Variance request for structure at 950 Sparrow Farm Road

Our initial intent was to save and repair this structure but after structural damage during the past two particularly harsh winters, this option is no longer viable. Our idea was and still is, to have a structure in this spot that would maintain function while preserving the character of the property and the neighborhood. Traveling down Sparrow Farm Rd. toward our home from the southeast, the last two houses before ours are similarly close to the road with outbuildings even closer, in keeping with custom at the time of construction. So rebuilding our structure in place is consistent with the historic neighborhood development pattern and preserves the historic setting of our circa 1850 homestead. The building is a fixture on the property and has local support -- two of the five property abutters expressed dismay that the building may go away.

There is no practical or aesthetic alternative to reconstruct the structure within the 75' setback, or even to the same non-conforming setback of the existing house. Such placement would effectively bisect our yard and put the structure up against our garden. The yard is also a groundwater discharge area during snowmelt and other wet times, which would make access at those times difficult without building an intrusive and expensive access road. Reconstructing the structure at the existing location would minimize these impacts.

Our vision is for a structure that is visually pleasing and that blends architecturally with the house and neighborhood. We therefore propose a design that mimics the architectural detail of our home, including details of the trim (full eaves and bird nest returns), still with simple lines but a clear improvement over the existing structure. Finish materials would be the same as the house – painted clapboards and a standing seam metal roof. As noted, the new structure would have the same footprint but a slightly greater volume than the existing one. The additional volume comes only from matching the steeper roof pitch of the house. Thank you for your consideration.

Jamie Shanley and Kim Kendall