years of age or older.
 - b. Prior to the issuance of a Special Permit under this Section 27, a deed, restrictive covenant or other recorded instrument showing the applicant to be the owner of the land to be designated as a Multiple Family Dwelling with fifty (50%) percent of the units restricted for persons 55 years of age or older shall be reviewed by the City Solicitor and approved by the City Council. It shall be a condition of any Special Permit granted hereunder that said Deed or other recorded instrument shall be recorded at the Middlesex County South District Registry of Deeds prior to the issuance of the Landowner's Notice of Special Permit Decision by the City Clerk's office.
8. The lot shall not be subdivided or reduced in size or otherwise developed for any other purpose subsequent to 1/1/2015.

(Added 1/22/2015)

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