



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2014-50

Date: June 19, 2014

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 72 Cedar Street

Applicant Name: Derick Snare

Applicant Address: 158 Central Street, Somerville, MA 02145

Property Owner Name: Kathryn Craig and Wayne Widdison

Property Owner Address: 7 Holden Road, #2, Belmont, MA 02478

Alderman: Mark Niedergang

Legal Notice: Applicant Derick Snare and Owners Kathryn Craig and Wayne Widdison seek a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming two-family dwelling by adding a first floor addition and a third floor shed dormer. RB zone. Ward 5.

Dates of Public Hearing: Wednesday, July 16, 2014

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject parcel is a 2,880 square foot residential lot near Porter Square. The structure is a 2½ story, two-family dwelling, with 5 parking spaces on-site.
2. Proposal: The Applicant proposes to build an 84 square foot addition to first floor in the rear of the property and add a 20-foot long third floor shed dormer. The first-floor addition would have two south-facing windows and be topped with a deck with second-floor access. The dormer would contain a new bathroom and additional closet space, and would necessitate new stair access to the third floor. It would have one window from the bathroom, and two glass-block windows from each of the closets. New



windows would also be added in several locations on the side and rear of the structure, as well as second-floor French doors to access the deck.



72 Cedar Street

3. Green Building Practices: A number of new insulated glass windows and improved insulation in scope of work areas.

4. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Engineering: Has been contacted and explained that the Engineering Office will need a letter from the design engineer summarizing the work and indicating any potential impacts from the project on stormwater runoff. If no impacts are intended it needs to be stated in the letter and acknowledged that any impacts to abutters or adjacent properties after the fact will be remedied by the owner at no cost to the City. This letter, to be kept on file in this office, should be enough to satisfy the engineering requirements.

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

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."*

Under SZO §4.4.1, an existing single or two-family dwelling may alter a nonconformity through the granting of a Special Permit. Therefore, due to the existing nonconforming right (north) side yard setback

(about 1.6-4.6 feet versus 8 feet minimum allowed), low pervious and landscaped area (12% each, versus 25% minimum landscaped area and 35% minimum pervious area allowed), short street frontage (36 feet versus 50 feet allowed) and the small lot size (2,880 square feet versus 7,500 square feet allowed), the proposed change, to enlarge the existing rear addition to create a dining area, requires a Special Permit.

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 changes proposed will minimally increase the habitable space and not affect the streetscape, or negatively impact the adjacent property. The proposed enlarged addition will look into the side yard and would remain as one story. Other than existing nonconforming characteristics of the property, the proposal would comply with ground coverage (40%) and floor area ratio (0.68), and would not further exacerbate nonconforming aspects of the structure.

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 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; and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City.

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."

The proposal to add habitable space through a small single-story rear addition and third floor shed dormer will enable the occupants to add a dining room and an additional bathroom. The addition is contextual to the existing structure and to surrounding properties. This proposal would not negatively impact the streetscape, nor be detrimental to adjacent properties.

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 Residence B zoning district near Porter Square. The surrounding Residential B and adjacent Residential A zoning districts are composed of one, two and three-family dwellings and a few larger apartment buildings along Cedar Street. The surrounding dwellings along Cedar Street are predominantly similar in that they are gable-end, 2½ story structures.

The additional living space will have minimal to no impact on abutters (the proposed dormer would be positioned such that the glazed window will be offset from the abutter's window, and the glass block windows will not allow views into the abutter's bathroom), will not affect the streetscape, and minimally enlarges the existing footprint. The first-floor addition will overlook the side and back yard, and the shed dormer will mimic the form of the structure next door, which applied for and received a Special Permit for a dormer addition in 2009, also with one regular widow and a glass block window. Proposed

alterations to the building will enhance the interior plan through the addition of a dining area and bathroom, and is contextual with the existing structure.

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

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.*

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 first floor addition and third floor shed dormer. 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>6/12/14</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(6/18/14)</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (Existing: Floor plans, elevations, sections; Proposed: Floor plans, elevations, sections.)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(7/8/14)</td> <td>Revised plans submitted to OSPCD (Existing: Floor plans, elevations, sections; Proposed: Floor plans, elevations, sections.)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	6/12/14	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	(6/18/14)	Plans submitted to OSPCD (Existing: Floor plans, elevations, sections; Proposed: Floor plans, elevations, sections.)	(7/8/14)	Revised plans submitted to OSPCD (Existing: Floor plans, elevations, sections; Proposed: Floor plans, elevations, sections.)
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Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
Pre-Construction												
2	Has been contacted and explained that the Engineering Office will need a letter from the design engineer summarizing the work and indicating any potential impacts from the project on stormwater runoff. If no impacts are intended it needs to be stated in the letter and acknowledged that any impacts to abutters or adjacent properties after the fact will be remedied by the owner at no cost to the City. This letter, to be kept on file in this office, should be enough to satisfy the engineering requirements.	BP	Eng.									
Construction Impacts												
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									
Design												
4	The new siding, trim, and other exterior wall details shall match or be complimentary to the existing in size, color and detail.	CO	Plng.									
5	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									
Public Safety												
6	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP									

Final Sign-Off				
7	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.	

