

## **Memorandum**

**Date:** December 2, 2009

**To:** Plan Commission

**From:** Planning Division Staff and Zoning Administrator

**Re:** Lakefront Building Bulk Limitations Test

This memorandum summarizes staff's preliminary analysis of the proposed waterfront development standards in the draft zoning code. To "test" these standards, staff has compared five recently approved lakefront development proposals with **Section 28.138(2)(b)** of the draft, *Residential Lakefront Development – Building Bulk Limitations*.

The test properties include both new construction and building additions approved by the Plan Commission in different waterfront areas of the City. Test properties include:

- 1834 Camelot Drive (Demolition and New Construction)
- 721 Woodward Drive (Demolition and New Construction)
- 2002 Waunona Way (Building Addition)
- 2918 Waunona Way (Building Addition – Second Story Addition)
- 5324 Lake Mendota Drive (Building Addition)

While these properties represent a range of project types and geographic areas, further testing of additional proposals may be beneficial.

### ***Methodology – Building Bulk Limitations***

The new code proposes limitations on the allowable building size and bulk of new buildings or additions. The subject property is compared to all residentially-zoned buildings within 1,000 feet, on either side. One required calculation is comparing the median "residential floor area ratio" of the proposed building to the adjoining homes. A second calculation is comparing the height of the proposed structure to the adjoining homes noted above. In both cases, the proposed building shall not exceed 125% of the median of the surrounding homes.

For this analysis, height information was omitted from this comparison due to lack of easily accessible data. Additional height data would be supplied by applicants, as part of the formal submittal.

### ***Summary of Results***

In looking at building bulk, staff note that two (2) out of the five (5) projects tested would meet the building bulk limitation requirement based on present conditions. This includes an addition on Waunona Way and new construction on Camelot Court. Three (3) recently approved projects, including new homes on Woodward Drive and Lake Mendota Drive and an addition on Waunona Way would not meet the building bulk limitation. As the draft is written, there is no ability for the Plan Commission to waive bulk and height requirements during conditional use review.

Details are found on the following page.

**Table 1: Summary of Test Properties**

	<b>1834 Camelot Drive</b>	<b>721 Woodward Drive</b>	<b>2002 Waunona Way</b>	<b>2918 Waunona Way</b>	<b>5324 Lake Mendota Drive</b>
<b>Type</b>	New Construction	New Construction	2-story addition, (attached garage with living space above)	2 <sup>nd</sup> story addition (same building footprint)	New Construction
<b>Lot Size</b>	16,716 sf	13,200 sf	12,006 sf	41,600 sf	5,951 sf
<b>APPROVED Total Residential Floor Area <sup>1</sup></b>	5,022 sf	5,279 sf	4,302 sf	6,165 sf	3,248 sf
<b>APPROVED FAR</b>	0.300	0.400	0.358	0.148	0.546
<b>Median Residential Floor Area: 1,000 feet either side <sup>2</sup></b>	3,864 sf	3,266 sf	2,938 sf	2,920 sf	1,991 sf
<b>Median FAR</b>	0.248	0.254	0.217	0.147	0.312
<b>125% Median FAR</b>	0.310	0.318	0.272	0.184	0.390
<b>Meets Proposed Bulk Standards? <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Yes</b> (121% Med FAR)	<b>No</b> (157% Med FAR)	<b>No</b> (165% Med FAR)	<b>Yes</b> (101% Med FAR)	<b>No</b> (175% Med FAR)

**NOTES ON TABLE**

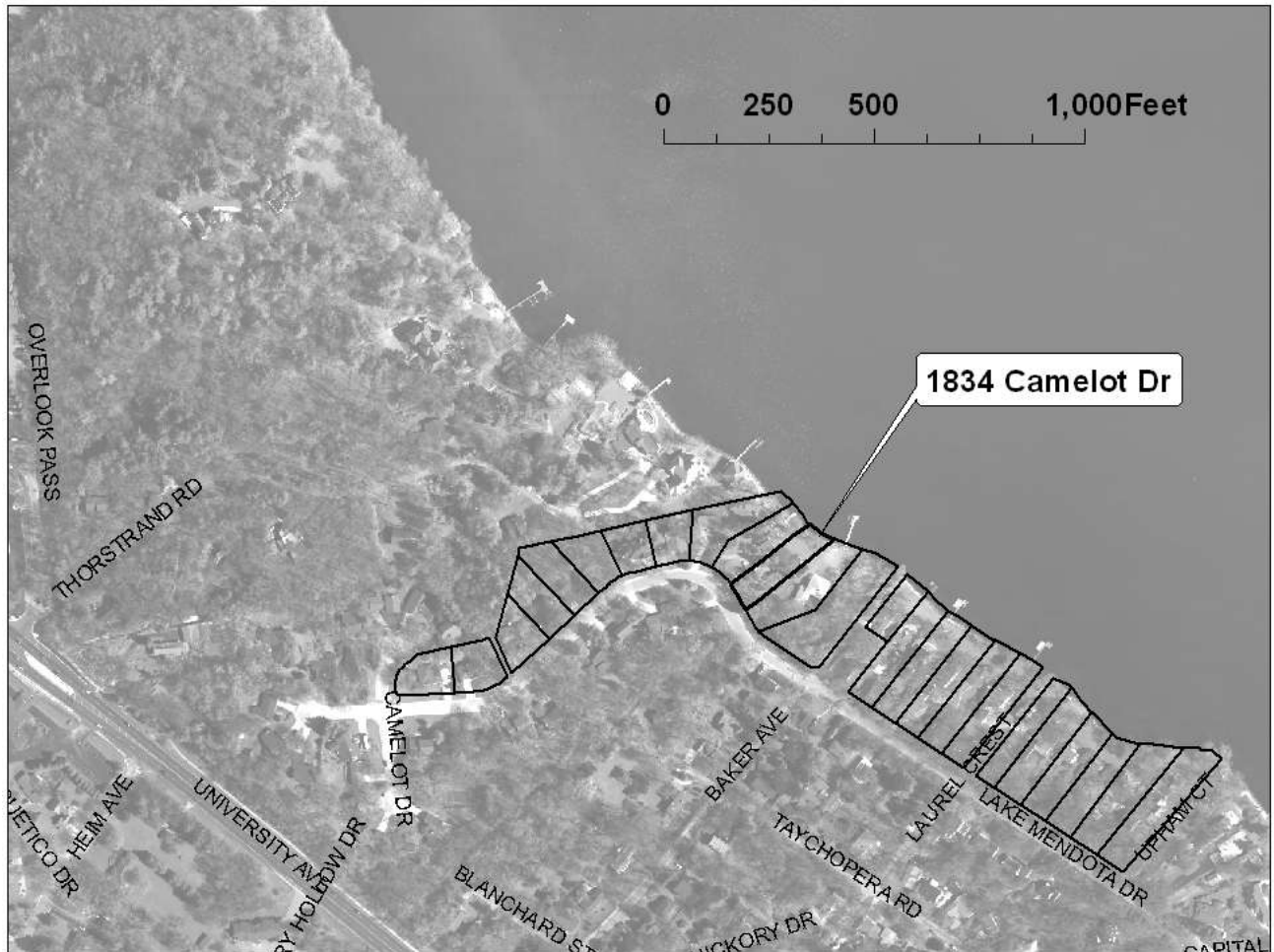
1 “Residential Floor Area” includes finished/occupiable attic and basement space, attached garages and enclosed porches. When available, assessor data was used. For attached garages, assessor data does not provide actual square footage of attached garages. As an estimate, staff has multiplied the number of stalls by a factor of 288 sf, a typical size of a single garage stall. For more recent submittals in which assessor data was not available, data from the applicant was used.

2 Median Residential Floor Area uses the same measurement as described under one, for all residentially zoned buildings within 1,000 feet on either side, per the proposed ordinance. City Assessor Data was used.

3 Per the proposed ordinance, the proposed residential floor area ratio of the principal building (FAR) shall not exceed 125% of the median FAR of all residentially-zoned buildings within 1,000 feet on either side.

## Case Study Information

Example: 1834 Camelot Dr.



For each of the 25 properties included within the 1,000 foot distance on either side of the property, the following calculations were completed using data from the assessor property database:

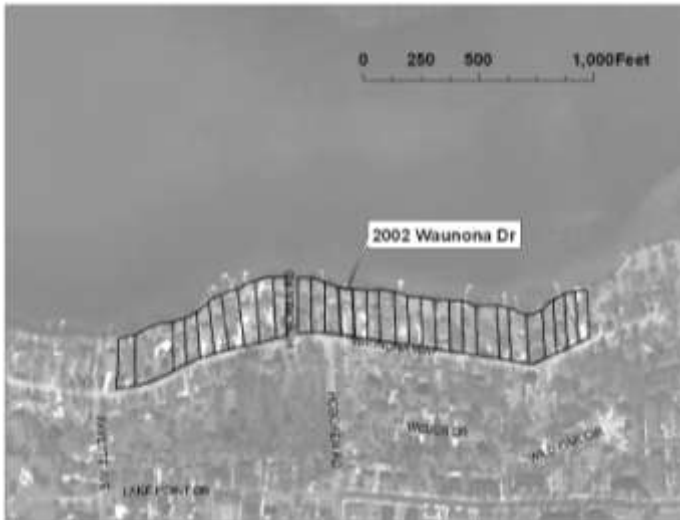
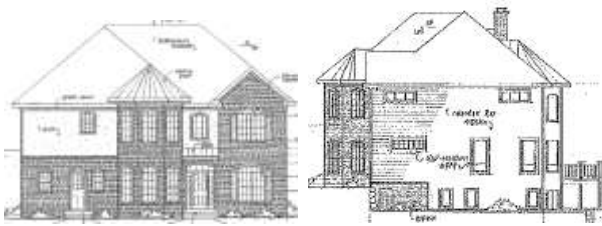
- Livable Area (sf)*
- + *Enclosed Porch (sf)*
- + *Finished Basement (sf)*
- + *(#Stalls in an Attached Garage x 288 sf)*
- Total Residential Floor Area (sf)***



***Total Residential Floor Area (sf) / Lot Area (sf) = Floor Area Ratio (FAR)***

From these, a **Median FAR** of 0.248 was obtained for comparison with the proposed structure.  $0.248 \times 125\% = 0.310$ , which would function as the maximum FAR for new proposals. Since the proposed structure has a FAR of 0.300, it does meet the bulk limitation, and could thus be reviewed under the conditional use process.

The same methodology was applied to the other four properties shown below:



## **Conclusion**

This exploratory exercise analyzed only a small fraction of recently approved lakefront development proposals, but shows that some exceed the bulk limitations proposed in the draft zoning code. The policy implications of this should be carefully considered, but broader analysis may be needed before any specific revisions can be recommended. During the exercise, staff recognized a few issues that may help the measurement to better reflect the intent of the ordinance.

- 1) The inclusion of finished basement space into the livable area calculation is somewhat awkward, and staff recommends that it be removed. Basements (whether finished or unfinished) usually do not contribute to the bulk of a structure as experienced from the street side. The distinction between finished and unfinished basement spaces, which does not affect the bulk of a structure at all, is difficult to keep track of, leading to potential inaccuracies in the Assessor's database. Finally, if a proposed home includes a large *unfinished* basement, its area would not be included in the initial measurement. However, if a future owner wished to finish all or part of the basement, obtaining building permits for the work, they may be unable to do so without review by the Plan Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals.
- 2) The inclusion of attached garage space, but the exclusion of detached garage space, may discourage large homes with attached garages, but does little to discourage large homes with large detached garages, which ultimately have the same impact on lot coverage as would an attached garage.
- 3) In order to minimize confusion, the "1,000 foot distance" should be clarified as to whether it is intended to capture properties on either side of the subject property along the *lakefront* side or the *street* side of the property. While this distinction is irrelevant for most properties, in the case of 1834 Camelot Drive, it would impact which properties were included in the analysis (for this test, *street* side was assumed).