

Request for an area variance at 83 Richards Avenue, Portsmouth 03801

Submitted by Katrina Carye
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This proposal is a request for a special exception from the Zoning Ordinance which requires residential lots in Portsmouth to have a square footage of 7500 square feet with a maximum coverage of 25%. Our single family residence at 83 Richards Avenue (lot 128-7) was built in 1880, prior to the existence of any zoning requirements. The long history of this specific site is a special condition which distinguishes it from other more recently developed properties in Portsmouth. We would like to place a 6x7 ft barrel-shaped cedar sauna in our side yard, which we believe is a reasonable use of our private property, but this would make our lot nonconforming to the current Zoning Ordinance.

Site plan and lot area: Attachments 1-2 show lot 128-7 on a map from the City of Portsmouth and a drawing of lot area. Lot 128-7 has a total area of 1,407 square feet. The existing 2-story house has a footprint of 445 square feet. This represents a coverage of 32%. With the proposed sauna's 42 square feet, the total lot coverage would increase to 35%.

Existing land use: Attachment 3 shows the brick-covered open side yard with a row of high evergreen trees in the back and a fence on the side. Additional 6-foot trees are to be planted along the fence for additional privacy.

Valuation of the project: The cost for the sauna is \$9,899 with assembly on-site. It will cost \$500 for the electrical connection to the house panel for a total cost of approximately \$10,500.

Description and dimensions of existing and proposed buildings: The existing 2-story house was built in 1880 and has two bedrooms and one bath. It has a total square footage of 762 square feet and a footprint of 445 square feet.

Attachments 4-5 show the specifications for the sauna from the manufacturer. It is barrel-shaped, 6 feet in height and width and 7 feet long with a square footage of 42 square feet.

Existing and proposed setbacks/yard dimensions: The existing house rests on the back property line and is 25.63 feet from the side property line. The lot itself is 30.1 feet deep and is contiguous with lot 128-6 which is 46.35 feet across.

Attachment 6 shows the required 5-foot setbacks from the house and the property lines. The remaining open space in the yard is 392 square feet. The 42 square foot footprint of the sauna would easily fit into the ample available space.

Photographs: Attachments 7-8 show an actual model of the proposed sauna at a local store.

Criteria for granting a variance under the Zoning Ordinance:

10.233.21

Granting a variance for the placement of a health-promoting sauna would not be contrary to public interest. The yard is a private space, shielded from the outside by landscaping, fencing and other structures. The sauna is not a permanent structure but rests upon a wooden base. It will only be used a few hours a week. The design of the sauna is on an appropriate scale to the surrounding buildings and made of a natural material. There would be no adverse affects from this sauna such as noise, pollution or leakage and it utilizes a standard electrical connection.

10.233.22

The spirit of the Ordinance in terms of allowing for adequate space will be observed in the granting of this variance. Attachment 3 shows a drawing of lot 128-7 with the setbacks highlighted from the house and the property lines in the back and on the side. With the sauna installed, the property would still be in compliance with the required 5-foot setbacks. The remaining open space of 392 square feet would allow ample room for the 6x7 foot sauna as shown here.

10.233.23

In granting this variance, substantial justice will be done in recognizing the special conditions of this site and allowing a reasonable use on private property.

10.233.24

The proposed use would not diminish the value of surrounding properties nor injure any other property owners. Since I also own the contiguous property, lot 128-6, then I am the only property owner affected by the placement of a sauna and I will be sharing in its use. Neighbors will not be impacted by our use of the sauna and it will not be visible to anyone outside of our property.

10.233.25

Given the specific conditions of this 1880's property, it is impossible for us to satisfy the current lot size restrictions in the Zoning Ordinance. Strict enforcement of these provisions would constitute an unnecessary hardship by interfering with a reasonable and allowed use of our private property which presents no disadvantages to anyone else.

Statement: The property at 83 Richards Avenue presents a unique situation with an 1880's house that shares a contiguous space with 79 Richards with common access to the street. It is outside of the formal historical district but belongs to the charming central part of old Portsmouth with its smaller lots and closely clustered buildings. Its nonconforming lot cannot

comply with 21st century zoning ordinances such as lot size and coverage but we can satisfy the setback requirements and allow for adequate open space.

We believe that having a health-promoting sauna in our yard is a reasonable use in our private space. It would not have any negative consequences for any other property owners or the public interest.

For the above reasons we would like to be considered for a special exception and be granted an area variance from the Board of Adjusters.

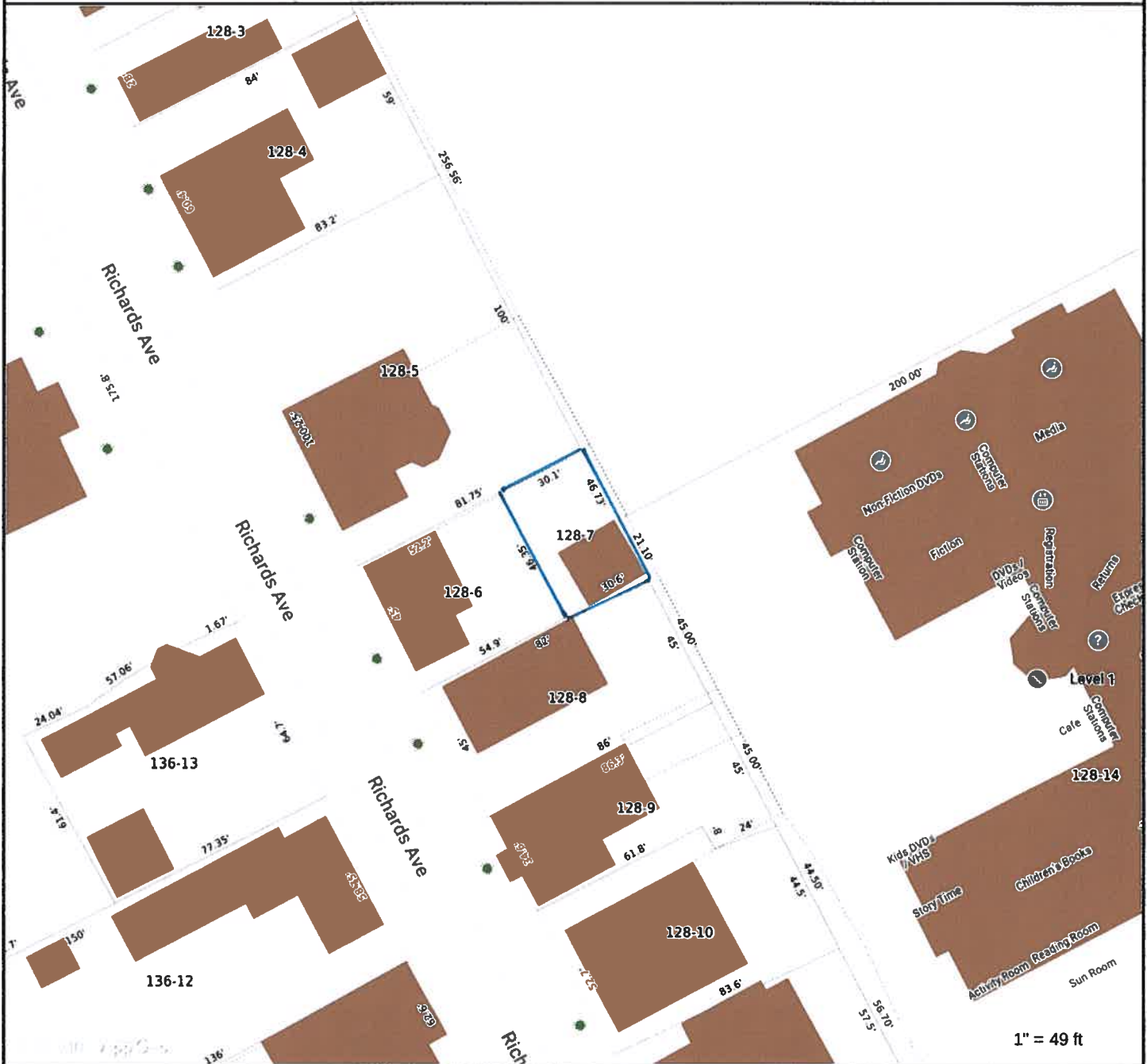
Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katrina Carye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Katrina Carye

April 28, 2021

83 Richards Ave



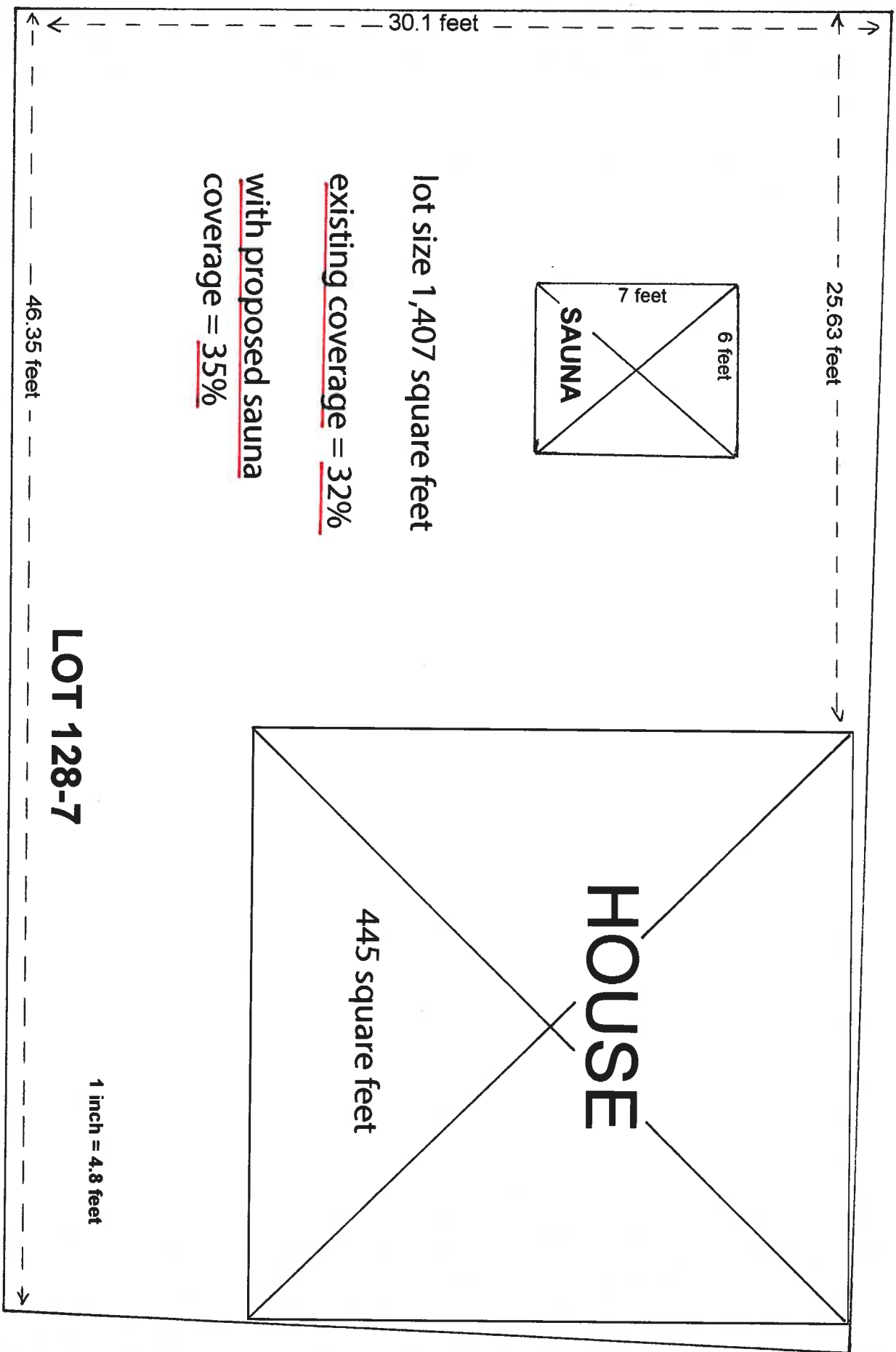
**MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY
NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT**

City of Portsmouth, NH makes no claims and no warranties, expressed or implied, concerning the validity or accuracy of the GIS data presented on this map.

Geometry updated 4/1/2019
Data updated 7/17/2019

Print map scale is approximate. Critical layout or measurement activities should not be done using this resource.

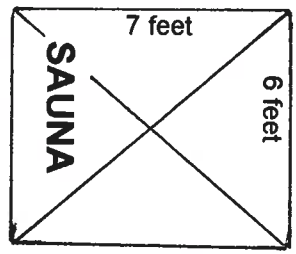
LOT AREA



25.63 feet

30.1 feet

46.35 feet



lot size 1,407 square feet

existing coverage = 32%

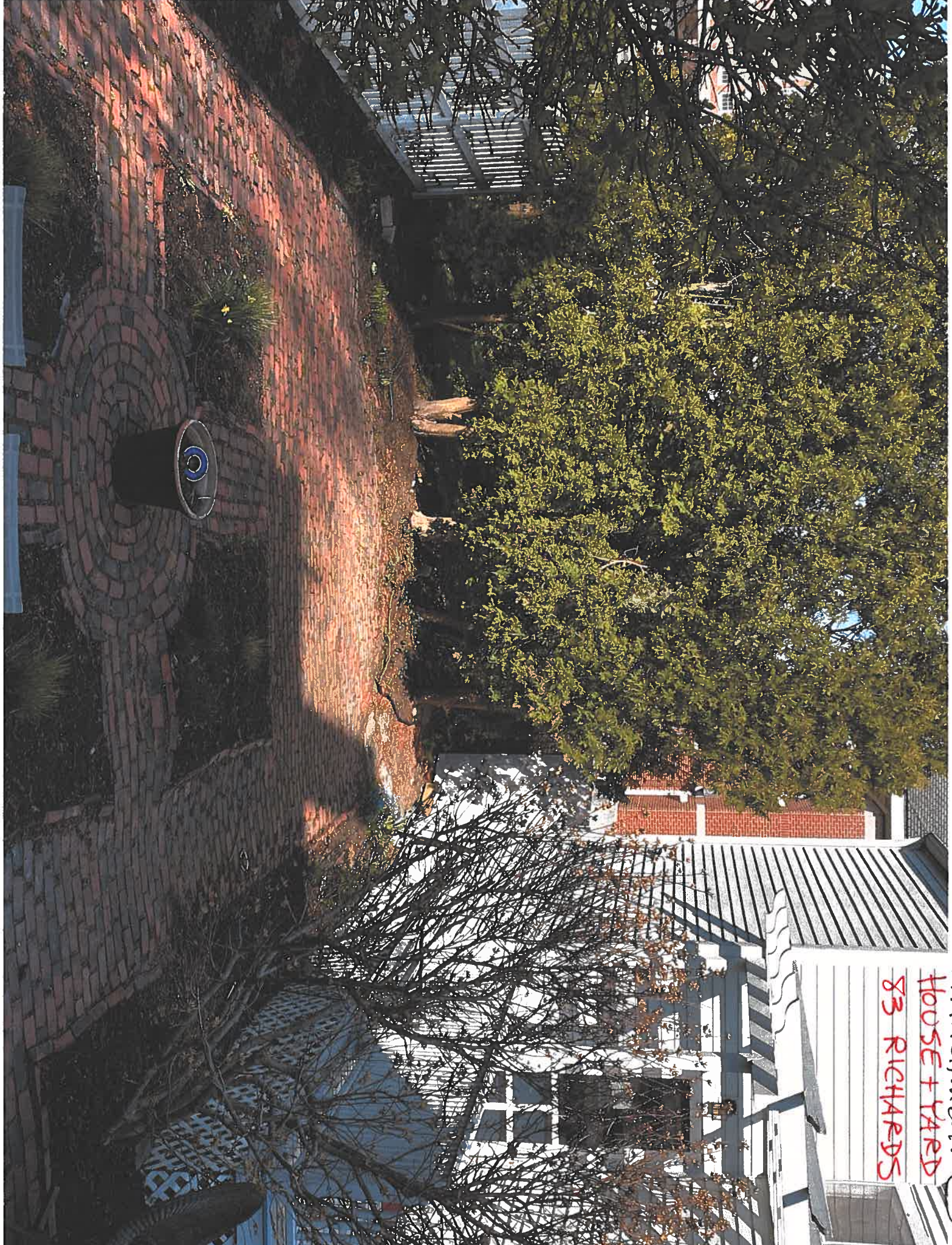
with proposed sauna coverage = 35%

HOUSE

445 square feet

LOT 128-7

1 inch = 4.8 feet



ATTACHMENT (5)

HOUSE + YARD

83 RICHARDS

DUM DALK RED CEDAR SAUNA ATTACHMENT ④

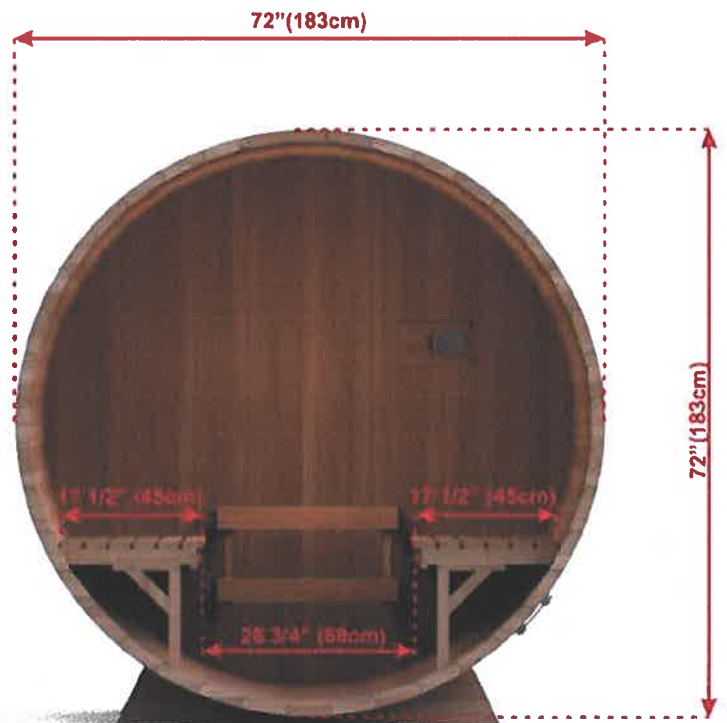


BARREL SAUNA PACKAGE FEATURES:

- Made in Canada with Canadian Cedar
- Easy to assemble package.
- Marine Grade aluminum bands with stainless hardware.
- Bronze tempered glass in door.
- Package includes Towel Bar and 2 Backrests.
- Opening vent on back wall.

BARREL SAUNA PACKAGE OPTIONS:

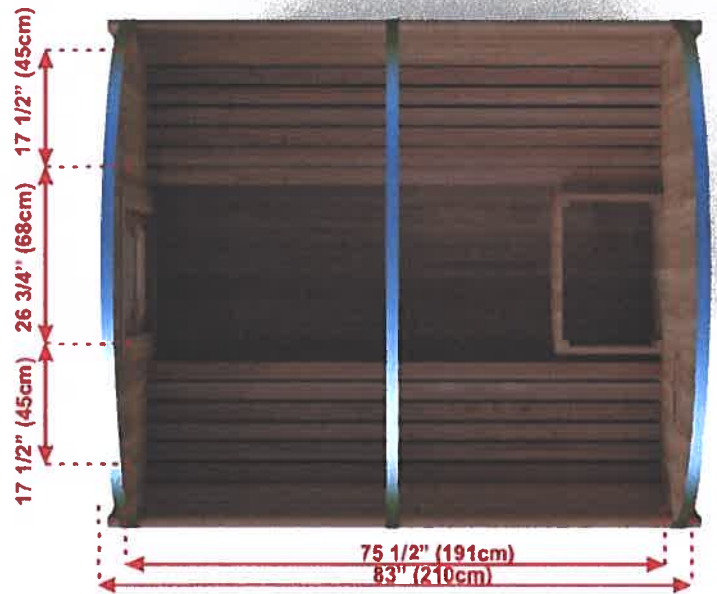
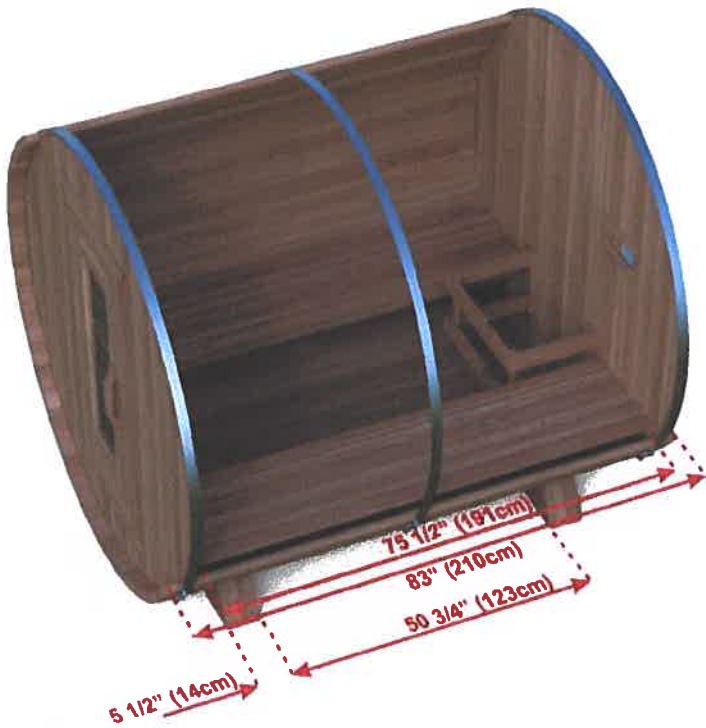
- 2' (60cm) Front Porch
- 4' (120cm) Changeroom with Benches
- Overhang Cove on Front
- 2 Windows in Front Wall
- Panoramic Window in End Wall
- Woodburning or Electric Heaters
- Signature Bench Upgrades



RED CEDAR
SAUNA

MODEL 670

DUNDALK



PACKAGE SIZE:

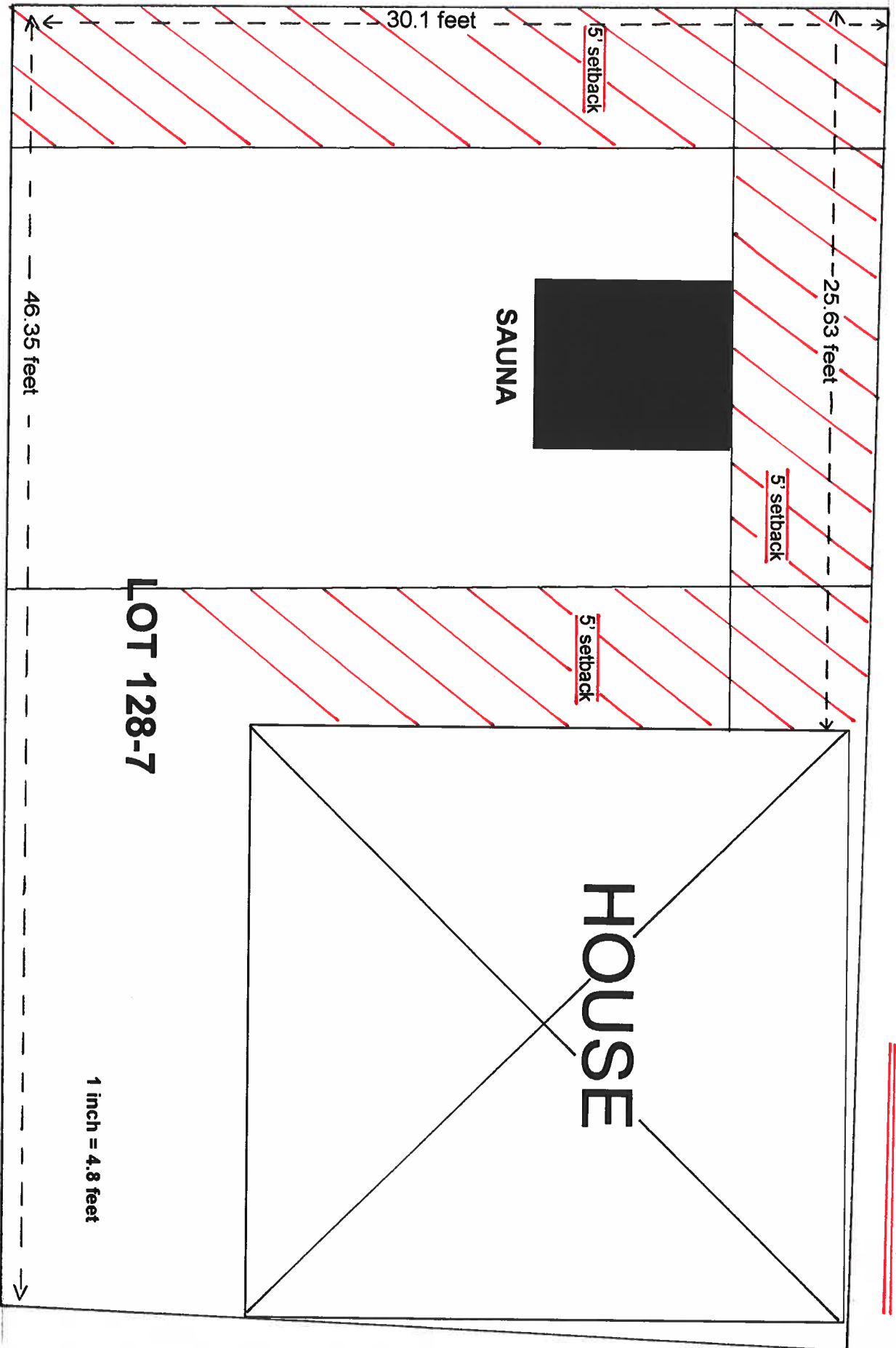
90x45x32"
228x114x81cm

PRODUCT WEIGHT:

1175 lbs.
532 kg.

PROPOSED SITE OF 6'x7' SAUNA
IN BACKYARD

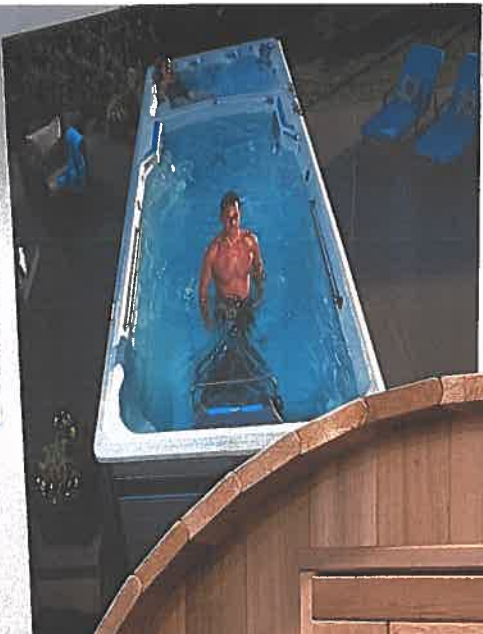
SETBACKS



83 RICHARDS AVE

ATTACHMENT (7)

DUNDALK
RED CEDAR SAUNA
(SHOW ROOM, HAMPTON,
NH)



DUNDALK RED CEDAR
SAUNA

(SHOW ROOM, HAMPTON, NH)

ATTACHMENT 8

