



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: PB 2011-20

Date: Dec 22, 2011

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 112 Broadway

Applicant Name: Augusto DaCunha - Olá Gifts Café, LLC

Applicant Address: 112 Broadway, Somerville MA 02143

Property Owner Name: same

Agent Name: none

Alderman: William Roche

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner, Augusto DaCunha, Ola Gifts Café LLC, seeks a Special Permit under SZO §6.1.22.D.5 to install signage for an existing cafe.

Zoning District/Ward: CCD55 / 1

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit under SZO §6.1.22.D.5

Date of Application: Dec 6, 2011

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals Jan 5, 2012

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a building in the middle of a block on Broadway in East Somerville. There is a small café on the street level with apartments above. There are two employees in the café and it is open from 7am to 4pm.

2. Proposal: The proposal is to install an awning across the storefront (13 feet) that will project out 4 feet over the sidewalk. The applicants have already received approval from the Board of Alderman to install an awning over the sidewalk. The awning will be 8 feet above the ground. It will be made of orange and red Sunbrella canvas fabric with a galvanized steel frame. The name of the café will be located on the front of the awning and a few items that they sell will be spelled out on the side of the awning which will be visible to pedestrians.



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3. Nature of Application: The property is located in the Corridor Commercial District 55 (CCD 55). Alterations to an existing or approved façade other than a one-for-one replacement require a special permit under SZO §6.1.22.D.5 with findings giving consideration to the Design Guidelines of SZO §6.1.22.H.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The surrounding area is comprised of a mix of uses along Broadway. The adjacent buildings are one-story commercial buildings with signs affixed parallel to the building and overhead lighting.

5. Impacts of Proposal: The proposal will improve the visibility of the café, which currently does not have a sign. The appearance of the awning will not be detrimental to the block. There are a variety of signs on the block and therefore having an awning on this storefront will not disrupt an established sign pattern. This storefront is the only one at the base of the building and the adjacent businesses do not have awning so having sides to the awning to inform pedestrians of the business is not disadvantageous. The Sunbrella fabric proposed is a high quality material and the wording on the side of the awning will not be excessive.

6. Green Building Practices: The business serves organic coffee. Also, the awning will keep the café cooler in the summer reducing the need for air conditioning.

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



112 Broadway storefront (top), adjacent properties (bottom)



II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §5.1 & §6.1.22.D.5):

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 sign design complies with the design guideline for signage in the CCD (§6.1.22.H).

1. The proposed awning will add some interest to the street wall along this area. The storefront currently does not have signage and the store blends into the commercial strip. The awning will add definition and color to this building among the storefronts. Painting the brick to outline the store is not recommended; however, it has already been done and did not require approvals.
2. The massing and height of the three story structure will not change.
3. The height of the building is three stories and it is located between two one-story buildings. The project design is not proposing to alter the height of the existing structure and a transition to residential or historically designated properties is not applicable.
4. The Applicant will be maintaining the existing width of the building, which is approximately 13 feet, along with maintaining a separate entrance for the café along the sidewalk. The storefront currently meets the guideline which states that there should be 75% transparent material on the ground floor. The existing windows will not be blocked by interior storage, displays, or signage. The guideline limits windows from being blocked by more than 30%.
5. The material of the awning will be a Sunbrella canvas fabric and galvanized steel, which are quality materials as encouraged in the guidelines for the Corridor Commercial District.
6. The side and rear facades of the building are not proposed to change.
7. The proposed signage design respects the building's context by placing the awning above the windows within the signage band that typically holds awnings for similar buildings. The awning will not conceal the architectural details of the building. The sign is legible and does not have excessive wording. The awning will be pedestrian oriented with the lettering on the bottom of the awning, in locations most visible to pedestrians. The awning will also provide shade and shelter to pedestrians. The color of the sign is bright but in the context of this block, it should not clash or compete with other bright colors.
8. This signage proposal will improve visibility for a café; which is an encouraged ground floor use in this district.
- 9./10. Artist Live/Work Spaces and residential unit size do not relate to this proposal.
11. The Applicant is not proposing to change the width of the sidewalk as part of this proposal as the building location and depth of the façade from the sidewalk is not changing.

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 the purpose of the CCD by promoting an active mix of uses with structures that complement the historic structures in the area.

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 sign would be compatible with the building's design as explained in finding two.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under §5.1 & §6.1.22.D.5

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 installation of new awning/signage on the building. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant: | BP/CO | ISD/PIng. | | | | | | | |
| | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date (Stamp Date)</th> <th>Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dec 6, 2011</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(Dec 23, 2011)</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (elevation/rendering)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | Date (Stamp Date) | Submission | Dec 6, 2011 | Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office | (Dec 23, 2011) | Plans submitted to OSPCD (elevation/rendering) |
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| Any changes to the approved elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 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 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 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 | PIng. | | | | | | | |

