



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

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF

GEORGE PROAKIS, *DIRECTOR OF PLANNING*
LORI MASSA, *SENIOR PLANNER*
ETHAN LAY-SLEEPER, *PLANNER*
SARAH WHITE, *PRESERVATION PLANNER*
DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

Case #: ZBA 2016-21
Date: May 4, 2016
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

Updated* PLANNING STAFF REPORT*

Site: 15 Woods Avenue

Applicant Name: Andrea Morton
Applicant Address: aMortonDesign, 561 Windsor Street, Suite A404, Somerville, MA 02143
Owner Name: Robert Bellino, Trustee
Owner Address: 15 Woods Avenue, Somerville, MA 02144
Alderman: Katjana Ballantyne

Legal Notice: Applicant, Carl O. Dumas*, and owner, Robert Bellino, Trustee, seek a Special Permit to alter a nonconforming two-family structure under SZO section 4.4.1 to change the roof slope and add a dormer. RB Zone. Ward 7.

Dates of Public Hearing: May 4, 2016

* The applicant changed since the legal notice was published to Andrea Morton.

**The second-floor plan was updated to show the removal of one bedroom and the total net square feet allows on the property was corrected.

Additions to the April 28, 2016 staff report are underlined and deletions are ~~struck~~.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a two-family, 2 ½ story house on a 3,280 square foot lot. Each unit has two bedrooms.



2. Proposal: The proposal is to change the pitch of the gable roof to get more head height for a bedroom and bathroom on the third floor. The height of at the ridge of the house will be 38 feet. A gable dormer will be added on the side of house that has sufficient side yard setback. ~~The two~~ One of the bedrooms on the second floor will be ~~combined~~ removed so that the unit will still only have two bedrooms.



3. Green Building Practices: None listed on the application form.

4. Comments:

Ward Alderman: Alderman Ballantyne has no concerns with this application.

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."*

The structure is currently nonconforming with respect to the following dimensional requirements: lot area, lot area per dwelling unit, front, left side and rear yard setback, and street frontage.

The proposal will impact the nonconforming ~~dimension~~ side yard setback which is 2.5 feet and the requirement is 8 feet. 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, Staff find that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The revised proposal keeps the house as a 2 ½ story structure with a gable roof and only one appropriately scaled gable dormer.

The proposal does not change the parking requirement and the FAR and height dimensions continue to be conforming. The number of parking spaces required stays that same because the number of bedrooms is not changing. The proposed square footage for the third floor is approximately 538 square feet, bringing the total net square footage to ~~2,260~~ 2,460 with an FAR of 0.75. The ridge is proposed to be at 38 feet and the midpoint of the gable is 31 feet. however, the building will still be less than The 35 foot height limit ~~because height~~ is measured from the midpoint of a gable roof making this proposal below the height limit.

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 providing for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City and conserving the value of land and buildings.

The proposal to alter a two-family house is consistent with the purpose of the district, which is RA - Residence Districts: *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."*

The raised ridgeline will now be taller than neighboring structures and the gable will have slightly different proportions, but will continue to have minimal impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. This alternative was preferred to popping up the middle portion of the structure to create usable space in the half story.

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

As a result of the proposal the unit will be more expensive; however, it is not an existing affordable unit.

8. 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 alteration of the house is in keeping with the goals of allowing houses to change within the neighborhood character.

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	
1	Approval is for the alteration of the roof of the structure. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.		
	Date (Stamp Date)				Submission
	Mar 3, 2016				Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office
	Feb 9, 2016				Plans submitted to OSPCD (Plot Plan)
	Jan 28, 2016				Plans submitted to OSPCD (A-01-02 Existing floor plans, A-03-04 Existing elevations)
	<u>Apr 13, 2016</u>				Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (SD2.1-2.4 proposed elevations, SD3.1 section)
	<u>Apr 29, 2016</u>				Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (SD1.2-1.3 proposed floor plans)
	Any changes to the approved elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.				
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	
Final Sign-Off				
4	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.	

