



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2016-126
Date: November 10, 2016
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 18-20 Arlington Street

Applicant Name: 18-20 Arlington Street, LLC c/o John Topalis
Applicant Address: 227 South Street, Walpole, MA 02081
Owner Name: 18-20 Arlington Street, LLC
Owner Address: 227 South Street, Walpole, MA 02081
Agent Name: N/A
Agent Address: N/A
Alderman: Matthew McLaughlin

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner, 18-20 Arlington Street, LLC, seeks a Special Permit per SZO §4.4 to modify a nonconforming five-unit condominium structure by adding a roof deck on top of the rear second story. RB zone. Ward 1.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – November 16, 2016

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The locus consists of an approximately 3,342 square foot parcel that contains a three story five-unit condominium structure with approximately 3,074 square feet of living area located in the RB zone. There is an existing fire escape on top of the second story roof that runs along the right side of the roof down to a first story roof and then down to grade.



2. Proposal: The proposal is to construct a roof deck above the second story in the rear of the structure. The footprint of the proposed deck will be the same as the existing landing of the fire escape. The building has a fire suppression sprinkler system; therefore, the Applicant is removing the fire escape. The Applicant proposes to construct the roof deck with composite decking boards and a railing with balusters.
3. Green Building Practices: The proposed decking is to be of recycled materials with minimal waste.
4. Comments:

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted and has no objections.

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."*

Section 4.4.1 states that “[l]awfully existing nonconforming structures other than one- and two-family dwellings may be enlarged, extended, renovated or altered only by special permit authorized by the SPGA in accordance with the procedures of Article 5. The SPGA must find that such extension, enlargement, renovation or alteration is not substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing nonconforming building. In making the finding that the enlargement, extension, renovation or alteration will not be substantially more detrimental, the SPGA may consider, without limitation, impacts upon the

following: traffic volumes, traffic congestion, adequacy of municipal water supply and sewer capacity, noise, odor, scale, on-street parking, shading, visual effects and neighborhood character.”

In considering a special permit under §4.4 or 4.5 of the SZO, Staff finds that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The proposal has been designed to occupy the exact footprint of the existing platform of the fire escape and will not encroach any further into the required setbacks.

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 the purposes of the Ordinance are 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 secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to conserve the value of land and buildings; 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 surrounding neighborhood contains a mix of residential structures of various architectural styles.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): The impacts of the proposal will be minimal to the neighborhood, and are compatible with the existing structure and use.

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

The proposal will not affect the affordable housing stock.

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, 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. The areas in the SomerVision map that are designated as enhance and transform should most significantly contribute towards the SomerVision goals that are outlined in the table below. The areas marked as conserve are not expected to greatly increase the figures in the table since these areas are not intended for large scale change.*

The proposal will not affect the SomerVision Plan.

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 for the construction of a roof deck. 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>October 13, 2016</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October 4, 2016</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (SK1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October 25, 2016</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (SK2)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.	Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	October 13, 2016	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	October 4, 2016	Plans submitted to OSPCD (SK1)	October 25, 2016	Plans submitted to OSPCD (SK2)	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.	
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Construction Impacts												
1	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.									
2	The Applicant shall at their expense replace any existing equipment (including, but not limited to street sign poles, signs, traffic signal poles, traffic signal equipment, wheel chair ramps, granite curbing, etc) and the entire sidewalk immediately abutting the subject property if damaged as a result of construction activity. All new sidewalks and driveways must be constructed to DPW standard.	CO	DPW									
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									
Design												
4	Applicant shall provide final material samples to Planning Staff for review and approval prior to construction.	BP	Plng.									

5	Conditions may require modification of the design of the structure in terms of size, but not reducing the allowable floor area ratio by more than twenty percent (20%) and, when applicable for special permit with design review, in terms of materials or other architectural elements in accordance with the design review guidelines of § 5.1.5;			
6	An exterior electrical receptacle is required for the second level.	Final sign off	Wiring Inspector	
Public Safety				
7	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
Final Sign-Off				
8	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.	

