



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

GEORGE J. PROAKIS, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF

SARAH LEWIS, *DIRECTOR OF PLANNING*
DANIEL BARTMAN, *SENIOR PLANNER*
SARAH WHITE, *PLANNER/PRESERVATION PLANNER*
ALEX MELLO, *PLANNER*

Case #: PB 2019-18
Date: October 17, 2019
Recommendation: None at this time.

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 28-44 Broadway

Applicant Name: Lower Broadway Development, LLC

Applicant Address: 100 Winchester Street, Medford, MA 02155

(44 Broadway) **Property Owner Name :** Lower Broadway Development, LLC

(44 Broadway) **Property Owner Address:** 100 Winchester Street, Medford, MA 02155

(28 Broadway) **Property Owner Name :** Fred Boulter

(28 Broadway) **Property Owner Address:** 87 Bubier Road, Marblehead, MA 01945

Agent Name: Sean T. O'Donovan, Esq.

Agent Address: 741 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144

City Councilor: Matthew McLaughlin

Legal Notice: Applicant, Lower Broadway Development, LLC, and Owners, Lower Broadway Development, LLC and Fred Boulter, seek a special permit with site plan review (SPSR) under SZO 6.5.D to demolish the existing buildings on the site and construct a five-story mixed use building with 10,463 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 38 residential units. TOD-55 Zone. Ward 1.

Dates of Public Hearing: Planning Board –
October 17, 2019

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The site includes two parcels that total 19,197 square feet of land area with four commercial structures on it. The buildings include the following:

- 28 Broadway, a one-story brick building, vacant building supply store
- 30 Broadway, one-story concrete building, liquor store
- 38 Broadway, one-story concrete building, storage and warehousing



- 44 Broadway, one-story wood frame/concrete building, eating and drinking establishment
The subject property takes up one whole block between Mount Vernon Street and George Street.

In March 2018, the ZBA granted a Variance for a proposed development at 44 Broadway that included a 55 foot tall five-story mixed use building with 27 residential units. The Variance was sought for floor area ratio (FAR) and the distance of the building to the adjacent residential district. Since the approval was granted the Variance was appealed and the Applicant purchased the adjacent property at 28 Broadway.

2. Proposal: The proposal is to demolish all of the existing buildings on the site and construct a five-story mixed use building with approximately 10,000 square feet of ground floor retail space and 38 residential units. The proposal will include an underground parking garage with 30 parking spaces and a bicycle storage room.

3. Green Building Practices: The application states that the proposal will include energy star station and appliances, re-usable building materials, and electric car charging stations. During the DRC meetings the project architect (a certified passive house consultant) stated that the design will include U-PVC windows, an extremely airtight façade, solar panels on the roof, the HVAC system will be either an energy recovery ventilation (ERV) or heat recovery ventilation (HRV) system, and a strong filter with a minimum efficiency rating value (MERV) of 14 or better for filtering ultra-fine particulate matter.

4. Comments:

Design Review Committee, September 3, 2019:

1. Neighborhood:
 - a. The DRC would like the Applicant to provide photos of the surrounding neighborhood so they can better understand the buildings context.
2. Buildings:
 - a. The proposal includes a lot of glass, curtain wall, and storefront. The DRC questioned if the visual is going to be reality. For example, the DRC likes the corner of Broadway and Mt. Vernon St. with the open glass corner but in reality will there need to be a corner support column? Mr. Sima believes that the corner will be able to be built as presented.
 - b. The proposal includes medium-density fiber cement panels that are flat faced. The DRC would like to have a better understanding on the type of panels. The DRC would like the Applicant to provide more details on the buildings materiality.
 - c. The DRC would like the Applicant to show what will end up going above the glass storefront. Will it be metal panel, spandrel glass, louvers, etc.?
3. Landscaping/Streetscape:
 - a. The DRC would like the Applicant to show the mature street trees that currently exist. The Applicant should show on the plans new street trees between the existing mature street trees. The plans should also show the street amenities added in a way that makes sense for the function of the building.
 - b. The Applicant should engage a landscape architect to devise a plan that includes ensures roof plantings are achievable. Provide more definition on the shared garden on the upper levels. Half-wall for the transformer for the neighbors? Hoping to vault it but will screen. Edge condition
 - c. Ground floor green space facing the neighborhood, what is going to survive there.
4. Sustainability/HVAC:

- a. The type of HVAC system is unclear. The type of system will impact whether the rooftop design can include a green roof and/or solar panels. It may also require screening if it include a condenser farm. The DRC would like to see a roof plan to see what the condenser farm looks like.
- b. The building should also show vents, dryer exhausts, air intakes, etc. in the façade and such features should be incorporated into the architecture.
- c. The DRC also encourages the Architect to explore more sustainability measures.

Design Review Committee, September 26, 2019:

The DRC would like to see:

- a commitment to care for permeable pavers.
- a condition that there is no penetration of mechanical intake/exhaust on the Broadway façade, which the exception of louvers (or similar) for the commercial spaces.
- the Applicant come back to the DRC when commercial tenant(s) are selected to have patio design reviewed.
- the design integrate the screening of the transformer more with the abuilding materials.
- the streetscape be more consistent with the rest of the recent work on East Broadway.
- the Applicant to come back to the DRC with a more detailed roof plan.

OSPCD Mobility:

- The OSPCD Mobility Division is coordinating with the Applicant on analyzing transportation studies.

OSPCD Public Space and Urban Forestry:

- The landscape plan should more clearly identify what trees are existing and proposed. If any street trees are proposed to be removed the Applicant may need to go through a public hearing process to remove existing street trees. Coordination with the City Arborist will be required.
- The tree on Broadway closet to the intersection with George Street should be preserved. The Applicant should take whatever measures are necessary to make sure it does not die during construction. Coordination with the City Arborist will be required.
- Work with City Arborist to assess the health of the street tree on George Street and do what is necessary to keep it. If not, plant one that City Arborist deems appropriate.
- Work with City Arborist to plant a few trees on Mt. Vernon Street
- Use red brick on the street edge and City standard black metal bike racks, trash cans, benches, etc. Also include short tree fencing around the street trees. Coordination with the Streetscape and Public Space Planner on final materials and location will be required.

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

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT with SITE PLAN REVIEW (SZO §6.5 and §9.13):

In order to grant a special permit with site plan review, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.2.5 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.2.5 in detail.

1. Information Supplied:

The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.2.3 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project.

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 with site plan review.”*

Under SZO §6.5.D.1, if some uses in new development are by-right and some are allowed by Special Permit, the entire development shall be subject to Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) review. Since the residential use requires a special permit, the entire development requires SPSR review. The residential use falls under Use Cluster E, §7.13.E, Residential, and any number of residential units requires a special permit.

Dimensional Requirements

The proposal complies with most of the dimensional requirements of the zoning district (the following dimensions take into account the main parcel, 9 Medford Street). The minimum lot area per dwelling unit is 450 square feet. The site has 451 square feet per dwelling unit. The maximum ground coverage is 80% and the proposed building covers 30.4% of the lot. Most notable in this flood prone area of the City, the proposal will increase the landscaped and pervious area. The site currently has no pervious or landscaped area. Including the park and green roof it will have 22.5% landscaped area post construction. Accounting for the park and pervious parking spaces only, there will be 9% pervious area. The maximum gross floor area ratio is 3.5 and the proposed building has an FAR of 2.4. The height of the building will not be taller than the 100 foot height limit. Per SZO §6.5.C, the Applicant will seek variances for minimum FAR, minimum frontage, upper level setback, upper level maximum floor plate, and usable open space from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Requirements	TOD-55	Proposal
Min Lot Size	15,000 sf	19,197 sf
Min Lot Area/Dwelling Unit	600 sf reduced to 495 sf with inclusionary bonus*	505 sf
Max Ground Coverage	80%	75.1%
Min Landscaped Area % of lot	10%	10%
Floor Area Ratio (based on gsf)	3 maximum	3.0
Max Height	55'	55'
Min Front Yard	0'	2'
Min Side Yard (Left)	0'	3'
Min Side Yard (Right)	0'	15'
Min Rear Yard	0'	varies
Min Frontage	50'	224.4'

** Section 13.3.4 of the SZO states that for projects of 18 or more units in all zoning districts other than RA and RB zones, which contain all inclusionary units on site, additional housing units may be permitted by adjusting the permitted lot area per dwelling unit by reducing the requirements by 17.5%, which translates into a 105 sf reduction.*

Affordable Housing

Projects of 18 units or more are subject to a 20% inclusionary housing requirement. For the proposed project, this translates into the creation of 7 permanently affordable units and a fractional payment of 0.6. The 7 affordable units will be made available to households in accordance with the City’s inclusionary housing ordinance.

Parking & Loading Requirements

The Applicant is seeking a Special Permit under SZO §9.13 for the number of required parking spaces.

<i>Requirement</i>		<i>Proposed</i>
Residential bike pkg.	1 per every 2 units = 19	39
Med. Retail and service bike pkg.	1 per every 5,000 sf = 3	5
Residential car pkg.	1 per unit = 38	30
Med. Retail and service car pkg.	1 per every 1,000 sf = 11	0

The proposal requires 22 bicycle parking spaces and 44 are provided indoors within the garage. The proposal requires 49 car parking spaces and the proposal provides 30 within the garage. Relief is being requires from provided 19 additional car parking spaces.

In considering a special permit under §9.13 of the SZO “the SPGA may grant such a special permit only when consistent with the purposes set forth in Section 9.1, and upon reaching the findings and determinations set forth in Section 5.1.4”. Given the proximity to Orange Line Station at Sullivan Square, the Staff finds that granting the requested Special Permit is consistent with the purposes of SZO §9.1 and will not cause detriment to increased traffic volumes, traffic congestion of queuing of vehicles, changes in the type of traffic, change in traffic patterns and access to the site, reduction in on-street parking, or Unsafe conflicts of motor vehicles and pedestrian traffic.

6.5.G TOD. All new developments shall meet the following standards:

1. Transportation Analysis. Applicants shall provide a Transportation Study and a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan tailored to the proposed site and mix of Use Clusters. The scope of the document will be prepared in consultation with the Director of Traffic and Parking and may include a project description and a description of the existing conditions of the transportation network in the vicinity of the Development Site. The following items may be required as part of a Transportation Study:
 - Counts of existing traffic volumes.
 - Projected traffic volumes for the proposed Development based on accepted engineering standards and adapted to local conditions.
 - Projected size of delivery vehicles, and frequency and days/hours of delivery.
 - Reviews of accident history trends in the vicinity of the Development Site.
 - Analyses of the Development impacts on the transportation network in the vicinity of the Development Site.
 - Examination of transportation by all feasible modes, including automobile, transit, bicycle and pedestrian.
 - Explanation of consistency with City transportation plans.

If the impact analyses indicate that safety or capacity will be adversely affected by the proposed Development, the Applicant will indicate appropriate mitigation measures, subject to the approval of the Director of Traffic and Parking, prior to the granting of a special permit.

The OSPCD Mobility Division is coordinating with the Applicant on analyzing transportation studies.

2. Incentives for Green Building. Buildings certified by the U.S. Green Building Council as LEED Gold or better shall receive the following bonuses (after comparison, the Mayor of Somerville may determine in writing that an alternate sustainable development rating system is equal or better than LEED Gold and that system may be substituted):
 - a) 0.5 FAR increase in the TOD70 and TOD100;

- b) 1.0 FAR increase in the TOD135; and,
 - c) 15 foot increase in maximum height in the TOD70, TOD100 and TOD135.
- LEED (or certified equivalent) Plan Review certification shall be required prior to issuance of a building permit and post-construction commissioning shall be the subject of a condition of approval to receive the incentive.

N/A

3. Credit for Provision of Land for Public Infrastructure. Where land is to be dedicated to the City of Somerville for public infrastructure (including roadways, sidewalks, public paths, parks, and other public infrastructure), the area of dedicated land shall be applied to calculations for dimensional requirements except for setback requirements. Upper level setbacks shall be measured from the original property line (pre-dedication) and other setback requirements shall be measured from the newly created property line (post-dedication).

N/A

4. *Credit and Height Bonus for Provision of Dedicated Parkland.* Where a minimum of forty thousand (40,000) square feet of land is to be improved and dedicated to the City of Somerville for public open space in the TOD135, a bonus of a fifteen-foot increase in maximum height (to a maximum of one hundred fifty (150) feet) may be granted. The area of dedicated land shall be applied to calculations of FAR and any upper level setbacks shall be measured from the original property line (pre-dedication). Public open space shall not be required on premises, but the maximum residual ground coverage shall not exceed ninety (90) percent and minimum landscaped area shall not be below ten (10) percent of residual lot area. All other dimensional standards shall be applied to the remaining parcel.

N/A

5. Transition to Abutting Residential District. No minimum side or rear yard setback is required for parcels that immediately adjoin a lot in a residential district (RA, RB, or RC) where a solid masonry wall is to be built on the property line. Where a masonry wall is not proposed, the minimum side or rear yard setback is twenty (20) feet, with the setback to consist exclusively of vegetative landscaping. However, no building or portion of building within forty (40) feet of a lot in a residential district (RA, RB, or RC) shall be higher than twenty-four (24) feet.

Staff finds that the proposal meets this standard and requested the Applicant draw a diagram to indicate such.

6. Upper Level Open Space. Area within Upper Level Setbacks may be used to provide usable or private open space, including residential balconies, and shall not be counted toward Floor Area Ratio.

N/A

7. Wind and Shadow Effects. Buildings shall be designed to minimize shadow and wind impacts to open space and residential areas especially between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. in the winter. Wind and shadow effects shall be demonstrated in technical studies.

The proposed shadow effects are anticipated on the Broadway right of way and the industrial

property across the street during the winter. The impacts will be less significant during the spring and fall seasons and even less significant during the summer months.

8. Landscaping and Usable Open Space Requirements. Developments shall conform to the applicable landscaping requirements set forth in Table 6.5.F, Article 10 and Article 17. Open spaces shall be contiguous to the extent practical in the opinion of the SPGA; however, in certain circumstances it may be preferable to provide Usable Open Space in unique locations, such as atria, winter gardens, and accessible roof decks or gardens. Hours of operation, signage, entrance location, and ADA compliance shall be taken into account when considering whether atria, winter gardens, and roof decks or upper level gardens truly will be accessible to the general public. Landscaping strips required in parking areas (per Article 10) shall not apply to Usable Open Space calculations.

The proposal complies with the minimum landscaping area requirements. The proposal also includes rooftop terraces and gardens.

9. *Payment in Lieu of Open Space*. For any new development(s) within the TOD 70 and TOD 100, the SPGA may approve either a cash payment in lieu of providing the required usable open space, or a partial cash payment combined with a partial provision of the required usable open space. SPGA approval should be based on the finding that the proposed development site truly cannot produce open space that would be of a size, location, or configuration that would enhance the community. Applicants wishing to make use of this option are strongly encouraged to meet with the Planning Director prior to formal submission of an application to help determine project compliance. Minimum landscaped area and maximum ground cover may be modified by the equivalent area for which an in-lieu payment is made, with a maximum ground coverage allowance of ninety (90) percent and a minimum landscaped area of ten (10) percent of lot area. Any further relief from these requirements shall require a variance. For payments made in lieu of the Usable Open Space required, the developer must designate, in coordination with the City and the Planning Director, a site to which those contributions shall be applied. Optimally, the open space will be within a quarter-mile of the subject property. Such payments shall be made to the City of Somerville. The City shall hold such payments in a stabilization fund dedicated to land acquisition, design, and construction of public open space in the catchment area defined in the Rules and Regulations of the Special Permit Granting Authorities. This may include repayment of any debt incurred by the City for capital costs associated with land acquisition, design, and/or construction of public open space. For each square foot of usable open space for which the cash payment is proposed in substitution, the applicant shall pay:
 - a. The assessed value per square foot of the development parcel (not including buildings) established by the City of Somerville Assessor's Office for the fiscal year during which the applicant has filed for SPSR for said development parcel; plus
 - b. The cost per square foot to design and construct a public park in Somerville (including but not limited to lighting, plantings, paving, and street furniture), as designated in the Rules and Regulations of SPGAs. This number shall be updated not less than every two (2) years and shall reflect the average cost per square foot of city parks in prior years. If the designated park has a specified cost, the actual development costs will apply.

No certificate of occupancy shall be issued unless and until all deeds, covenants, contractual agreements, and other documents necessary to ensure compliance with this Article have been submitted to and approved by the SPGA's designee and all cash payments have been made.

N/A

10. **Pedestrian Connections.** Continuous pedestrian connections shall be supported between all major points of pedestrian activity on the Development Site, including, but not limited to, connections to all public and private ways abutting the Development Site and any transit stops. Development(s) shall support improved access to surrounding neighborhoods by means of sidewalk connections, crosswalks, landscaping, traffic signalization and traffic calming methods as appropriate.

The OSPCD Mobility Division is coordinating with the Applicant on analyzing transportation studies.

11. **Pedestrian Oriented Requirements.** To promote pedestrian activity, buildings shall be designed with separate front entrance doors to lobbies, cultural spaces, retail and business, and other sources of pedestrian activity. These entrances shall be oriented to existing or proposed public sidewalks, paths, and other open space (as opposed to a central "mall" entrance).

The proposal meets this standard. The residential lobby will be Mount Vernon Street and the commercial ground floor is going to be designed to accommodate multiple entrances as commercial tenant(s) are selected. The entrances will be oriented to the Broadway sidewalk.

12. ***Parking Design.*** Refer to Section 9.17 for parking requirements. Parking and loading areas shall be hidden from view from public ways. Parking shall not face the street edge(s) of the parcel and shall be suitably screened both visually and acoustically from the street and abutters (sufficient to conform to the City's Noise Ordinance during operation). Parking structures shall contribute to, and not obstruct, pedestrian activity in the vicinity. The exterior facade shall maintain a horizontal line throughout; the sloping interior necessary in parking structures shall not be repeated on the exterior facade. A wall or other screening of sufficient height and depth to screen parked vehicles and visually pleasing character shall be provided. Any views into parking structures shall be minimized through use of landscaping or architectural treatment.

The proposal includes an underground parking garage and bicycle storage room that will be accessed off of George Street.

13. **Parking Optimization Plan.** Applications shall include a Parking Optimization Plan illustrating how management and pricing strategies will encourage shared use and reasonable turnover of parking spaces, and discourage structures' use as "Park and Ride" facilities.

The OSPCD Mobility Division is coordinating with the Applicant on analyzing transportation studies.

14. **Service Areas and Loading Spaces.** Ground level mechanical equipment, utility and trash enclosures, loading docks and other utilitarian and service elements shall not abut the street edge(s) of the parcel and shall be visually and acoustically screened (sufficient to conform to the City's Noise Ordinance during operation). Access to these areas shall not interrupt pedestrian and sidewalk treatments. The SPGA may limit the hours of delivery so as to minimize any adverse impacts the service and loading aspects of proposed use may have on the surrounding neighborhood. Generally, loading times should take local traffic patterns into consideration.

The proposal includes an underground parking garage that will include a trash and recycling area that will be accessed via George Street.

15. **Lighting.** Lighting shall be appropriate to the historic and pedestrian-oriented character of surrounding neighborhoods and buildings, and shall enhance safety and security while minimizing glare and light trespass.
16. **Properties Adjoining Railroad Rights-of-Way.** Properties directly adjoining railroad rights-of-way shall not be subject to additional City-imposed setbacks. However, any application for a project on such a parcel shall demonstrate coordination with the appropriate rail agency and assume full responsibility for gaining all required permissions therefrom.

N/A

17. **Penthouses and Mechanical Equipment.** All elevator and stairwell penthouses, roof-mounted mechanical equipment (including enclosure, if any) and other similar rooftop installations shall be set back behind a plane inclined at forty-five (45) degrees from the vertical, beginning at the maximum height of the building, along all street lines and rear lot line and shall be screened pursuant to the screening provisions in Section 14.3. Ventilation for restaurants and other businesses producing odors should vent away from residential districts. Equipment shall be designated to comply [with] the City's Noise Ordinance during operation. The first fifteen (15) feet in height of such equipment shall be exempt from the calculation of maximum height; if such equipment is greater than fifteen (15) feet in height, the additional height shall count toward the building's height.

Staff finds that the proposal meets this standard and requested the Applicant draw a diagram to indicate such.

18. **Reduction of Minimum Lot Area.** Where the SPGA makes the following findings, the minimum lot area may be reduced from the requirements of Section 6.5.F:
 - a) The applicant has demonstrated that good faith efforts have been made to acquire additional land and have been unsuccessful;
 - b) The project would have sufficient lot area to ensure compliance with all other dimensional and development standards;
 - c) Quality of usable open space would not be compromised by the reduced lot area;
 - d) Design guidelines would not be compromised by the reduced lot area; and
 - e) Development of the site may not result in a lost economic opportunity that would have been feasible on a lot meeting the minimum requirement. The reduced lot area may not be used as a justification for a reduced scale of development or for a mix of uses that does not achieve the purposes of the district, including increasing commercial development in appropriate areas.

N/A

3. **Purpose of District:** *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with the intent of the specific zoning district as specified in Article 6".*

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district, which is, "to encourage mixed-use transit-oriented development with well-designed pedestrian access near transit connections and commercial

squares. In response to different neighborhood contexts, TODs have been created featuring various heights, densities, and compatible use mixes. In order to be aesthetically, economically, environmentally and socially beneficial, projects in the Districts shall promote a mix of uses both within buildings and across the districts. Moderate to high-density developments will include commercial, residential, and institutional cores complemented by pedestrian-oriented retail and business services, and in some districts, compatible industrial uses. Parking, where provided, will be housed within structured parking facilities. In a dynamic commercial center, changes in tenancy and use are expected. Therefore, the TODs are designed to be responsive to changing market conditions while maintaining high standards for building design and construction. As such, development review in these Districts is concerned foremost with appropriateness of building design and broad categories of uses. The major purposes are to:

1. Facilitate development of a mix of uses that contributes to a vibrant business environment and increases street-level activity;
2. Increase real estate investment and strengthen local tax base through intensive commercial development in higher density TOD districts;
3. Create new jobs at a variety of income and skill levels;
4. Redevelop vacant or underutilized land with appropriately dense development;
5. Replace incompatible and environmentally unsound uses with compatible mixed-use development;
6. Increase the supply of affordable housing units within the City of Somerville; and,
7. Encourage sustainable development and the use of green building standards..

The TOD is divided into sub-districts, which are distinguished by their respective height and density regulations. The purpose of the lower-density TOD-55 sub-district allows for mixed-use development opportunities in close proximity to existing lower-density residential neighborhoods. Where mapped in commercial squares, development is anticipated to be a mix of commercial and residential uses. Where mapped on local streets, development is anticipated to be predominantly residential in nature.

4. Site and Area Compatibility: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project “(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the existing natural features of the site and is compatible with the characteristics of the surrounding area, and that the scale, massing and detailing of the buildings are compatible with those prevalent in the surrounding area”.*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The subject property takes up an entire block on East Broadway between George Street and Mount Vernon Street. The adjacent block toward Sullivan Square include two, three, four, and five story mixed used buildings.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): 6.5.H. Design Guidelines for the TODs. These guidelines are not intended to inhibit design creativity or discourage innovative architectural design solutions. Rather, they provide general standards for building massing, siting and articulation. It is understood that Buildings and Structures may not be able to comply with all of the following Guidelines.

1. Building(s) should complete the streetwall along the primary street edge(s).

The proposed building completes the streetwall along Broadway, George Street, and Mount Vernon Street.

2. Massing and height of buildings should be articulated in a manner compatible with the physical character of the surrounding districts, particularly where a building abuts a residential or historically designated property. Whenever possible, historical variety in the scale, rhythm, and relationship of buildings to pedestrian public ways should be preserved.

The massing and height of the building is articulated in a manner compatible with the physical character of the surrounding districts. Where it abuts the residential district, the building is stepped back.

3. A transition in height should be established where new development adjoins low-rise residential districts or historically designated properties.

See above

4. Thirty-foot-wide commercial bays with independent entrances onto the street are typical in Somerville and should be repeated in new developments to create visual and pedestrian interest. Varied architecture should be created and flat facades avoided by using recessed or projected entryways, bays, canopies, awnings, residential balconies on 2nd floor or above, and other architectural elements. Non-residential ground floor façades should have a minimum seventy-five (75) percent transparent material, and second floor facades should have a minimum of forty (40) percent transparent material. These openings should provide views into the building and should not be blocked by interior storage, nonartistic displays, or greater than thirty (30) percent internally mounted signage.

The proposed building provides bays of varying widths along Broadway and uses recessed and projected entrances to provide visual and pedestrian interest. The retail ground floor includes a transparent storefront system.

5. Exterior building materials for all visible portions of the building should be high quality, durable, and aesthetically appropriate. Particular attention should be paid where properties abut residential districts and historically designated property. Predominant exterior building materials should include an appropriate combination of brick, glass, wood, artistically used metal, stone, or stucco. Precast concrete panels, EIFS-type finishes, and large expanses of glass or corrugated sheet metal are generally discouraged. Bare or painted concrete as the only exterior facade material shall not be allowed.

The proposed exterior materials include a charcoal brick (will be conditioned to be full depth brick), metal panels, fiber cement panels, aluminum panels, and masonry.

6. Visible rear and side façades should maintain a similar character to the front façade of the building and the intended character of the surrounding district.

The building maintains a similar character on all sides.

7. Signage and awning design should respect buildings' context (e.g., scale, design, style, colors, materials), be oriented to pedestrians, and be subordinate to the overall building composition. Creative shapes must be carefully designed and coordinated with the overall appearance of the building. The design should also maintain an existing "signage line" and respect the character, scale, and locations of adjacent signs and awnings. Large, interior-lit or back-lit signs or awnings, neon "open" signs, vinyl or plastic materials and overly bright colors are generally discouraged. To add interest and character to the retail environment signs or awnings may convey interesting elements or logos without excessive wording. They should be limited to advertising the business name and its main goods or services, with minimal or no national brand names or logos. Type styles should enhance readability of the sign and provide information simply and legibly. Use awnings to create pleasant shaded spaces in front of a building. Signs and awnings should enhance important architectural details and not conceal or obliterate them.

The residential entrance on Mount Vernon Street will have an entry canopy and signage. Ground floor tenants are yet to be determined. The signage for the proposed tenants shall follow the zoning requirements and be subject to Planning Staff review and approval.

8. Major entrances should be located on public streets, and at or near corners wherever possible. Entrances should relate well to crosswalks and pathways that lead to bus stops and transit stations.

The orientation of the entrance on Mount Vernon Street is to provide retail flexibility and to be located closer to the Sullivan Square entrance.

9. Buildings should have a clearly expressed base, middle, and top. This may be achieved through changes in material, fenestration, architectural detailing, or other elements. Taller buildings should be articulated to avoid a monolithic appearance.

The building achieves this tripartite design guideline.

10. The façade below the Tapering Height should exhibit human scale through design elements such as changes in plane, and variety or contrast in form, color, and materials. Architectural elements and setbacks should be used to break up long façades and avoid large areas of undifferentiated or blank building façades.

The proposal contains elements that change in plane and contrast in form, color, and materials.

11. Building elements located above the Tapering Height should be designed to limit impacts from visual massing, obstruction of views, and creation of shadows on public open space, residential districts or public ways. Where practicable, the width and depth of these elements should be limited to one hundred twenty (120) feet and where more than one element exists a minimum separation of fifty (50) feet is encouraged, although other means may be more appropriate on odd-shaped lots or lots adjoining highways or railroad rights-of-way.

The proposal will not cast shadows on public open space, residential districts, or public ways.

12. All rooftop-building systems, including wireless communications facilities, should be incorporated into the building form in a manner integral to the building architecture, including screening with materials that harmonize with buildings' exterior finishes.

The proposal will meet this guideline.

13. Individual Artist Live/Work Spaces should be designed as closely as possible in accordance with the "Design Guidelines for Artist Housing" produced by the Somerville Arts Council.

N/A

14. A sidewalk depth of at least fifteen (15) feet from the street curb to building is strongly encouraged for developments fronting major streets.

The sidewalk along Broadway will include a 7'-8" walkway zone and 6'-6" furnishing zone.

15. On-site, off-street parking should be accessed from either a side street or an alley. Where this is not possible, vehicular access should be provided through an opening, no wider than twenty-five (25) feet in the street level façade of the building. Such entrances should be designed to minimize conflict with pedestrians.

Parking will be accessed from George Street through a 20-foot wide opening.

16. Above ground structured parking should be lined with active uses (shops, cafes, etc.) along major public streets. Upper levels and facades along smaller public streets shall be screened and include architectural design elements such as windows, bays, etc. such that the space's use for parking is not immediately apparent. Large horizontal openings are strongly discouraged. Direct pedestrian access to the street and/or to a public area should be provided by all garages serving non-residential uses.

N/A

17. Usable Open Space should be located to support public gathering. To the extent possible, usable open space should be designed to appear as an extension of existing public space, through consistency in design and materials. The provision of an interconnected series of open space to support pedestrian movement is encouraged.

The at-grade open space is in the rear of the building and is intended for residents of the building to use as a dog run. The proposal also includes outdoor patio areas adjacent to the Mount Vernon Street and George Street sidewalks for the retail tenants to have a public outdoor space.

18. Installation of public art is encouraged in order to add visual interest and distinguishing features to landscaped or other public areas.

The Applicant is considering commissioning local artists for mural paintings on portions of the building.

19. Properties abutting the MBTA right-of-way are strongly encouraged to place pedestrian unfriendly uses such as parking, loading, and trash collection along the right-of-way. However, given that the MBTA right-of-way represents a gateway into the City, these facilities shall be screened and the architectural design of façades facing the right-of-way shall be of equal or better quality to façades elsewhere in the building.

N/A

20. Utilities and wiring shall be placed below ground. Transformers and trash facilities may also be required to be located underground.

Conditions for such are included.

5. **Functional Design:** *The project must meet “accepted standards and criteria for the functional design of facilities, structures, and site construction.”*

The project meets “accepted standards and criteria for the functional design of facilities, structures, and site construction.” The Applicant also revised the design of the elevation in response to comments of the Design Review Committee.

6. **Impact on Public Systems:** *The project will “not create adverse impacts on the public services and facilities serving the development, such as the sanitary sewer system, the storm drainage system, the public water supply, the recreational system, the street system for vehicular traffic, and the sidewalks and footpaths for pedestrian traffic.”*

The addition of 38 residential units will have an impact to the sanitary sewer and public water supply but will not unduly burden those systems. The proposal will trigger an inflow/infiltration payment be made to the Department of Public Works (DPW) to mitigate those impacts.

7. Environmental Impacts: *“The proposed use, structure or activity will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from: 1) excessive noise, level of illumination, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration which are higher than levels now experienced from uses permitted in the surrounding area; 2) emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances; 3) pollution of water ways or ground water; or 4) transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception.”*

The proposed uses will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from excessive noise, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration. The level of illumination will be conditioned to be sensitive to the adjacent property owners, especially residential. There will be no emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances, or pollution of water ways or ground water.

8. Consistency with Purposes: *“Is consistent with: 1) the purposes of this Ordinance, particularly those set forth in Article 1 and Article 5; and 2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit with site plan review which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those at the beginning of the various sections.”*

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 provide for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; to lessen congestion in the streets; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; to protect and promote a housing stock that can accommodate the diverse household sizes and life stages of Somerville residents at all income levels, paying particular attention to providing housing affordable to individuals and families with low and moderate incomes; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

9. Preservation of Landform and Open Space: *The Applicant has to ensure that “the existing land form is preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing grading and the erosion or stripping of steep slopes, and by maintaining man-made features that enhance the land form, such as stone walls, with minimal alteration or disruption. In addition, all open spaces should be designed and planted to enhance the attractiveness of the neighborhood. Whenever possible, the development parcel should be laid out so that some of the landscaped areas are visible to the neighborhood.”*

There are no landforms or significant vegetation due to the location in an existing urban area.

10. Relation of Buildings to Environment: *The Applicant must ensure that “buildings are: 1) located harmoniously with the land form, vegetation and other natural features of the site; 2) compatible in scale, design and use with those buildings and designs which are visually related to the development site; 3) effectively located for solar and wind orientation for energy conservation; and 4) advantageously located for views from the building while minimizing the intrusion on views from other buildings.”*

There are no landforms or significant vegetation due to the location in an existing urban area. The proposed structure is compatible to those that are expected to be built in a transit-oriented urban neighborhood.

11. Stormwater Drainage: *The Applicant must demonstrate that “special attention has been given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Storm water shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, and powered area, and routed through a well-engineered system designed with appropriate storm water management techniques. Skimming devices, oil, and grease traps, and similar facilities at the collection or discharge points for paved surface runoff should be used, to retain oils, greases, and particles. Surface water on all paved areas shall be collected and/or routed so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved area. In larger developments, where practical, the routing of runoff through sheet flow, swales or other means increasing filtration and percolation is strongly encouraged, as is use of retention or detention ponds. In instances of below grade parking (such as garages) or low lying areas prone to flooding, installation of pumps or other devices to prevent backflow through drains or catch basins may be required.”*

Storm water shall be removed from all roofs and any paved areas shall be collected and/or routed so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in public areas.

12. Historic or Architectural Significance: *The project must be designed “with respect to Somerville’s heritage, any action detrimental to historic structures and their architectural elements shall be discouraged insofar as is practicable, whether those structures exist on the development parcel or on adjacent properties. If there is any removal, substantial alteration or other action detrimental to buildings of historic or architectural significance, these should be minimized and new uses or the erection of new buildings should be compatible with the buildings or places of historic or architectural significance on the development parcel or on adjacent properties.”*

There is no historical significance to the existing structures.

13. Enhancement of Appearance: *The Applicant must demonstrate that “the natural character and appearance of the City is enhanced. Awareness of the existence of a development, particularly a non residential development or a higher density residential development, should be minimized by screening views of the development from nearby streets, residential neighborhoods of City property by the effective use of existing land forms, or alteration thereto, such as berms, and by existing vegetation or supplemental planting.”*

The redevelopment of the site to include a mixed-use multi-story building will be a significant improvement to the City over the existing one-story industrial buildings.

14. Lighting: *With respect to lighting, the Applicant must ensure that “all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be adequately lit and designed as much as possible to allow for surveillance by neighbors and passersby.”*

All exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be adequately lit and designed as much as possible to allow for surveillance by neighbors and passersby. However, all lighting will be conditioned to be constrained to the site.

15. Emergency Access: *The Applicant must ensure that “there is easy access to buildings, and the grounds adjoining them, for operations by fire, police, medical and other emergency personnel and equipment.”*

The proposed building occupies an entire city block and will have access on three sides.

16. Location of Access: *The Applicant must ensure that “the location of intersections of access drives with the City arterial or collector streets minimizes traffic congestion.”*

The OSPCD Mobility Division is coordinating with the Applicant on analyzing transportation studies.

17. Utility Service: *The Applicant must ensure that “electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment are placed underground from the source or connection, or are effectively screened from public view.”*

All the utility rooms are located on the first floor and in the garage. Utilities connections to the new building will be placed underground. Should a transformer be required to supply power to the building, the Applicant is hoping to vault it underground on George Street. Should the utility company change the location or require it above ground, the proposal considers integrating its screening into the design of the building and site. A condition will be recommended that the location should be reviewed by Planning Staff prior to Building Permit.

18. Prevention of Adverse Impacts: *The Applicant must demonstrate that “provisions have been made to prevent or minimize any detrimental effect on adjoining premises, and the general neighborhood, including, (1) minimizing any adverse impact from new hard surface ground cover, or machinery which emits heat, vapor, light or fumes; and (2) preventing adverse impacts to light, air and noise, wind and temperature levels in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development.”*

The design has been to accommodate the concerns of the Design Review Committee and neighbors to the greatest extent possible.

19. Signage: *The Applicant must ensure that “the size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall reflect the scale and character of the proposed buildings.”*

Signage will be conditioned to be mounted within the sign band at the ground floor storefront on Broadway and limited to lettering only above the residential entrance. Any additional signage may need to apply for a Special Permit.

20. Screening of Service Facilities: *The Applicant must ensure that “exposed transformers and other machinery, storage, service and truck loading areas, dumpsters, utility buildings, and similar structures shall be effectively screened by plantings or other screening methods so that they are not directly visible from either the proposed development or the surrounding properties.”*

Trash rooms are located within the building and trash cans will be rolled out to the street for pickup. There is minimal loading anticipated for the retail and the residences.

21. Screening of Parking: Parking will be underground.

21. Housing Impact: *Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.* This project improves the supply of affordable unit and will, therefore, have no adverse impacts. Per Table 13.3.4.A, the total of 38 units require 20% inclusionary which means that 7 new units will be provided plus a cash payment 0.6 units per Section 13.4.

22. 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, transform key opportunity areas, preserve and expand an integrated, balanced mix of safe, affordable and environmentally sound rental and homeownership units for households of all sizes and types from diverse social and economic groups; and, make Somerville a regional employment center with a mix of diverse and high-quality jobs.*

<u>SomerVision Summary</u>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
<i>Dwelling Units:</i>	0	39
<i>Affordable Units:</i>	0	7.6
<i>Commercial Sq. Ft.:</i>	10,100	10,463
<i>Estimated Employment:</i>	unknown	unknown
<i>Parking Spaces:</i>	11	30

23. Impact on Affordable Housing: *In conjunction with its decision to grant or deny a special permit for a structure of four or more units of housing, the SPGA shall make a finding and determination as to how implementation of the project would increase, decrease, or leave unchanged the number of units of rental and home ownership housing that are affordable to households with low or moderate incomes, as defined by HUD, for different sized households and units.*

All measures taken to provide for, protect, or increase the affordability of housing units within the proposed structure; the degree of such affordability to households of low or moderate income, as defined by HUD; and the duration of legal assurances of such affordability will be determined through the AHIP process (as conditioned below).

III. RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Staff has no recommendation at this time.