



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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ALEX MELLO, *INTERN*

Case #: ZBA 2013-54
Date: August 1, 2013
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 37 Alpine Street

Applicant Name: David and Patricia Rances
Applicant Address: 37 Alpine Street, Somerville, MA 02145
Property Owner Name: Same
Agent Name: Stephen Doucet, Doucet Remodeling + Design, Inc.
Agent Address: 1 Central Street, Stoneham, MA 02180
Alderman: Courtney O'Keefe

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owners, David and Patricia Rances, seek a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter an existing one-family, nonconforming, dwelling to add an approximately 274 square foot second story addition including a dormer over an existing roof within the existing nonconforming side yard setback. RB Zone. Ward 5.

Zoning District/Ward: RB Zone / Ward 5

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit SZO §4.4.1

Date of Application: July 9, 2013

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – **August 7, 2013**

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property consists of a three-bedroom single family dwelling on an approximately 2,320 square foot lot. The property is in a Residential B district and is a 1½ story structure. The area of the building footprint is 773 square feet translating to 33% ground coverage. The subject parcel is narrow at approximately 21.4 feet wide. The property owners currently have a recorded



easement in the deed with their neighbors to the right of the property for a three foot wide shared walkway for access to the backyard. The easement is also shown on the Certified Plot Plan.

2. Proposal: Applicant's and Owner's, David and Patricia Rances, propose to construct a second story addition above an existing roof in the rear of the structure. The new addition will increase the net floor area of the dwelling by approximately 274 square feet. The proposed new net floor area of the subject dwelling is 1,440 square feet. Included in the proposed addition is the construction of an 18 feet long dormer on the right side roof. The proposed addition will be used as a master bedroom with a walk-in closet. The addition allows the homeowners to make other interior layout modifications. The structure will remain as a three-bedroom single family dwelling.



37 Alpine Street

3. Nature of Application: The structure is currently nonconforming with respect to several dimensional requirements including minimum lot size and left and right side yard setbacks. In accordance with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) §4.4.1, a nonconforming two-family dwelling may increase a nonconforming dimension through Special Permit approval.

The required side yard setback for a 1 ½ story structure in a RB district is at least 6 feet or the sum of both side yards must be at least 14 feet. However, since the lot is less than 50 feet wide, one inch may be deducted from the required width of each side yard and two inches from the required width of both side yards, provided that no side yard shall be less than five feet. Since the lot is 21.4 feet wide, the property receives 2.4 feet of relief from the width of each side yard or 4.8 feet from the width of both side yards; however, no side yard shall be less than five feet. Since the current left side yard is 1.2 feet and the current right side yard is 1.7 feet, constructing an addition within both side yards is an alteration that requires Special Permit approval.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of one- and two-family dwellings and structures that range from 1 story up to 2 ½ stories. Lots on the same section of Alpine Street as the subject property are relatively narrow compared to other lots throughout the City.

5. Impacts of Proposal: There are very few impacts of this proposal. The proposed modification to the rear of the structure would not appear to be detrimental to the building or the surrounding neighborhood. The alterations to the rear of the dwelling will not greatly impact the Alpine Street

streetscape. The overall height of the building will remain the same. The footprint of the structure will not encroach any farther into the already nonconforming side yard setbacks.

6. Green Building Practices: The Application does not indicate any green building practices.

7. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Ward Alderman: Alderman Courtney O’Keefe is interested if any residents have voiced concern in the project. Planning Staff has not yet received any public comments.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §4.4.1):

In order to grant a special permit, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.1.4 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.1.4 in detail.

1. Information Supplied: The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.1.2 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the required Special Permits.

2. Compliance with Standards: The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit."

In considering a special permit under §4.4 of the SZO, Staff finds that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The proposal to construct an approximately 274 square foot second story addition and a dormer in the rear of the property will allow the homeowners to modify the interior layout without a great deal of impact on their neighbors.

3. Consistency with Purposes: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the general purposes of this Ordinance as set forth in Article 1, and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those purposes at the beginning of the various Articles."

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to promoting "the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to conserve the value of land and buildings; and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City".

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district, which is, "to establish and preserve medium density neighborhoods of one-, two- and three-family homes, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts".

4. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area, including land uses".

The proposed alterations will be compatible with the built and unbuilt surroundings. The proposal to construct a second story addition and a dormer over an existing roof will not enlarge the foot print of the building. The Applicant has indicated on the Application that the new addition will give their home a more cohesive look.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under §4.4.1

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

The recommendation is based upon a technical analysis by Planning Staff of the application material based upon the required findings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and is based only upon information submitted prior to the public hearing. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendations, findings and/or conditions based upon additional information provided to the Planning Staff during the public hearing process.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes								
	Approval is to alter an existing one-family, nonconforming, dwelling to add an approximately 274 square foot second story addition including a dormer over an existing roof within the existing nonconforming side yard setback. RB Zone. Ward 5. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date (Stamp Date)</th> <th>Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>(July 9, 2013)</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 18, 2013 (July 30, 2013)</td> <td>Modified elevations and floor plans submitted to OSPCD (A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June 24, 2013 (July 30, 2013)</td> <td>Certified Plot Plan</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.	Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(July 9, 2013)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	July 18, 2013 (July 30, 2013)	Modified elevations and floor plans submitted to OSPCD (A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5)	June 24, 2013 (July 30, 2013)	Certified Plot Plan	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.	
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Design												
2	New siding type and color, roofing, trim, and materials of the addition shall match or be complimentary to the rest of the existing structure.	CO	Plng.									
Public Safety												
3	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP									
Final Sign-Off												
4	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.									

