



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

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DREW KANE, (*ALT.*)

**Case #: ZBA 2019-59**  
**Site: 30-32 Whitman Street**  
**Date of Decision:** August 7, 2019  
**Decision:** *Approved with Conditions*  
**Date Filed with City Clerk:** August 12, 2019

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**ZBA DECISION**

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**Site: 30-32 Whitman Street**

**Applicant Name:** Douglas Okun  
**Applicant Address:** 156 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138  
**Owner Name:** Robert W. Sinnott  
**Owner Address:** 520 Beacon Street, Apt. 4D, Boston, MA 02215  
**City Councilor:** Katjana Ballantyne

Legal Notice: Applicant, Douglas Okun, and Owner, Robert W. Sinnott, seek a special permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming structure by constructing a dormer on each side of the roof. RA Zone. Ward 7.

<u>Zoning District/Ward:</u>	RA Zone. Ward 7
<u>Zoning Approval Sought:</u>	SZO §4.4.1
<u>Date of Application:</u>	June 13, 2019
<u>Date(s) of Public Hearing:</u>	August 7, 2019
<u>Date of Decision:</u>	August 7, 2019
<u>Vote:</u>	4-0

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Case number ZBA 2019-59 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 August 7, 2019, the Zoning Board of Appeals took a vote.



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## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposal is to construct a gable style dormer on each side of the roof.

## **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 size, lot area per dwelling unit, landscaped area, pervious area, floor area ratio (FAR), front yard setback, right side yard setback, and frontage.

The proposal will impact the following nonconforming dimensions of the right side yard and FAR. The current right side yard dimension is 2.2 feet, and the proposed right side dormer will be three feet from the right side property line. The requirement in the district is 8 feet for a 2.5 story structure. The current FAR is 0.83 and the proposal to add the dormers will increase the FAR to 0.91. The maximum allowed FAR in the district is 0.75. 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 “[I]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 creation of additional living space to make the bedrooms larger and to create an office, bathroom, and laundry room. The proposal has been designed with setbacks that minimally impact the neighbors and the requirements for ground coverage, building height, rear yard setbacks, and left 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 conserve the value of land and buildings; to adequately protect the natural environment; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RA district, which is, “to establish and preserve quiet neighborhoods of one- and two-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 south side of Whitman Street, which is in West Somerville between Packard Ave and Mason Street. It is a residential street that includes single and two-family dwellings. The neighborhood includes a lot of different structures that include gable and gambrel style dormers.

*Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility)*: The proposed dormers will be gable roofed dormers to match that of the existing house and those in the surrounding area. The proposal is designed to be compatible with the existing house and the 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, Susan Fontano, Danielle Evans, Anne Brockelman, and Drew Kane (alt.). Upon making the above findings, Danielle Evans made a motion to approve the request for a Special Permit. Anne Brockelman 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
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1	Approval is for the construction of 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>June 13, 2019</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 19, 2019</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (T1, E0, S0, E1-E8, and A0-A8)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	June 13, 2019	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	July 19, 2019	Plans submitted to OSPCD (T1, E0, S0, E1-E8, and A0-A8)
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Any changes to the approved 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	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.							
<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							
<b>Final Sign-Off</b>										



10	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.	
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Attest, by the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Susan Fontano, *Chair*  
Danielle Evans, *Clerk*  
Anne Brockelman  
Drew Kane (Alt.)

Attest, by Planner:

\_\_\_\_\_

Alexander Mello

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 \_\_\_\_\_

