

Submission to the Board of Appeals
Town of Truro
November 18, 1992

SUMMARY OF REQUEST FOR SPECIAL PERMIT
Submitted by Town Building Committee
Truro Fire Rescue Police Station

The Town of Truro Zoning Bylaw, Section VIII.C. Special Permits, Paragraph 3 states:

"Special permits may be approved only after a finding by the Board of Appeals or Planning Board (as applicable) that the proposed use is in the opinion of the Board in harmony with the general public good and intent of this Bylaw."

1. The proposed Fire Rescue Police Station exceeds the allowable height to the highest point of the gable roof of 30 feet as defined in Section IX.5.A.
2. The Town Building Committee, on behalf of the proposed Fire Rescue Police Station, has applied for a special permit under Section IX.5.D. to exceed the 30 foot height limit.

As Lloyd Rose's comments at the hearing Monday night indicated, the 30' height provisions came from measuring Cape Cod houses. As has been noted, the 30' height limit in the Bylaw does not distinguish among residential, commercial or municipal uses, but its origins were clearly residential. We have to assume that drafters of the Bylaw included the Special Permit exception because they anticipated certain situations would arise where more height was appropriate. The Bylaw allows for appropriate exceptions to be granted by the Board of Appeals, recognizing that there are instances when the use or character of a building warrants relief from the general height provision, such as a barn, church, town hall, etc.

3. The building as designed was based on the following elements:
 - a. The function of the apparatus garage is to hold the fire trucks and rescue vehicles. The width of 63 feet is to meet the needs of the department for three double bays; the bay spacing is based on the size of present and future fire equipment. High ceilings are essential for the equipment. This raises the eave line and accordingly the roof line.

The design was prepared by working closely with the Fire, Rescue and Police Departments. Many hours were spent working together on

siting the building, meeting the specific requirements of each department, and holding to the budget.

- b. In the early design phases, a number of different building and roof styles were looked at. A flat roof or low slope roof was rejected on functional grounds (sloping roofs perform better, the low pitch would not allow future expansion into the attic over the office area) and on aesthetic grounds (a flat or low pitch roof would make the building look industrial or like a highway maintenance garage). The preferred roof shape was a traditional sloping roof.
- c. Traditional Cape-style roofs typically have a pitch of 10-in-12 or more. The proposed office roof is designed to 8-in-12 pitch, the apparatus garage at 9-in-12. These were considered the minimum in the acceptable range for it still to look traditional.

This is consistent with other fire stations on the Cape that the Building Committee and Fire and Police Departments visited. The Committee did not think that stations with low pitch or flat roofs would fit into Truro well; most stations did have pitched roofs, and because of the size of the apparatus bay, most of these roofs were high. The station in West Barnstable was the closest in size and form to that proposed for Truro. The roof height there was 38 feet and required a Special Permit.

- d. In previous presentations in model form, perspective and elevation drawings, the design was perceived by the public as harmonious, in proportion, and appropriate for the site and the Town. Because the proportions seemed comfortable, the roof height was not considered controversial. The Committee was most concerned about keeping within the budget and holding the line on space allocations. It was assumed that, as in other towns that we visited, a special permit would be granted routinely.
 - e. The Committee followed the required process in submitting plans to the Building Department and subsequently applying for a special permit for a height exception.
4. The proposed roof solution is unique to this project:
- a. This municipal building is not a house. The building represents the public safety function of the town, and as a civic building it should have presence.
 - b. The context for the building is the Route 6 General Business zone. The proposed station does not block views from other buildings. **It is**

buffered from the adjoining residential zone by the large site area and extensive trees.

- c. The fire rescue police station is a unique, specific, municipal use and does not set a precedent for other structures whether commercial or residential. Given the specific, technical requirements of a town fire station, we do not think the Board of Appeals is opening the door to other applicants.

5. In summary:

- a. The building represents an appropriate style for the Town and has been well received.
- b. The overall height is a result of the functional requirements (apparatus bay) and traditional proportions. There are other possible solutions, but in our judgement, this is the preferred choice. In working with design of the building, the Committee has all along felt that harmony with the rural character of the town was its most important objective, and that the traditional barn image was consistent with this objective.
- c. Certain other existing buildings in town exceed 30 feet in height, are appropriate, and help define the rural character of the town (town hall, churches, barns, lighthouse, portions of the school).
- d. The request for a special permit is reasonable and consistent with the public good. The language of the Special Permit regulations speak of "harmony with the general public good and intent of the Bylaw."

The Building Committee feels that the type of architecture proposed is in harmony with the rural character of the town and that the roof is an appropriate solution.

The Committee feels that the request is in keeping with the intent of the Bylaw, which stipulates a general 30 foot height limit and specifically allows for appropriate exceptions.