



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2018-183
Date: February 6, 2019
Recommendation: Conditional approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 233 Willow Avenue

Applicant Name: Derick Snare
Applicant Address: 158 Central Street, Somerville, MA 02145
Owner Name: KTA Construction, LLC c/o Frank Amato
Owner Address: 4 Gemma Drive, Peabody, MA 01960
Councilor: Lance Davis

Legal Notice: Applicant, Derick Snare, and Owner, KTA Construction, LLC c/o Frank Amato, seek a special permit under §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming structure to finish a portion of the basement. RA Zone. Ward 6.

** There was a clerical error in the legal advertisement. The legal advertisement indicated a case number of ZBA 2018-134, which is incorrect. The correct case number is ZBA 2018-183.*

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – February 6, 2019

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property consists of one parcel totaling 3,360 square feet of land area. It contains a two-family dwelling and a one-car single-story detached garage.
2. Proposal: The proposal is to finish a portion of the basement for a recreation room and a bath/laundry room. The Owner also intends on demolishing the single-car garage and replacing it with two permeable paver parking spaces.



3. Green Building Practices: There are none listed on the application form.
4. Comments:

Ward Councilor: Councilor Davis has been informed of this proposal and has yet to comment as of the publication of this report.

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."*

The structure is currently nonconforming with respect to the following dimensional requirements: lot area, lot area per dwelling unit, floor area ratio (FAR), front yard setback, left side yard setback, and street frontage.

The proposal will impact the nonconforming dimension of FAR. The current dimension is 0.83, the proposal to add 654 square feet of living area by adding a recreation room and bathroom/laundry room will increase the FAR to 1.02. The requirement in the district is 0.75. This alteration to a nonconforming structure requires the Applicant to obtain special permits under §4.4.1 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO).

Section 4.4.1 states that “[l]awfully existing one-and two-family dwellings which are only used as residences, which are nonconforming with respect to dimensional requirements, may be enlarged, extended, renovated or altered by special permit granted by the SPGA in accordance with the procedures of Article 5.”

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 will allow for the creation of a modest amount of living space in the basement. The proposal has been designed with setbacks that minimally impact the neighbors and the requirements for ground coverage, landscaped area, pervious area, building height, rear yard setback, and right side yard setback will continue to be conforming to the requirements of the SZO.

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 promote the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of

Somerville; to lessen congestion in the streets; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RA district, which is, “to establish and preserve quiet neighborhoods of one- and two-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."*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The immediate neighborhood is almost exclusively residential and is comprised of mostly two-family dwellings and with a few three-family dwellings nearby. The majority of the neighborhood is composed of gabled structures that are 2½ stories in height with dormers.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): Finishing the basement will not have an impact on the design and compatibility of the structure with the surrounding area.

7. Housing Impact: Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.

8. SomerVision Plan: Complies with the applicable goals, policies and actions of the SomerVision plan, including the following, as appropriate: Preserve and enhance the character of Somerville’s neighborhoods.

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
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1	Approval is for the finishing of the basement. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.							
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date (Stamp Date)</th> <th>Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>December 18, 2018</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>January 8, 2019</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (1, 2, 3, net clacs 1, net clacs 2, and net clacs 3, and site plan)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	December 18, 2018	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	January 8, 2019	Plans submitted to OSPCD (1, 2, 3, net clacs 1, net clacs 2, and net clacs 3, and site plan)
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Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
Pre-Construction										
2	The proposed basement finished floor elevation shall not be less than is 1 foot above the Seasonal High Ground Water elevation. The seasonal high ground water elevation shall be determined by a Massachusetts certified soil evaluator and stated on a signed soil test pit log.	BP	Eng.							
Construction Impacts										
3	The applicant shall post the name and phone number of the general contractor at the site entrance where it is visible to people passing by.	During Construction	Plng.							
4	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P							
5	For the convenience of and respect for the neighborhood, during the construction phase, construction work shall not begin prior to 7:30am and shall finish no later than 5pm Monday through Friday. There shall be no construction or construction-related work performed on weekends or holidays.	During Construction	ISD							
Miscellaneous										
6	Granting of the applied for use or alteration does not include the provision for short term rental uses, such as AirBnB, VRBO, or the like. Separate approvals are needed for the aforementioned uses.	Ongoing	ISD / Plng.							
7	The Applicant, its successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for maintenance of both the building and all on-site amenities, including landscaping, fencing, lighting, parking areas and storm water systems, ensuring they are clean, well kept and in good and safe working order.	Cont.	ISD							
Public Safety										
8	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP							
Final Sign-Off										

9	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	Png.	
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