



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

GEORGE J. PROAKIS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEMBERS**

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DANIELLE EVANS, *CLERK*  
RICHARD ROSSETTI  
ELAINE SEVERINO  
JOSH SAFDIE  
ANNE BROCKELMAN, (ALT.)

**Case #: ZBA 2018-187**  
**Site: 21 Houghton Street**  
**Date of Decision:** February 20, 2019  
**Decision:** *Petition Approved with Conditions*  
**Date Filed with City Clerk:** March 6, 2019

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**ZBA DECISION**

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**Site:** 21 Houghton Street  
**Applicant / Owner Name:** Raquel A. Schott  
**Applicant / Owner Address:** 21 Houghton Street, Somerville, MA 02143  
**City Councilor:** J.T Scott

Legal Notice: Applicant / Owner, Raquel A. Schott, seeks a special permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming structure to construct a rear second-story addition above an existing one-story portion of the building. RB Zone. Ward 2.

|                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Zoning District/Ward:</u>      | RB Zone. Ward 2.  |
| <u>Zoning Approval Sought:</u>    | SZO §4.4.1        |
| <u>Date of Application:</u>       | December 20, 2018 |
| <u>Date(s) of Public Hearing:</u> | 2/20              |
| <u>Date of Decision:</u>          | February 20, 2019 |
| <u>Vote:</u>                      | 4-0               |

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Case # ZBA 2018-187 was opened before the Zoning Board of Appeals in the Council Chambers at Somerville City Hall. 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 February 20, 2019 the Zoning Board of Appeals took a vote.



## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is to construct a rear second-story addition above the existing rear one-story portion of the building. The addition will include a bedroom and a bathroom, which will result in the dwelling becoming a two-bedroom single family dwelling.

## **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, and left side yard setback.

The proposal will impact the nonconforming dimension of the left side yard setback. The structure is currently on the left property line and the proposal is to construct a second-story addition above the existing one-story portion of the building along the left property line. 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 a small single family dwelling above an existing nonconforming foot print. 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 provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; 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 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 north side of Houghton Street on the block between Oak Street and Bolton Street. It is located at the end of a series of four two-story row houses. The second property in from the left was added upon to its existing footprint at some point in a much less aesthetically pleasing fashion compared to the proposed.

*Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility)*: The proposed second story will blend with the existing two-story mansard structure in form and materiality to be compatible with rest of the structure and neighborhood.

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, Richard Rossetti, Danielle Evans, and Elaine Severino. Upon making the above findings, Danielle Evans made a motion to approve the request for a Special Permit. Elaine Severino seconded the motion. The Zoning Board of Appeals voted **4-0** to **APPROVE** the request **WITH CONDITIONS**. The following conditions were attached:



| #  | Condition   | Timeframe for Compliance | Verified (initial) | Notes |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------|-------|--|------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1  | Approval is for the construction of a rear second-story addition. 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 20, 2018</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December 20, 2018</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (ZBA 1-7)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> |                          |                    |       | Date (Stamp Date)  | Submission | December 20, 2018 | Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office | December 20, 2018 | Plans submitted to OSPCD (ZBA 1-7) |
|  | Date (Stamp Date)   |                          |                    |       | Submission   |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
|  | December 20, 2018   |                          |                    |       | Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| December 20, 2018  | Plans submitted to OSPCD (ZBA 1-7)  |                          |                    |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval. |   |                          |                    |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| <b>Construction Impacts</b>  |   |                          |                    |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| 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                |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| <b>Design</b>  |   |                          |                    |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| 5  | Material for siding, trim, windows, and doors must match those of the existing structure.   | BP                       | Plng.              |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| <b>Site</b>  |   |                          |                    |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| 6  | Landscaping shall be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards.   | Perpetual                | Plng. / ISD        |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| <b>Miscellaneous</b>   |   |                          |                    |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| 7  | 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.        |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| 8  | 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                |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |
| <b>Public Safety</b>   |   |                          |                    |       |  |            |                   |  |                   |                                    |



|                       |   |                |       |  |
|-----------------------|---|----------------|-------|--|
| 9                     | The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.  | CO             | FP    |  |
| 10                    | 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. |  |
| <b>Final Sign-Off</b> |   |                |       |  |
| 11                    | 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*  
Danielle Evans, *Clerk*  
Elaine Severino  
Richard Rossetti

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 \_\_\_\_\_

