



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2019-30
Site: 48 Cameron Avenue
Date of Decision: June 5, 2019
Decision: *Petition Approved with Conditions*
Date Filed with City Clerk: June 19, 2019

ZBA DECISION

Site: 48 Cameron Avenue

Applicant / Owner Name: Joanna London
Applicant / Owner Address: 56 Devonshire Road, Newton, MA 02468
City Councilor: Katjana Ballantyne

Legal Notice: Applicant / Owner, Joanna London, seeks a special permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming structure by constructing a rear addition above an existing one-story portion of the structure and dormers on both sides of the roof. RB Zone. Ward 7.

<u>Zoning District/Ward:</u>	RB Zone. Ward 7.
<u>Zoning Approval Sought:</u>	SZO §4.4.1
<u>Date of Application:</u>	March 11, 2019
<u>Date(s) of Public Hearing:</u>	May 1, 2019, May 15, 2019, and June 5, 2019
<u>Date of Decision:</u>	June 5, 2019
<u>Vote:</u>	4-0

Case # ZBA 2019-30 was opened before the Zoning Board of Appeals in the City Council Chambers at Somerville City Hall on May 1, 2019. Notice of the Public Hearing was given to persons affected and was published and posted, all as required by M.G.L. c. 40A, sec. 11 and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. On June 5, 2019, the Zoning Board of Appeals took a vote.



I. DESCRIPTION:

The proposal is to construct a second story addition atop the existing one-story portion of the building in the rear. The proposal also includes a shed dormer on the right side of the roof and enlarging the existing windows on the enclosed front porch. The proposed alterations will create one additional bedroom in the 2nd/3rd floor unit to make it a five-bedroom unit. The proposal will not increase the parking requirement.

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 Board 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, front yard setback, rear yard setback, left side yard setback, and street frontage.

The proposal will impact the nonconforming dimension of the left side yard setback. The current dimension is 1.3 feet and the proposal will maintain that same distance. The requirement in the district is 8 feet for a 2.5 story structure in the RB district. The main massing of the proposed addition will be five feet from the property line. However, the proposal includes a balcony off the addition that will be the same distance to the property line than the existing building below. 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, the Board finds that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The proposal will allow for the expansion of living space without expanding the footprint of the building. The proposal has been designed with setbacks that minimally impact the neighbors and the requirements for lot area per dwelling unit, ground coverage, landscaped area, pervious area, floor area ratio (FAR), building height, 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 protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to adequately protect the natural environment; 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 RB 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."*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The subject property is located on the east side of Cameron Avenue, which is primarily a residential street comprised of two- and three-family dwelling.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): The proposed rear addition will be constructed above an existing one story portion. The proposed addition will have minimal visibility from Cameron Avenue. The proposal also includes a shed style dormer on the right side of the roof. The Board was originally concerned with the lack of slope on the shed dormer. The Board recognizes that the minimum required head height atop the stairs necessitates a flatter dormer. Although the proposed dormer does not have a preferred slope, the alternative would be a dormer that goes above the ridge or an entire 3rd story; which would be less compatible than the proposed dormer. The property will also undergo an overhaul of improvements to the exterior cladding and landscaping.

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

6. 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.DECISION:

Present and sitting were Members Orsola Susan Fontano, Elaine Severino, Drew Kane and Anne Brockelman. Upon making the above findings, Susan Fontano made a motion to approve the request for Special Permits. Elaine Severino seconded the motion. The Zoning Board of Appeals voted **4-0** to **CONDITIONALLY APPROVE** the request for **SPECAIL PERMIT**. The following conditions are attached:



#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes								
1	Approval is for the construction of a rear addition and dormers. 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>March 11, 2019</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 22, 2019</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (AZ-1 – AZ5)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February 27, 2019</td> <td>Plot Plan</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	March 11, 2019	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	May 22, 2019	Plans submitted to OSPCD (AZ-1 – AZ5)	February 27, 2019	Plot Plan
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February 27, 2019	Plot Plan											
Any changes to the approved (site plan or elevations/use) that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
Construction Impacts												
2	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.									
3	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									
4	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									
Design												
5	Applicant shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors to Planning Staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of a building permit.	BP	Plng.									
Site												
6	Landscaping shall be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards;	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD									
Miscellaneous												



7	Gas and electric meters shall not be on the front of the structure. Gas and electric meters may be located on the side of the structure but shall be screened from the street by a hardy, staff approved evergreen planting. Utilities shall not be located adjacent to windows and shall not impact any parking, landscaping, or egress. The provisions of this condition may be waived by staff if the applicant submits a letter from the utility, signed by a utility representative, on utility letterhead, indicating that there is no feasible alternative to placing meters in violation of this condition.	CO	ISD	
8	Electrical conduits on the exterior facades of buildings shall be painted to match the wall material to which they are attached. Conduits are not allowed on the front of any structure.	CO	Plng.	
9	Garbage and recycling locations shall be clearly indicated on site plans. Storage areas shall be inside of the structure or shall be fully screened from view from both the public way and abutters by an appropriate material reviewed and approved by staff. The location shall not impact any parking, landscaping, or egress.	BP	Plng.	
10	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.	
11	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				
12	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
13	Per Somerville fire safety regulations, grills, barbecues, chimineas and the like are NOT permitted on decks or porches.	Perpetual	FP/ISD	
14	To the extent possible, all exterior lighting must be confined to the subject property, cast light downward and must not intrude, interfere or spill onto neighboring properties.	CO	Plng.	
Final Sign-Off				
15	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.	



Attest, by the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Orsola Susan Fontano, *Chairman*
Elaine Severino, *Acting as Clerk*
Anne Brockelman
Drew Kane (Alt.)

Attest, by the Administrative Assistant:

Monique Baldwin

Copies of this decision are filed in the Somerville City Clerk's office.
Copies of all plans referred to in this decision and a detailed record of the
SPGA proceedings are filed in the Somerville Planning Dept.

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

Any appeal of this decision must be filed within twenty days after the date this notice is filed in the Office of the City Clerk, and must be filed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40A, sec. 17 and SZO sec. 3.2.10.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 A, sec. 11, no variance shall take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the City Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the Office of the City Clerk and no appeal has been filed, or that if such appeal has been filed, that it has been dismissed or denied, is recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title.

Also in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 A, sec. 11, a special permit shall not take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the City Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the Office of the City Clerk and either that no appeal has been filed or the appeal has been filed within such time, is recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title. The person exercising rights under a duly appealed Special Permit does so at risk that a court will reverse the permit and that any construction performed under the permit may be ordered undone.

The owner or applicant shall pay the fee for recording or registering. Furthermore, a permit from the Division of Inspectional Services shall be required in order to proceed with any project favorably decided upon by this decision, and upon request, the Applicant shall present evidence to the Building Official that this decision is properly recorded.

This is a true and correct copy of the decision filed on _____ in the Office of the City Clerk, and twenty days have elapsed, and

FOR VARIANCE(S) WITHIN

_____ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or
_____ any appeals that were filed have been finally dismissed or denied.

FOR SPECIAL PERMIT(S) WITHIN

_____ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or
_____ there has been an appeal filed.

Signed _____ City Clerk Date _____

