



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Case #:** ZBA 2013-82  
**Date:** January 30, 2014  
**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT<sup>1</sup>**

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**Site:** 587-593 Somerville Avenue

**Applicant Name:** Thomas Tuton

**Applicant Address:** 531 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Everett, MA 02149

**Property Owner Name:** 593 Somerville Avenue Realty Trust

**Property Owner Address:** 593 Somerville Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143

**Agent Name:** Richard G Di Girolamo

**Agent Address:** 424 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145

**Alderman:** Thomas Taylor

Legal Notice: Applicant, Thomas Tuton, and Owner, 593 Somerville Avenue Realty Trust, seek a Special Permit under SZO §7.11.1.c to establish six dwelling units in a new mixed-use building with a ground floor retail component; a Variance under SZO §9.5.1.a for parking relief; a Special Permit under SZO §9.13.b to alter parking design standards; a Special Permit under SZO §9.13.c to share a driveway; and a Special Permit under SZO §9.13.e to share parking. BA zone. Ward 3.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – **Wednesday, December 11, 2013**

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: The subject parcel is 8,318 square feet, located near the corner of Somerville Avenue and Spring Street. The parcel is comprised of three structures: a c.1845 side-gable historic dwelling, located at the rear of the parcel, which was determined by the Historic Preservation Commission to be Preferably Preserved; a small c.1920 single-story retail store, located in the southeast corner along Somerville Avenue; and a single bay garage that was once likely some kind of barn or

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<sup>1</sup> Updated through January 30, 2014 to reflect changes since the last Staff Report, issued December 5, 2013. Text added is colored orange and removed text is ~~crossed-out~~ and colored orange.



accessory structure, located in the southwest corner. The mix of uses on this parcel is an auto service, retail, and residential use. There has been no prior zoning relief given to the subject parcel.



*587-593 Somerville Avenue, parcel outlined in blue  
595 Somerville Avenue, parcel outlined in red*

2. Proposal: The site will have one new mixed-use structure and retain the historic dwelling on-site.

Mixed-Use Structure:

The proposed mixed-use structure would be 47'-8" in height with a footprint that is 2,850 square feet and a 1.3 floor area ratio (FAR). The two ground floor retail spaces are ~~each~~ approximately 700 and 400 square feet with main entries on Somerville Avenue. There will be 4 two-bedroom plus study units that are approximately 1300 square feet and 2 two-bedroom units that are approximately 980 square feet. **Unit 2 will be ADA accessible with a ground floor entrance at the rear of the alley, which is nearest the ADA parking space. This solution also addresses previous Fair Housing concerns.**

The main residential entrance will be centrally located on Somerville Avenue. Five parking spaces will be located beneath the cantilevered rear portion of the structure, one space for five of the six residential units. The sixth space would be located elsewhere on the parcel. Each space beneath the cantilever would

also have a mounted bike rack located on the wall in front of the parking space. One of these sheltered parking spaces would be ADA accessible.

The Somerville Avenue façade of the new structure is five bays with a consistent rhythm of windows. There is a heavy cornice between the third and fourth floors and a Mansard style roof to provide height for the fourth floor. The first floor has a center entry for the residential component, retail entries on either side, and glazed windows on the remainder of the façade. The Spring Street façade is simple with two bays of windows on the second through fourth floors and a ground floor rear egress for the retail. The east façade has four window bays and a ground floor rear egress for the other retail space. The rear façade has six window bays with balconies. While the building cantilevers above the ground floor parking stalls, the fourth floor is recessed to follow the height limit for structures abutting residential districts. Materials would include cementitious fiber board, vinyl windows, architectural shingles, a storefront system, and cement trim boards.

### Historic Structure

The Applicant has worked with the Historic Preservation Commission and devised a strategy to relocate and restore the existing c.1845 historic structure in a Memorandum of Agreement, dated 11/19/2013. The 20<sup>th</sup> century addition that currently composes the right side of the structure will be dismantled, the structure rehabilitated and then relocated to front along Somerville Avenue. *Per Section 9 of 521 CMR (Massachusetts Architectural Access Board Rules and Regulations), this dwelling unit shall serve as the accessible unit for this development proposal.* The historic structure would be approximately 1100 square feet with three bedrooms.

*Due to the project simultaneously proposed at 595 Somerville Avenue (ZBA 2013-58), the Applicants of both projects have decided to move forward with a combined site plan to better address access, landscaping, trash, and parking between the two projects.*

### Site Plan

The site plan provides access to both development sites from a shared driveway off Spring Street. The existing curb cut would be reduced by approximately 18' on the south side and increased by approximately 8' on the north side for a 20' access drive. The subject property does not currently meet the 10% landscape requirement; however, the proposal would increase the landscaped area to approximately 21%. Pervious pavers would be located between the two new proposed structures while a raised landscape area would be located behind the historic structure. There will be landscaping in front of the historic structure with a fence and signage noting details of the history of this building. Three public bike racks and four new street trees would be placed along Somerville Avenue as part of this combined site plan. The trash area would be enclosed and located at the rear of the adjacent development, abutting the rear of a garage. There will be two curb cuts closed along Somerville Avenue which will increase the on-street parking.

### Parking

The parking calculation requires a total of 15 spaces for the subject development; 12 spaces for residential, including one visitor space, and three spaces for the retail component. Five parking stalls are located beneath the cantilevered rear portion of the subject structure and would be dedicated to five of the seven units; two additional parking spaces for the remaining two units are located on-site, but located at the rear of the parcel. Three 8'x16' compact spaces, located in the northeast corner of the adjacent development site, would be shared between the retail parking requirement and the adjacent development.

3. Green Building Practices: There are no green building practices indicated on the application.

#### 4. Comments:

*Fire Prevention:* Fire Prevention was satisfied upon understanding that there would be 20' of unobstructed access at the rear of the building.

*Traffic & Parking:* ~~Comments were not yet submitted for this report at the time this report was disbursed; however,~~ Traffic & Parking stated that 5 IPS meters would be requested as mitigation for the parking relief. These would be used along Somerville Avenue.

#### Memo dated January 2, 2014 to ZBA, from Planning Staff:

The applicants, Thomas Tuton and Douglas Beaudet, propose to redevelop properties at both 587-593 and 595 Somerville Avenue, respectively. The redevelopment of 595 Somerville Ave consists of a three-story residential building with four residential units and 406 square feet of ground floor commercial space. The redevelopment of 587-593 Somerville Ave consists of a four story residential building with seven residential units total and two commercial units with 707 square feet of commercial space each. The proposed redevelopment of 587-593 and 595 Somerville Ave will be integrated and have shared parking spaces and a shared driveway.

The applicants have hired a professional Transportation Firm, Design Consultants, Inc. (DCI) to prepare a Parking and Trip Generation Study.

The redevelopment of 595 Somerville Ave per the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) requires 7 off-street parking spaces. Four off-street parking spaces are being provided. Three required parking spaces are being provided on the adjacent site, to be shared with the commercial components of both projects. Each of the four residential units has a dedicated space on-site beneath the cantilever at the rear of the building.

The redevelopment of 587-593 Somerville Ave per the SZO requires 15 off-street parking spaces. Ten off-street parking spaces are being provided. Five required parking spaces are not being provided. Each of the seven residential units has a dedicated parking space on-site, either beneath the cantilever at the rear of the building or behind the historic structure.

The applicants are requesting three shared parking spaces for commercial use and overflow residential or visitor use. A driveway to be shared between the two parcels and three compact parking spaces (8' x 16') instead of the required three (9' x 18') parking spaces is also proposed by the applicant.

The submitted Parking and Trip Generation Study has provided information from the Institute of Transportation Engineers Planning Handbook ITE (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) that explain compact sized parking spaces are the norm for the size of new vehicles. This ITE publication is accepted and recognized as a professional industry standard by Traffic Engineers. Traffic and Parking does not disagree with this assessment and is not opposed to the number of compact parking spaces.

The Parking and Trip Generation Study also discusses shared parking. The study submitted documentation from the Institute of Transportation Engineer's (ITE) Parking Generation (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) that use of residential parking spaces demand is at the highest from 11:00PM – 6:00AM and the highest demand for commercial spaces is from 11:00AM – 10:00PM. This ITE publication is also accepted and recognized as a professional industry standard by Traffic Engineers. Traffic and Parking does not disagree with this assessment.

The submitted Parking and Trip Generation Study also discusses the shared driveway. The submitted study concluded that due to the low traffic demand for the proposed redevelopment, the complimentary

nature of the land uses that the shared driveway can sufficiently serve the needs of both the residential units and commercial retail use of both 595 and 587-593 Somerville Ave. Traffic and Parking does not object to this conclusion. However Traffic and Parking has concerns concerning vehicle conflicts from the shared driveway, the driveway immediately across the street and conflicts from vehicles onto this two way portion of Spring Street. These conflicts could result in vehicles avoiding this area and seeking parking spaces on Somerville Avenue rather than using the shared driveway and shared parking spaces.

The Parking and Trip Generation Study also conducted a parking inventory of the nearby public parking supply. This inventory determined that there were sufficient available on-street parking spaces to accommodate the five off-street parking spaces not being provided as required by the SZO. The parking inventory supports this assumption and Traffic and Parking does not object to its overall findings.

As stated above, the fourteen off-street and three shared parking spaces, provided for these combined projects, appears to be sufficient. However there will be a minor impact relative to the available parking supply as motorists seek out on-street parking spaces. This activity will have an impact on the surrounding public transportation network. As a result, there will be a minor increase in traffic congestion and delay due to not fully providing the required off-street parking spaces. There will also be a slight decrease in pedestrian and bicycle safety due to this factor. To alleviate this condition, traffic mitigation is required.

Regarding the traffic mitigation, Traffic and Parking, from a historical perspective, believes that the public parking spaces along the sidewalk in the vicinity of 587-593 and 595 Somerville Avenue would be in continuous use by patrons of the commercial/retail businesses. Parking space turnover is thus paramount so that public parking spaces will be available. In order to provide for this required turnover, the Applicants should purchase and deliver to the City 8 total IPS Group single space parking meters or their equivalent as determined by Traffic and Parking. Five meters should be supplied by the applicant for 587-593 Somerville Avenue and 3 shall be supplied by the applicant for 595 Somerville Avenue. These parking meters are/will be state of the art and are programmable for both rates and time duration and will accept credit cards, cash or pay by telephone. These parking meters will provide for frequent parking space turnover.

Provided the above traffic mitigation as discussed above is incorporated as a condition, Traffic and Parking does not object to this application.

*Wiring Inspection:* The Wiring Inspector explained that a transformer should be shared between both development parcels, dependant upon NSTAR approval, and that this should be located at the rear of the property near the trash area.

*Lights and Lines:* Has been contacted but has not yet submitted comments.

*Engineering:* Has been in contact with IES Inc. who is preparing a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. Staff has also been in contact with IES and been informed that petroleum release is likely to be the only contaminate found. A full report will be submitted once the work has been completed.

*Ward Alderman:* Has been contacted but has not yet submitted comments.

*Historic Preservation Commission:*

*7/9/2013 – from Preferably Preserved Public Meeting Minutes:*

While there are currently three structures located on this parcel, only the single-family dwelling with the above referenced address was determined by the HPC to be “Preferably Preserved.” The Architect for the

project presented a site plan that illustrated a new three-story mixed-use building located along Somerville Avenue with the Preferably Preserved structure located to the right. Parking would be located behind both structures, accessible by an easement from Spring Street. The Architect explained that the project proposes seven residential units with a first floor commercial component and parking in the rear. The discussion first addressed the necessary number of units to make the project viable.

The Architect then explained that by focusing on retaining the main massing of the dwelling and eliminating the later enclosed porch/storefront addition, more options would open up to retain the Preferably Preserved structure. Eliminating this component would allow the new building to have an additional 2,000 gross square feet (approximate). Staff explained that this was a later addition of a different period than the main massing component and the Commissioner agreed that if eliminating this later addition to allow more square footage for the development was enough incentive for the developer to retain the building than this would be supported.

The discussion then addressed if there were other options which would retain the building as a whole, such as adding a fourth story, reducing the on-site parking, or altering the proposed locations of the Preferably Preserved and new buildings. The Architect explained that four stories would be difficult due to zoning regulations which articulate height limitations for lots adjacent to residential districts within a specific parameter. Reducing the number of on-site parking stalls could be done, but support for this reduction would be related to the actual existing and proposed parking requirement. Staff did not have all the information necessary to calculate this requirement at the time, but explained that this information would be obtained to determine if reducing the parking would be an option the City could support as the project moves forward through the discretionary permit process. Altering the proposed locations of the buildings, in that the new building would be located on the right side of the lot while the Preferably Preserved building would be located on the left side of the lot, seemed to present a feasible option. While the developer would likely still pursue eliminating the later addition of the historic structure, by switching the locations of these structures, the new building would be able to gain additional square footage. The Architect explained that these options would be presented to the developer to gain an understanding for how to proceed.

8/1/2013 – from Preferably Preserved Public Meeting Minutes:

The Architect presented an updated site plan from 7/9/2013, which illustrated a new four-story mixed-use building located along Somerville Avenue. Due to the residential district at the rear, a small portion at the rear of the new building would be reduced to three stories in height. The historic structure would be located to the right; however, the later enclosed porch/storefront addition would be eliminated and the relocated structure would have a five foot front yard setback and a three foot right side yard setback. Parking would be located at the rear of the parcel, accessible by an easement from Spring Street. The Architect also explained that the project proposes to retain an existing tree that is currently located in front of the historic dwelling.

The discussion then turned to details of the site such as signage for the historic structure, which could potentially be incorporated into a fence at the sidewalk and located between two granite piers. A wooden fence would be most appropriate for the time period; however, there is an existing iron fence located on the site. Historically appropriate windows were also discussed as the dwelling currently has inappropriate replacement windows. While the photograph in the Form B survey illustrates six-over-one glass panes, the Commissioners agreed that restoring these windows to six-over-six would be more appropriate and requested that this become part of the resulting Memorandum of Agreement. The Architect requested that direction with regard to a color palette would be helpful. The Commissioners explained that they do not have jurisdiction over color with regard to local historic districts; however, they would be happy to provide advice with regard to what would be most appropriate. Staff suggested that while a new foundation would be necessary for the relocated structure, the Commission may prefer for the new foundation to have a brick veneer to illustrate the original material above grade.

*Design Review Committee:*

9/26/2013 - DRC recommendations on the design for 587-593 Somerville Avenue include:

- The height of the building is accentuated because the Mansard is in the middle and the squared off elements are on the ends;
- The symmetry of the building makes it feel more prominent than it should be when compared with the buildings on either side;
- The accessibility of the units should be considered since an elevator is not shown;
- The materials of the Mansard will be important and the DRC would like to see a sample; and
- As the historic structure will be relocated, the DRC requested that the structure be raised two-three feet so that the original proportions of the high brick foundation are maintained. The Applicant noted that the accessible unit for the development would be located within the residential structure and the DRC noted that the accessible requirement will need to be accommodated while still preserving the original foundation proportions.

The Committee discussed the challenges and realities of tucked in parking in the back of the building.

10/24/2013 - The DRC recommendations on the design for 587-593 Somerville Avenue include:

- The cornice at the top of the mansard is too large and needs to be scaled appropriately.
- The rooftop equipment needs to be set back and screened to protect abutters, especially because of the change of grade, to mitigate equipment noise. Site lines from the far side of Somerville Ave. should be reviewed for the visibility of the screening and equipment. These elements should be pushed back from the street as far as possible to conceal their appearance from Somerville Ave.

The Applicant will incorporate the suggestions and proceed to the Zoning Board of Appeals.



*595 & 587-593 Somerville Avenue Elevation*

## **II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §7.11.1.c, §9.13.b, §9.13.c, & §9.13.e):**

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."

Under SZO §7.11.1.c, a Special Permit required is in a Business A district to construct 4-6 housing units. A Variance is required under SZO §9.5.1.a for parking relief. A Special Permit is required to share a

driveway under SZO §9.13.c, to share parking under SZO §9.13.e and, as the three shared spaces will also be compact parking stalls, a Special Permit is required to alter parking design standards under SZO §9.13.b. Due to the height limit for structures abutting residential districts, the proposed structure cannot extend beyond 40 feet in height within thirty feet of the residential district at the rear and the site; therefore the rear portion of the fourth floor provides units 5 and 6 with a sizable deck.

In considering a Special Permit under §9.13 of the SZO the Applicant must be able to demonstrate that granting the requested special permit would not cause detriment to the surrounding neighborhood through any of the criteria as set forth under SZO §9.13, which are as follows:

- 1) increase in traffic volumes;
- 2) increased traffic congestion or queuing of vehicles;
- 3) change in the type(s) of traffic;
- 4) change in traffic patterns and access to the site;
- 5) reduction in on-street parking; and
- 6) unsafe conflict of motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

A common driveway, shared parking, and compact parking stalls would not cause detriment to the surrounding neighborhood as each residential unit would be provided with one dedicated parking space, additional on-street parking will be provided by closing curb cuts along Somerville Avenue, and the curb cut along Spring Street would be reduced to align with the rear access drive. The proposed use would likely reduce the overall amount of traffic as the rear access provides clear entry and exit lanes. While the type of traffic would likely change, due to eliminating the automotive use and increasing the residential and retail components, the traffic would be more appropriate to the residential structures at the rear of the development. Traffic patterns will also change as well as access to the rear of the site would be only from Spring Street; however, pedestrians would have better access, vehicle conflict would be reduced, and overall access to the site would be more efficient. The proposal would increase on-street parking between two and five additional spaces, which would further reduce any existing conflict for vehicles or pedestrians along Somerville Avenue.

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 "promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to lessen congestion in the streets; 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 preserve the historical and architectural resources of the City; 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 Business A district, §6.1.6, which is, "To establish and preserve business areas bordering main thoroughfares that are attractive to a wide range of uses, including retail business and services, housing, government, professional and medical offices, and places of amusement. While it is anticipated that most users will arrive by motor vehicle, it is intended that the area should be safe for and conducive to pedestrian traffic."

The proposal is to construct a mixed-use development that will implement the SomerVision

Comprehensive Plan, which refers to new zoning that is appropriate to the pedestrian and transit-oriented nature of this proposal. This project will create housing near transit, a streetwall which will enhance the pedestrian quality of this corridor, and incorporate a mix of uses to increase the neighborhood amenities that will activate the street and help establish a sense of place. Together, these will enhance the neighborhood west of Union Square and facilitate interest in this corridor.

In considering a special permit under §9.13 of the SZO the SPGA may grant such a special permit only when consistent with the purposes set forth in Section 9.1.

The subject proposal promotes traffic safety through on-site parking, clear entry and exit lanes, additional on-street parking, and less pedestrian conflict. As the proposed use is more appropriate to the site, the carrying capacity of Somerville Avenue and Spring Street would become more efficient while the additional on-street parking would increase and be available to the larger community. Eliminating several curb cuts would also reduce pedestrian hazards. The proposed use, as well as shared access, protects adjoining lots and is more considerate to the residential structures at the rear of the parcel. The proposal dedicates a number of new bike parking spaces to each residential unit as well as locates three new bike racks along Somerville Avenue.

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 parcel is located in a Business A district and abuts residential properties to the rear, a mixed use building to the east, and a proposed new development to the west, 595 Somerville Avenue, which proposes to share a site plan with the subject project. The subject parcel is located near Wilson Square, at the corner of Somerville Avenue and Spring Street. Somerville Avenue is comprised of a mix of uses that includes other auto body repair shops, restaurants, office and retail while the residential neighborhood north of Somerville Avenue is comprised of single, two-, three- and multi-family dwellings.

The use, site plan and building design will not be detrimental to the Somerville Avenue corridor nor the adjacent residential neighborhood and have been devised to be compatible with the built and unbuilt surrounding area. The proposed six-unit residential use with two ground floor retail spaces is more appropriate for this commercial corridor and adjacent residential neighborhood than the existing auto oriented use as the proposed structure is located at the sidewalk, incorporates ground floor retail, is pedestrian friendly and activates this area Somerville Avenue near the intersection of Spring Street. The site plan, as combined with the adjacent proposed development at 595 Somerville Avenue, provides for a shared access drive, parking, and a enclosed trash area while simultaneously closing curb cuts to add on-street parking, three new public bike racks, and four new street trees. The building design proposes hardy materials and a contextual building design that is compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood, continues the Somerville Avenue streetwall, develops the character of the streetscape, and enhances the pedestrian quality of the corridor. In addition, the site plan and proposed structure allows for the rehabilitation and reuse of a Preferably Preserved historic structure.

A shadow study illustrates that during the summer solstice, the proposed development will cast a shadow along Somerville Avenue in the morning and cast shadows within the rear parking lot in the evening. The fall/spring equinox will cast shadows on Spring Street and Somerville Avenue in the morning, and by evening, this shadow will extend toward the buildings facing Pitman Street. Due to the depth of the building located behind #587-593, which faces Pitman Street, the study illustrates that this equinox will minimally impact the rear portion of this structure. The winter solstice casts shadows across Spring Street into the parking lot behind Somerville Avenue in the morning. This shadow extends toward Pitman Street in the evening. Again, due to the depth of the building located behind #587-593, which faces Pitman Street, the study illustrates that the winter solstice evening shadow will minimally impact the rear portion of this structure.

Lighting has been added to the ground floor alley entrance for Commercial Unit 1, near the street in the alley on the opposite side, and at the ground floor residential entry for Unit 2, near the parking.

5. Adverse environmental impacts: The proposed use, structure or activity will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from: 1) excessive noise, level of illumination, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration which are higher than levels now experienced from uses permitted in the surrounding area; 2) emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances; 3) pollution of water ways or ground water; or 4) transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception.

The proposal would not result in an adverse impact on the surrounding area as the proposed use is more appropriate than the automotive use as well as expands upon the existing retail and residential uses, the site plan is efficient and considerate of the surrounding residential parcels while also retaining a historic structure. The building design proposes quality materials and a contextual building design that is compatible with Somerville Avenue and the adjacent residential neighborhood.

6. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation: The circulation patterns for motor vehicles and pedestrians which would result from the use or structure will not result in conditions that create traffic congestion or the potential for traffic accidents on the site or in the surrounding area.

The subject proposal promotes traffic safety through on-site parking, clear entry and exit lanes, additional on-street parking, and less pedestrian conflict. As the proposed use is more appropriate to the site, the carrying capacity of Somerville Avenue and Spring Street would become more efficient while the additional on-street parking would increase and be available to the larger community. Eliminating several curb cuts would also reduce pedestrian hazards. The proposed use, as well as shared access, protects adjoining lots and is more considerate to the residential structures at the rear of the parcel. The proposal dedicates a number of new bike parking spaces to each residential unit as well as locates three new bike racks along Somerville Avenue.

The Traffic and Parking Assessment concludes that the combined development proposal (587-593 & 595 Somerville Avenue) would have an insignificant impact on the permit parking supply for the surrounding area and that sharing a driveway and on-site compact parking spaces would not exceed capacity of the site nor create issues regarding access to the site. The proposal is expected to generate traffic similar to, if not less than, existing traffic conditions. Capacity issues are not anticipated with regard to a shared driveway, which are estimated at a maximum of 14 peak hour trips for both the combined development proposal; however, this does not account for proximity to transit nor to future transit stations, which would further reduce this estimate. Shared parking is expected to be sufficient with regard to the residential and retail demand as the timing for these peak uses is offset. In a predominantly residential setting, with regard to compact parking spaces, the use of smaller parking spaces is reasonable due to the small turnover rate, as the 9'x18' dimensions specified in the SZO are for a broad range of parking facilities. As compact cars have increased in popularity and the average size of most vehicle classifications is less than 16' in length and 6' in width, reduced size parking stalls would be appropriate and viable for this combined development proposal. The closure of several curb cuts will provide several new on-street parking stalls, to be available for use by the larger public. Census data indicates that ¼ of Somerville residents do not own a vehicle and more than half travel to work by alternate transportation modes. The site is served by several bus routes and both the Porter and Harvard Square stations are less than one mile away, providing easy access to the larger metropolitan area. Upon completion of the Green Line Extension, the Union Square Station would be located within one mile as well. The parking study also indicates a substantial amount of underutilized parking permit spaces are located within 500 feet of the development, which does not include the Conway Park lot, handicap parking, or loading zones. The shared driveway and parking,

additional on-street parking, proximity to public transit, mode choice precedent, existing parking conditions, and trip generation estimates illustrate that the combined development proposal is appropriate for the site and will not be detrimental to this commercial corridor or the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Staff has discussed the current two-way to one-way circulation concern of Spring Street with Traffic and Parking. Due to the recent replacement of older signs with new signage (two Do Not Enter signs and two One Way signs), Traffic and Parking do not feel that the addition of 6-8 vehicles entering and exiting into the rear of the proposed parcels will significantly impact the current traffic pattern. Additionally, Pitman Street funnels traffic back toward Somerville Avenue and is not a shortcut through the neighborhood, so as this route is not a shortcut, the one-way offenders are likely knowledgeable neighborhood residents.

### **III. FINDINGS FOR VARIANCE (SZO §9.5.1.a):**

1. Explain any special circumstances affecting the land or structure (related to soil conditions, shape or topography) that are unusual and do not affect other properties and any hardship that results from these special circumstances.

Special circumstances affecting this site that are unusual and do not affect other properties are that there is a historic structure located at the rear of the property. In rehabilitating and reusing this structure, the on-site parking is necessarily reduced to allow for this structure to remain existent. The Applicant has worked with Staff, the Historic Commission, and the adjacent developer to design a site plan that provides an efficient design of one space to each residential unit as well as three shared spaces between the retail uses of both sites. The addition of more parking would eliminate the ability to retain the existing historic structure, reduce the landscape, and be detrimental to the urban quality of this project.

2. Explain if and how the Variance is the minimum approval necessary to grant reasonable relief to the owner and results in a reasonable use of the land or structure.

Due to Preferably Preserved status of the historic structure, the Applicant was able to devise a new building design and site plan that reduces the number of on-site parking stalls, while still maintaining enough parking so as to accommodate the needs of the project. Due to accessible public transportation as well as proximity to transit stations, the request for five spaces of parking relief is all that is necessary for a reasonable use of this parcel.

3. Explain if and how the granting of the Variance will be in harmony with the SZO and will not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

Granting the Variance would be in harmony with the SZO and not injurious to the surrounding neighborhood, nor otherwise harmful to the public welfare. This project is in accordance with the SZO as well as the SomverVision Comprehensive Plan as this project provides appropriate uses for this portion of Somerville Avenue, creates a walkable and pedestrian friendly streetscape and corridor, and maintains a historically significant resource that contributes to the diversity and affordability of the existing historic building stock.

### **IV. RECOMMENDATION**

**Special Permit under §7.11.1.c, §9.13.c, §9.13.d, & §9.13.e and Variance under SZO §9.5.1.a:**

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 and VARIANCE**.

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 Special Permits to establish six dwelling units in a new mixed-use building with two ground floor retail components, to share a driveway, to alter parking design standards, and to share parking as well as a Variance for parking relief. 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>(November 7, 2013)</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(October 18, 2013) <del>December 5, 2013</del> January 29, 2014</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (A-000, Z-001, A-303, A-102, A-103, A-100, A-101, A-110, A-300 &amp; A-301 )</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(January 14, 2014) <del>December 5, 2013</del> January 29, 2014</td> <td>Landscape Plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(November 20, 2013) <del>December 5, 2013</del> January 29, 2014</td> <td>Site Plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(May 1, 2013) <del>December 5, 2013</del> January 29, 2014</td> <td>Civil Site Plan (C-1)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(October 18, 2013) January 29, 2014</td> <td>Shadow Study</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(November 7, 2013)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	(October 18, 2013) <del>December 5, 2013</del> January 29, 2014	Plans submitted to OSPCD (A-000, Z-001, A-303, A-102, A-103, A-100, A-101, A-110, A-300 & A-301 )	(January 14, 2014) <del>December 5, 2013</del> January 29, 2014	Landscape Plan	(November 20, 2013) <del>December 5, 2013</del> January 29, 2014	Site Plan	(May 1, 2013) <del>December 5, 2013</del> January 29, 2014	Civil Site Plan (C-1)	(October 18, 2013) January 29, 2014	Shadow Study
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Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.																		
<b>Pre-Construction</b>																		
2	The Applicant will be required to demonstrate that the updated project plans meet the current City of Somerville stormwater policy. Utility, grading, and drainage plans must be submitted to the Engineering Department for review and approval.	BP	Eng.															
<b>Construction Impacts</b>																		

3	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.	
4	The Applicant shall at his 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	
5	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	
<b>Design</b>				
6	Applicant shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors (to the Design Review Committee for review and comment and) to Planning Staff for review and approval prior to construction.	BP	Plng.	
7	An exterior light and electrical receptacle is required for the first (or all) level of the porch and an electrical receptacle is required for the second level (if there is no access to the ground).	Final sign off	Wiring Inspector	
<b>Site</b>				
8	Landscaping should be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards;	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
9	The electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment shall be placed underground from the source or connection. The utilities plan shall be supplied to the Wiring Inspector before installation.	Installation of Utilities	Wiring Inspector	
10	New sidewalks in front of the development will be installed by the Applicant in accordance with the specifications of the Highway Superintendent. Specifically, all driveway aprons shall be concrete.	CO	Plng.	
11	Applicant will screen the dumpster to block any views of the dumpster itself.	CO	Plng.	
12	Applicant will supply 5 private bicycle parking spaces within garage and 2 public U-shaped bicycle racks along Somerville Avenue.	CO	Plng.	
13	Snow plowed from the development shall be limited to on-site storage.	Cont.	ISD.	
14	Pending NSTAR approval, a transformer shall be located at the rear of the site; shall not impact adjacent residential structures, the historic building, or landscape area; shall be fully screened; and be shared between both developments.	Electrical permits & CO	Plng./ISD	
<b>Traffic &amp; Parking</b>				
15	The Applicant shall submit five IPS meters to Traffic and Parking.	CO	Traffic/Pkg.	

16	Parking spaces dedicated to specific units shall be clearly marked. Parking spaces for the retail component shall be clearly marked for the shared retail establishments.	CO	Plng.	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>				
17	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>				
18	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
19	Any transformers should be located as not to impact the adjacent historic building (589 Somerville Ave.) or landscape area, and shall be fully screened.	Electrical permits & CO		
20	Notification must be made, within the time period required under applicable regulations, to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) if there is any release of oil, hazardous materials, or regulated hazardous substances at the site. The City's OSE office, Fire Department and the Board of Health shall also be notified.	CO	OSE/FP/BOH	
21	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>				
22	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.	
23	The Applicant shall purchase and plant two street trees to be located along Somerville Avenue in front of the development.	CO	Plng.	
24	The alley shall be appropriately lit near the ground floor residential and commercial entries, and at the front of the alley near the street.	CO	Plng.	

587-593 Somerville Avenue

