City of Somerville

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals
FROM: Planning, Preservation & Zoning (PPZ) Staff
SUBJECT: 21 Eastman Rd., P&Z 2021-121
POSTED: January 14, 2022

RECOMMENDATION: No change

This memo is supplemental to the PPZ Staff Memo dated December 15, 2021.

ANALYSIS

On January 10, 2022, the Applicant submitted a revised plan set identifying design modifications. On January 10, 2022, the Applicant also submitted a cover letter and a "variance diagram" with their assessment of the variances they believe are needed. The plan set and variance diagram are addressed later in this memo.

On January 13, 2022, the Applicant submitted the following documents in response to the Board's request to see the plans previously submitted to the Board under the old zoning code in 2019:

- cover letter
- 2019 plan set
- presentation boards used at the 11/6/2019 ZBA hearing
- comparative massing study showing the 2019 proposal in relation to the current proposal

The Applicant has amended their plans to propose one large principal structure instead of the two separate principal structures show in the last iteration of the project (reviewed by the ZBA on December 15, 2021). The previous proposal of two principal structures on one lot fundamentally undermined the entire premise of the zoning code which allows only one principal structure per lot. By connecting the two structures on the second story of the building, the Applicant has eliminated this issue.

Proposing one principal structure rather than two has also eliminated several variances that were previously required. The Board will recall that several of the variances listed in the December 15, 2021, staff memo applied to *both* principal structures. For example, the Applicant previously needed *two* variances for story height, as they were proposing *two* principal structures that each violated that requirement. However, because the proposal is now for just *one* principal structure, there is just *one* variance needed for story height.

In addition to the above other changes to the proposal include:

- pulling the front left elevation of the building back from the pinch point at the left property line
- reducing width of the driveway entrance
- removing the parking space between the two units and the parallel space on the driveway

Due to the nature of the changes, the variances now needed for this proposal have been reduced from 22 to 9. The Applicant has eliminated the need for the following variances:

- more than one principal building on a lot (1)
- driveway in the frontage area (1)
- parking space and drive aisle (2)
- parking in the frontage area (2)
- front setback (2)
- side setback (1)

The following variances are still required, although in some cases only one variance is required rather than two (as only one principal building is proposed instead of two):

- building type (1)
- habitable space depth (2)
- number of stories (1)
- story height (1)
- building width (1)
- ground story elevation (1)
- upper story fenestration (1)
- parking within the parking setback (1)

The total number of variances listed above is 9.

The Board will note that this list includes one variance (parking within the parking setback area) that was not addressed in the December 15 staff memo. This variance is addressed in more detail below; the analysis for the remaining variances that are required has not changed from the December 15 staff memo.

Parking within the parking setback (1 variance)

Parking is not allowed within 20 feet of the front lot line. The proposed parking space in the garage of the front dwelling unit is within this 20-foot no parking zone.

Staff do not have any changes to the recommended conditions found in the December 15, 2021, memo and maintains its prior recommendation regarding both the variances and the steep slope special permit. Staff believe that the project could be redesigned to eliminate the need for this and several other remaining variances.