



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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PLANNING DIVISION

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DOROTHY A. KELLY GAY
AMELIA ABOFF
GERARD AMARAL, (ALT.)

Case #: PB 2019-06 (SP)
Site: 20 Prospect Street (D2.2)
Date of Decision: July 11, 2019
Decision: *Approved*
Date Filed with City Clerk: July 23, 2019

PLANNING BOARD DECISION

Site: 20 Prospect Street
Applicant Name: Union Square RELP Master Developer LLC
Owner Name: City of Somerville and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority
Agent Name: N/A
City Councilor: Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

Legal Notice: Applicant, Union Square RELP Master Developer LLC and Owners, the City of Somerville and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority, seek Design & Site Plan Review under SZO §5.4 and SZO §6.8 to construct a general building and a Special Permit under SZO §6.8.10.A.4 to authorize a principal entrance for ground floor residential uses oriented toward a side lot line. TOD 100 underlying zoning district. Union Square Overlay District and High-Rise sub district. Ward 2.

Zoning District/Ward: Union Square Overlay District and HR sub district. Ward 2.
Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit §6.8.10.A.4
Application Date(s): February 11, 2019; Revised April 30
Public Hearing Date(s): July 11, 2019
Decision Date: July 11, 2019
Vote: 4-0

Case number **PB 2019-06** was opened before the Planning Board at the Visiting Nurse Association 3rd Floor Community Room, 259 Lowell Street. 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 July 11, 2019, the Planning Board took a vote only on the requested Special Permit.



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property consists of one vacant parcel totaling 66,907 square feet of land area. The parcel was created by a subdivision, shown as Lot 3, which was approved by the Planning Board (Case No. PB 2019-02) on March 21, 2019. There is a hypothetical lot line dividing the parcel 3 for the purposes of this application. Hypothetical lot lines are lot lines superimposed over an official plot plan indicating the boundaries of a lot for development review, but not officially recorded with the Registry of Deeds or Land Court. The parcel has been identified as parcel D2.2 in the Coordinated Development Special Permit (CDSP) that was approved by the Planning Board in December 2017. The approval of the CDSP permitted this parcel to be developed as a general building with commercial (likely retail) and residential uses. The property is in the High Rise (HR) sub district of the Union Square Overlay District (USOD).

The Applicant has also submitted separate Design and Site Plan Review (DSPR) applications for 10 Prospect Street (a commercial building called D2.1 in the previously approved CDSP), 50 Prospect Street (a mid-rise podium tower also referred to as D2.3 in the previously approved CDSP), a new thoroughfare planned as a mid-block service alley, and a new civic space planned as a plaza.

D2.2 is proposed as a 6-story, approximately twenty-four thousand (24,000) square foot general building with six thousand (6,000) square feet of ground floor commercial space, eighty-seven (87) dwelling units, and a portion of an integrated, above ground Commercial Vehicular Parking Facility. The height of the building is proposed to be 6 stories and 80'-0", excluding mechanical equipment and parapet. This building is attached at the side to the building proposed for D2.3 (50 Prospect Street) to provide shared Commercial Parking. The combined parking structure of D2.2 and D2.3 includes two hundred and sixty-nine (269) motor vehicle parking spaces and four hundred and fifty-one (451) long term bicycle parking spaces.

For this application to be determined as compliant with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, a Special Permit (SZO §6.8.10.A.4.d) authorizing a principal entrance oriented toward a side lot line must first be approved by the Planning Board. The Applicant has requested to provide a lobby entrance oriented toward the side lot line (facing Bennett Court and D2.1).

II. FINDINGS:

Per the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board must consider the criteria of §6.8.10.A.4.d in its discretion to permit a principal entrance oriented toward a side lot line.

Review Criteria of §6.8.10.A.4.d:

1. The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in Section 5.1 Special Permits.
2. Privacy of residential uses on neighboring lots.
3. Visibility of the entrance(s) from the public right of way and legibility of the means of access for emergency services.

SZO 5.1 Special Permits**1. Information Supplied**

The Planning 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."

See findings 1-2 for SZO §6.8.10.A.4.d below.



- 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."**

See #2 in Section SZO §5.4.6 below.

- 4. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant must 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."**

This neighborhood is currently undergoing intense physical changes, with utility and streetscape work on Somerville Avenue, and track and bridge work for the Green Line Extension already underway, and much new work proposed in later phases of development for the D Parcels. This proposal is among a series of projects going forward at this time, which will initiate a process developed through the Union Square Neighborhood planning process to establish the D Parcels as an Urban Employment Center for the City of Somerville. This project is one of the first steps in this process, responding to current neighborhood characteristics with an eye toward establishing a new built context and new patterns of land use for this Urban Center.

The Planning Board finds that this mixed-use general building will respond to and be compatible with existing uses in the area by providing new residential space at the edge of Union Square, transitioning to more purely residential uses along Allen, Lincoln, and Merriam Streets. At the same time, ground floor restaurant and retail space provided for in this building will augment current commercial activity facing Prospect Street and the adjacent Civic Space. This building, along with its neighbors on the D2 Parcel will serve as the first opportunity to weave new patterns of growth and activity into the existing fabric of the city.

SZO §6.8.10.A.4.d

- 1. The review considerations for all Special Permits as specified in Section 5.1 Special Permits**

See findings 1-4 for SZO §5.1 Special Permits above.

- 2. Privacy of residential uses on neighboring lots.**

The Planning Board finds that there will be limited impact on neighboring uses, as the proposed entrance for the upper floor residential uses in the D2.2 building faces Bennett Court and the D2.1 Laboratory building.

- 3. Visibility of the entrance(s) from the public right of way and legibility of the means of access for emergency services.**

The Planning Board finds that, as currently designed, the proposed entrance to upper floor residential space in D2.2 provides insufficient visibility and legibility from both Prospect Street and Bennett Court. The Applicant must redesign this entry as part of the Design & Site Plan Review application; at minimum this redesign should include a selection from the strategies laid out in the Architectural Design Guidelines to make entrances for upper floor uses more apparent at street level, especially as the entrance is not located on the street that is the official address. These solutions may include, but not be limited to, changes in plane and surface treatment at entries, use of projecting entry canopies, and use of canopy or blade signage to indicate upper floor entry sequences. For purposes of emergency egress, this redesign should also include pair of swing doors at the entry sequence, as opposed to the single panel door currently indicated.

III. DECISION:

Present and sitting were Michael Capuano, Joseph Favaloro, Dorothy Kelly Gay, Amelia Aboff. Gerard Amaral recused himself. Upon making the above findings, Michael Capuano made a motion to approve the application for Design & Site Plan Review. Dorothy Kelly Gay seconded the motion. The Board voted **4-0** to **APPROVE** the request.



Attest, by the Planning Board:



Joseph Favaloro



Michael Capuano


Dorothy A. Kelly Gay

Amelia Aboff

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 Planning & Zoning Division of the
Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development

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 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 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 _____

