

255 POWDERHOUSE BOULEVARD

SITE PLAN REVIEW FOR PROPOSED FENCE IMPROVEMENTS.

OWNER SEEKS TO INSTALL FENCE ALONG POTION OF PROPERTY LINE. CORNER LOT FEATURES 166' OF FRONTAGE. ZONING RELIEF SAUGHT TO INSTALL 46' OF 6' TALL FENCING ALONG 46' OF THE FRONTAGE.

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Narrative

Our home is located on a triangular lot at the corner of Powder House Blvd and North Street. Nearly all of the perimeter of the lot is technically frontage, and the 20 linear feet that are NOT considered frontage are a mere 8’ from the exterior wall of the house (leaving just 160 SF of what is essentially an alleyway that could be contained within a privacy fence under the existing code).

The purpose of this application is to install a fence to create private exterior space along a portion of the North Street exposure, requiring relief on:

- 1. Fence height (6’ rather than 4’), and
- 2. Fence opacity (90% rather than 50%).

The 6’ fence would act as a buffer from the very busy sidewalk and passing vehicle traffic and create a space that would otherwise typically be afforded by either a backyard, or a side yard or front yard on a less busy roadway.

Our proposal is to remove the 1950s era chain link fence and concrete slabs. The entire front-most corner portion of the lot would remain unfenced, and planting of native shrubs and flowers would be completed. A new cedar fence would begin at the Southeast corner of the home, running out perpendicular from the front edge of the home to the North Street edge of the lot, along the North Street edge of the lot (5’ of 90% opaque fencing topped by 1’ lattice), and down the rear edge of the lot (6’ of opaque fencing); it would be completed along the driveway. There will be up to three access gates.

Neither a low fence nor a 50% opaque fence would provide sufficient buffering from the constant traffic and idling cars, all of which is quite near to the yard given the narrow sidewalk and the fact that the vehicle lane is flush to the curb (there is neither a bike lane nor parking on that side of North Street).

This proposed scope of work would include landscape work interior to the lot to remove existing concrete and create significantly more permeable surfaces and native planting. We are also looking to reduce the size of the current driveway to create more areas for planting. All of this would build off of work where homeowners have removed non-native plants and two very large white pine trees, and planted significant quantities of native, pollinator-friendly perennials and two new birch trees. The resulting Green Score meets the vision set in the applicable Zoning Code.

A. Explain any special circumstances affecting the land or structure (related to soil conditions, shape or topography) that are unusual and do not affect other properties AND any hardship that results from these special circumstances.

Our lot perimeter is nearly entirely frontage, along the very public corner at the heavily-trafficked intersection of Powder House Boulevard and North Street. The house is set closest to the rear of the lot (within 8’ of the edge shared with the sole abutter) and nearly all of the open space is along these two major streets, resulting in no semi-private yard space for the property.

Many pedestrians cross Powder House Blvd at the driveway to go through the parking lot of Clarendon Hill Apartments to reach the shopping center. Often, cut through the rear of our private property, crossing through the small alleyway, to go from North Street to the place where they wish to cross PHB. This happens at least once a week.

Both sidewalks are very busy and North Street is particularly narrow with tree boxes reducing the public sidewalk width to less than three feet in locations. This essentially forces people even closer to our yard space. The current pandemic, and the need to maintain proper social distancing, has raised the urgency of this hardship. Pedestrians, frequently without masks, are essentially overhanging our private yard space and rendering it impossible to enjoy our yard as cannot be in our yard AND maintain six feet of distance.

As mentioned, Powder House Boulevard and North Street are both very busy streets with near constant vehicular and pedestrian traffic -- often at high speeds, and there are frequent collisions. Recent studies and plans from the city have made reference to this fact. Given the lack of essentially any backyard space, the proposed fence improvements would provide a needed buffer to vehicle noise and lights that burden this particular corner more than most.

These unique challenges of this site are exacerbated by our unique site whereby currently, 92% of the site area not including the house is considered Frontage Area.

In summary - as pertains to Hardship 1, Fence Height - the relief on height is respectfully requested to create private outdoor space that would otherwise be impossible to create given the site conditions noted above. For Hardship #2, fence opacity, relief is requested on this for similar reasons. A solid fence will create the privacy for this very public and unusual lot.

B. Explain if and how the variance is the minimum approval necessary to grant reasonable relief to the owner AND results in a reasonable use of the land or structure.

As mentioned, all but 20 of the 250 linear feet of lot perimeter are considered frontage. This proposal would only create a privacy fence along 48’ of that frontage along North Street and the shared lot line. This fencing would allow the property to have a modestly-sized private exterior space in keeping with other single- and multi-family houses in the area. The fence is set significantly far back from the intersection of PHB and North Street and will not impact pedestrian or motorist visibility in any way.

Making a significant investment in removing the concrete and regrading the part of the lot is not worthwhile to the homeowner if the new space is still mostly open to passers-by (and the litter that is often left in the yard) and does not permit for proper COVID distancing, therefore leaving the space somewhat unusable to residents. The taller fence will also serve as a support for climbing plants.

In summary - as it pertains to Hardship 1, Fence Height - this relief is requested to create a modest private outdoor space for the property. For Hardship 2, fence opacity, this again goes hand in hand with the height issue to create visual and acoustic screening necessary. This proposal has been considered to seek minimal relief in making a modest sized screened yard space. As shown in the diagram on A3.1, the resulting screened yard space where relief is requested measures just 825 SF, a modest, comparable scale to other lots in the neighborhood.

C. Explain if and how the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance AND will not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

Granting the variance will allow for the removal of the existing, unsightly decades old silver chain-link fence, as well more than 400 SF of existing concrete, to complete a planting and fencing scope that are much more visually appealing and in harmony with the City’s climate goals.

Neighbors have expressed appreciation for the homeowners decision to replace grass and non-native species with significant native plantings. The scope of work associated with this variance would allow for a continuation of that goal. Proposed fence will be visually appealing, and will align with key regulating lines in the house creating a harmonious relationship. The existing chain link fence spans more than 80’ and is warped from decades of use. Replacing that fence with 40’ of native planting, and 48’ of non-compliant fencing, that will act as a support for additional climbing plants.

Specifically for Hardship 1, Fence Height, the layout of the proposed fence is in harmony with the Zoning Ordinance. For the homeowners, it enhances livability and allows for a more opportunity to enjoy the property. (1.1.4.d.ii) The alignment of the fence also creates a clearer hierarchy for the lot as a whole and focuses attention to the front facade and front yard proper where significant investments have been made to enhance its character and provide plantings that are to the benefit of the neighborhood public realm as a whole. (1.1.4.d.v).

For hardship 2, Fence opacity, much of the same reasoning applies. The opaque fence along the small portion of the frontage area will create visual and acoustic separation that will enhance livability for the homeowners. The fence will be handsomely designed to be a positive contribution to the neighborhood.

255 PHB - EVANS

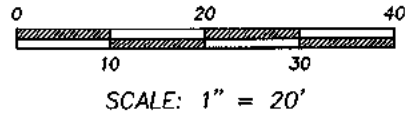
255 POWDER HOUSE BLVD
SOMERVILLE, MA 02144

NARRATIVE

01/17/21

REV 3/20/21

A1



CURRENT OWNER: JONATHAN & KATHLEEN EVANS

TITLE REFERENCE: BK 69441 PG 132

PLAN REFERENCE: 3436G

THIS PLAN WAS PREPARED WITHOUT A FULL TITLE EXAMINATION AND IS NOT A CERTIFICATION TO THE TITLE OF THE LANDS SHOWN. THE OWNERSHIP OF ABUTTING PROPERTIES IS ACCORDING TO ASSESSORS RECORDS. THIS PLAN MAY OR MAY NOT SHOW ALL ENCUMBRANCES WHETHER EXPRESSED, IMPLIED OR PRESCRIPTIVE.

SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION:

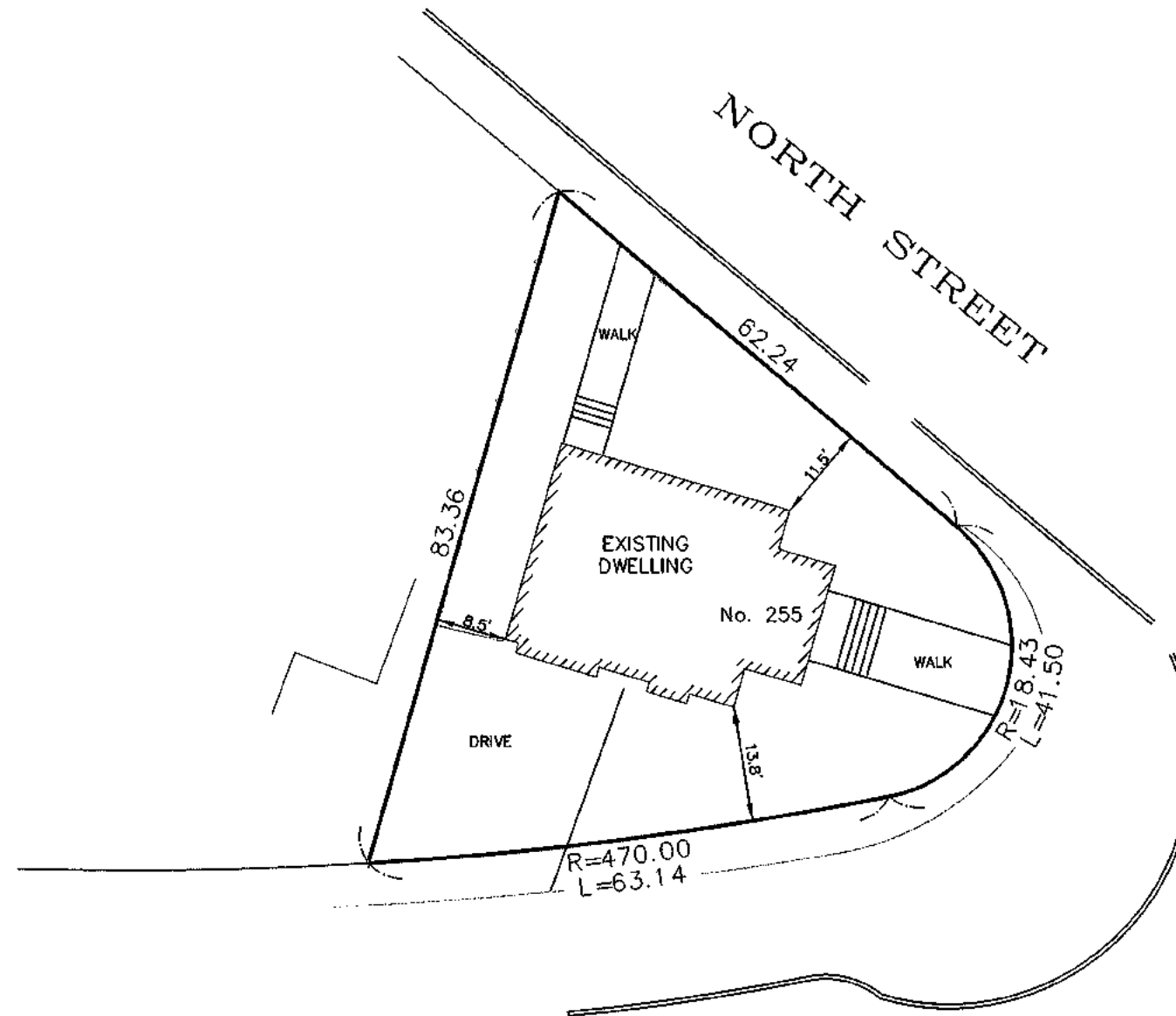
TO: JONATHAN & KATHLEEN EVANS

I CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN AND THE SURVEY ON WHICH IT IS BASED WERE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE PRACTICES OF LAND SURVEYORS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS FOR A PLAN AND SURVEY OF THIS TYPE. THIS CERTIFICATION IS MADE ONLY TO THE ABOVE NAMED INDIVIDUAL(S) AND IS NULL AND VOID UPON ANY FURTHER CONVEYANCE OF THIS PLAN.

THE FIELD WORK WAS COMPLETED ON: AUGUST 31, 2020
DATE OF PLAN: SEPTEMBER 6, 2020


RICHARD J. MEDE, JR. P.L.S.

09/06/2020
DATE:



POWDER HOUSE BLVD

CERTIFIED PLOT PLAN
255 POWDER HOUSE BLVD
SOMERVILLE, MA.
(MIDDLESEX COUNTY)

PREPARED BY:

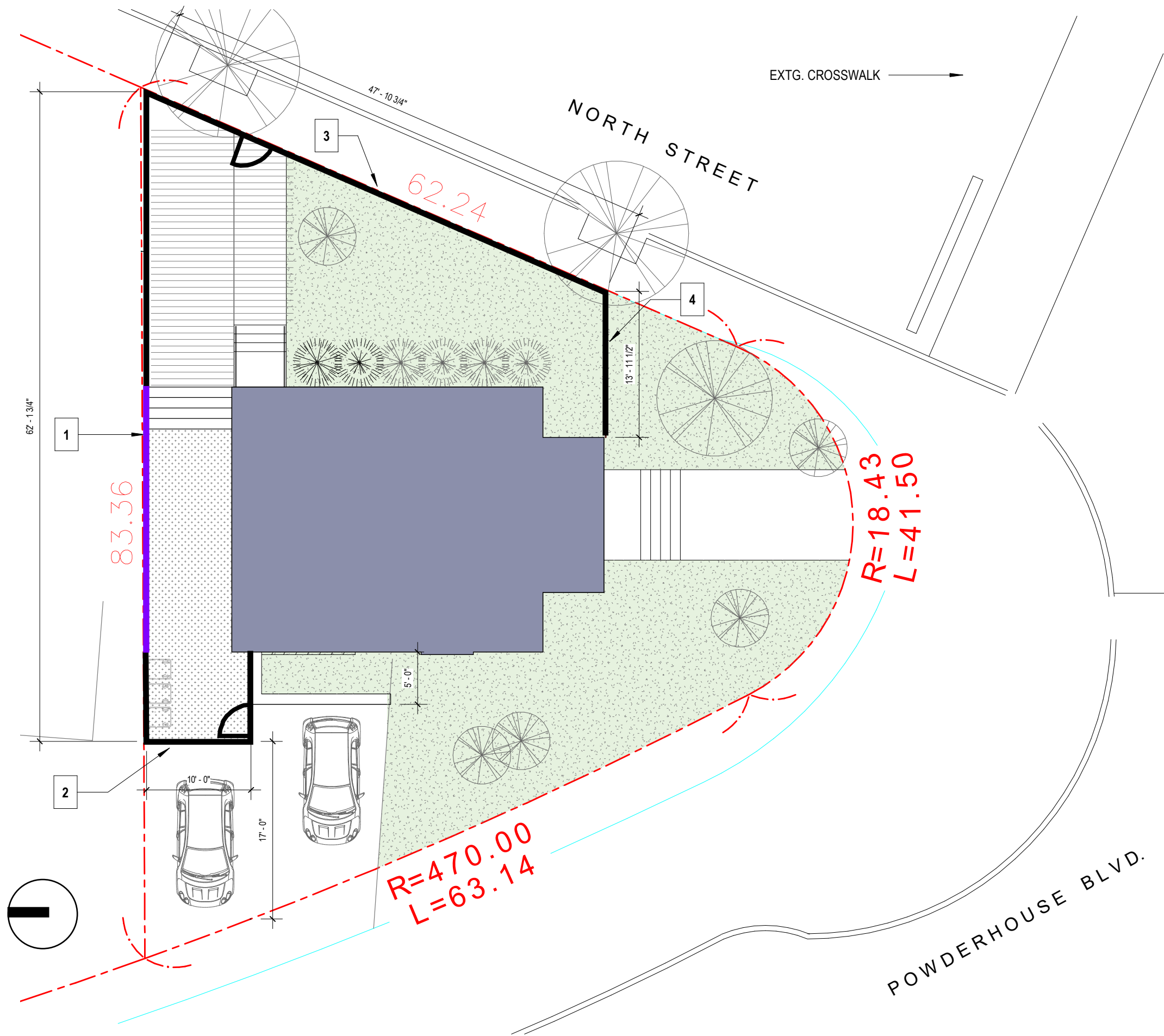
**MEDFORD
ENGINEERING
& SURVEY**

ANGELO B. VENEZIANO ASSOCIATES
15 HALL STREET, MEDFORD, MA 02155
781-396-4466 fax: 781-396-8052

PREPARED FOR:

JON EVANS

DRAWN CAV	CHECKED RJM	FILE No. 20892
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- NOTES
1. PRIVACY FENCE (6' TALL) ALONG REAR PROPERTY LINE. (IN PURPLE)
AS OF RIGHT PER ZONING ORDINANCE 10.6.1a & 10.6.1b
 2. PRIVACY FENCE (6' TALL) OFF POWDERHOUSE BLVD. SIDE OF PROPERTY.
SET BACK MIN. OF 15' FROM PUBLIC WAY.
AS OF RIGHT PER ZONING ORDINANCE 10.6.1a & 10.6.1b
 3. DECORATIVE PRIVACY FENCE (46' LONG, 6' TALL - 5' SOLID PLUS 1' TALL LATTICE) AT NORTH ST. SIDE OF PROPERTY.
 4. DECORATIVE PRIVACY FENCE (5' SOLID PLUS 1' TALL LATTICE) AT FRONT LAWN.

GREEN SCORE CALCULATION					
Address		255 Powder House Blvd			
Total Lot Area		3,644			
	Count	SF per	SF	Multiplier	Score
Soils					
Landscaped, < 24"			0	0.3	0
Landscaped, > 24"			1,300	0.6	780
Pervious Paving, 6-24"			0	0.2	0
Pervious Paving, > 24"			400	0.5	200
Groundcovers			1,800	0.1	180
Plants					
Vegetation, < 2'			600	0.2	120
Vegetation, > 2'	25	12	300	0.3	90
Trees					
Small Tree					
Large Tree	3	450	1,350	0.6	810
Preserved Tree	6	65	390	0.8	312
Engineered Landscape					
Veg Wall					
Rain Garden					
Green Roof					
					2,492
					0.68

255 PHB - EVANS

255 POWDER HOUSE BLVD
SOMERVILLE, MA 02144

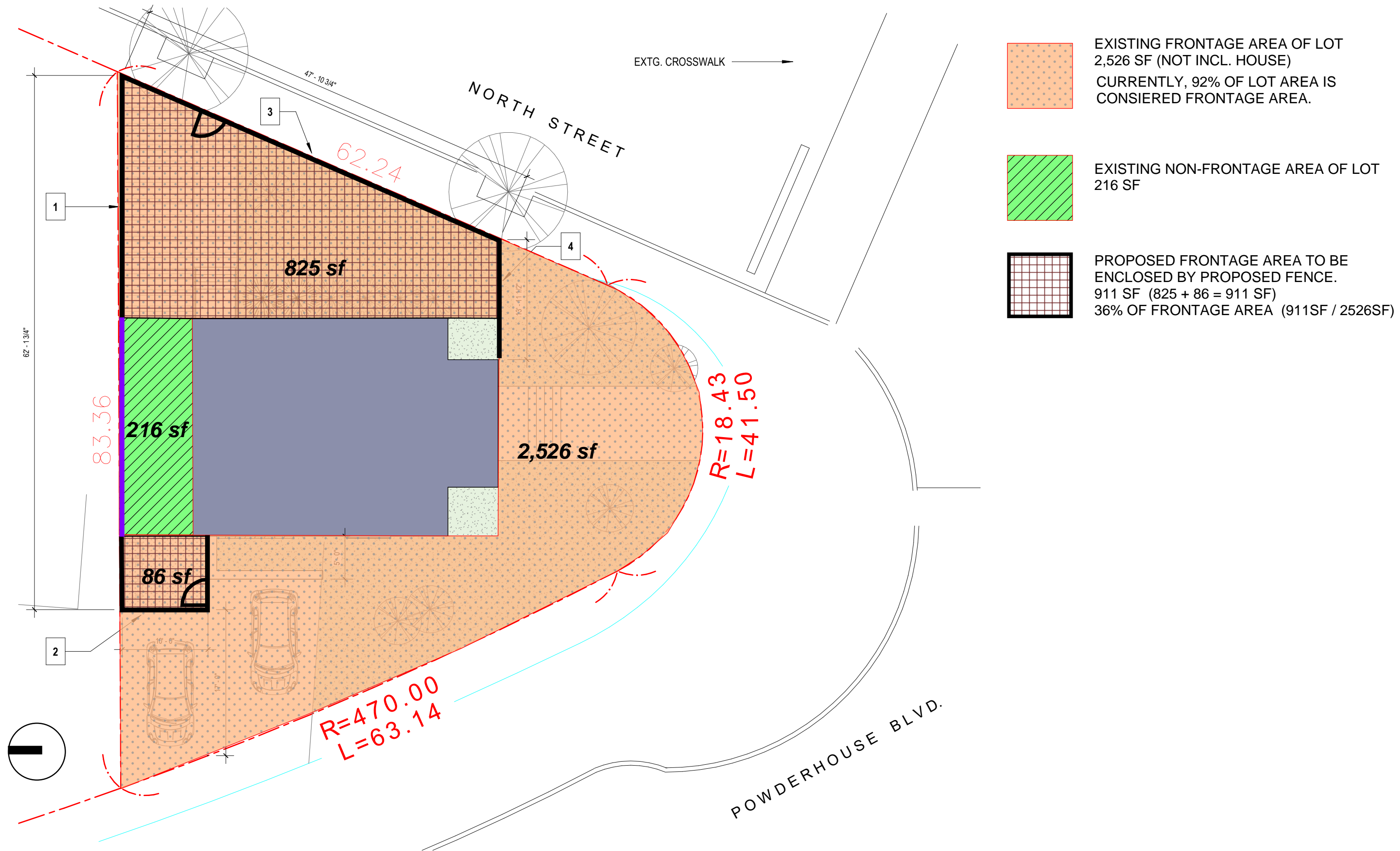
PROPOSED SITE PLAN

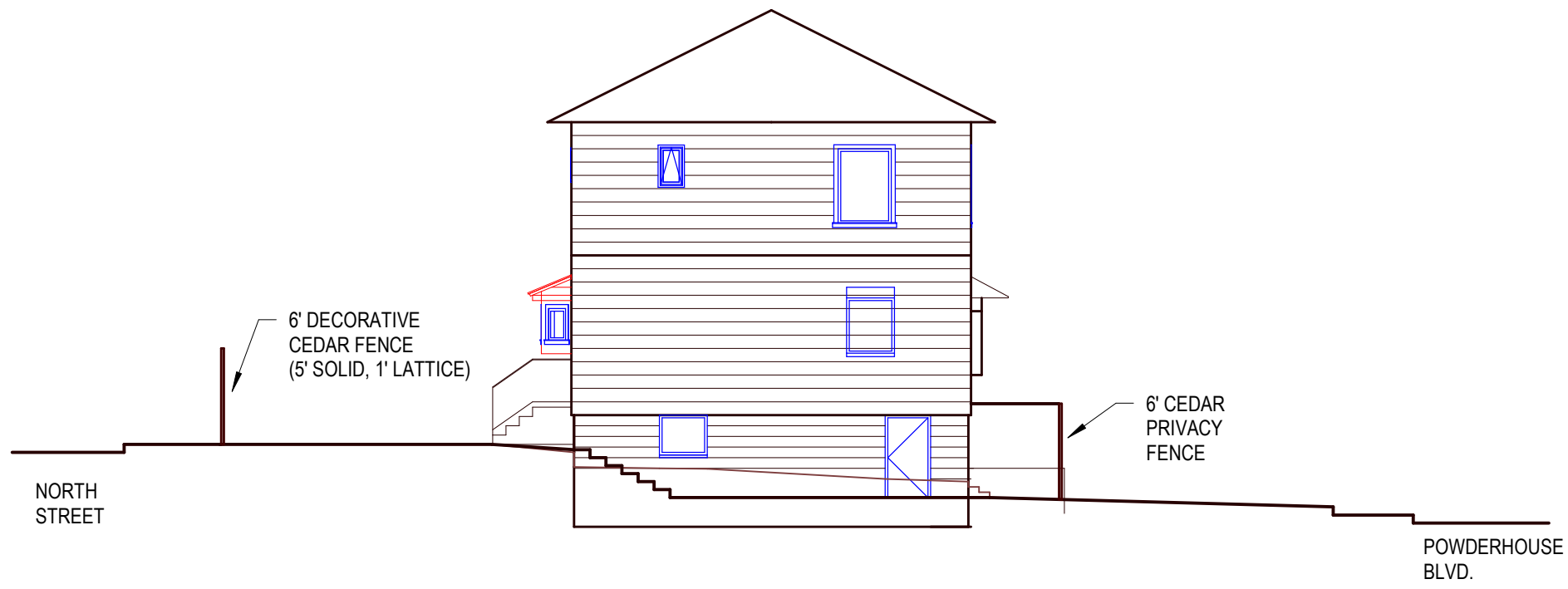
11/04/20

1" = 10'-0"

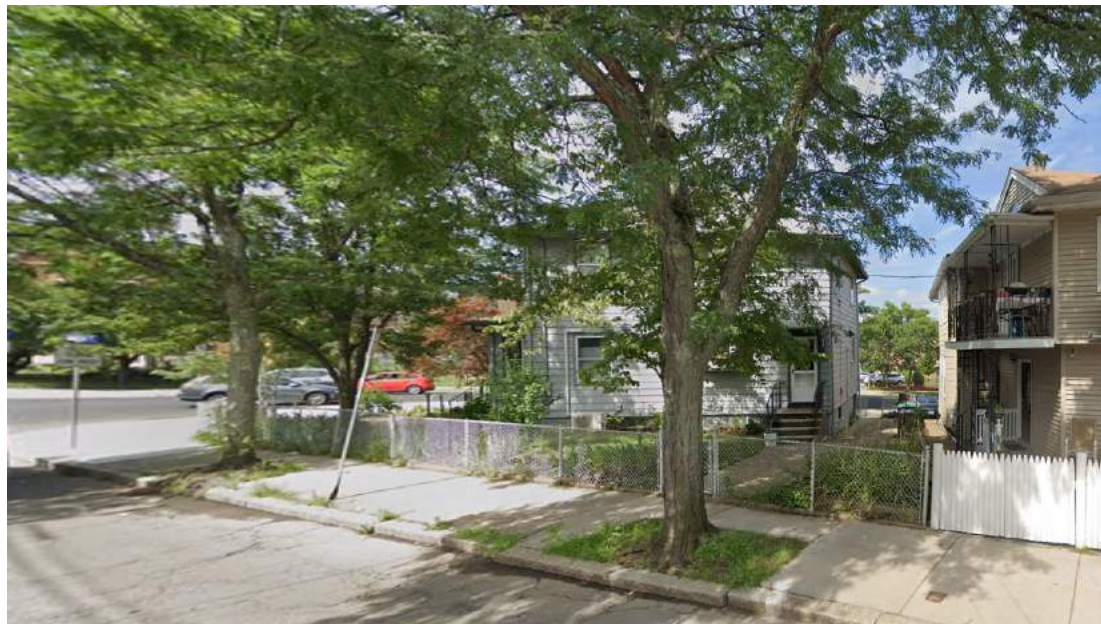
REV 3/20/21

A3





1 NORTH ELEVATION
1" = 10'-0"



EXTG. VIEW FROM EAST



EXTG. VIEW FROM WEST

255 PHB - EVANS

255 POWDER HOUSE BLVD
SOMERVILLE, MA 02144

PROJECT

ELEVATION, IMAGES

10/11/20

DATE

1" = 10'-0"

SCALE

A4



255 PHB - EVANS

255 POWDER HOUSE BLVD
SOMERVILLE, MA 02144

ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING

01/31/21

A5