



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2014-104

Date: October 30, 2014

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 77 Munroe Street

Applicant & Owner Name: Zelia Silva & Lauriene Dasilva

Applicant & Owner Address: 77 Munroe Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Alderman: Robert McWatters

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owners, Zelia Silva & Lauriene Dasilva, seek a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming three-family structure to create a second-story front porch. RA zone. Ward 3.

Dates of Public Hearing: **Zoning Board of Appeals - Wednesday, November 5, 2014**

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject parcel is 3,979 square foot parcel with a 2 ½ story gable-end dwelling that houses three units. There is a concrete block garage located in the rear corner along the right side of the lot. Located across from Prospect Hill Park on Spring Hill, the surrounding neighborhood is predominantly residential with single, two- and three-family dwellings.

2. Proposal: The Applicant proposes to add a second story porch above the existing enclosed first-story porch. The railings would be composed of metal and match in style to the existing railings at the front of the property while the decking would be a composite material. The porch would be the same width and depth as the first story enclosed porch, approximately 20' x 8' in depth. A door will be located in the center of the façade to access this exterior space.



3. Green Building Practices: The Applicant is using decking material that is composed from recycled materials.

4. Comments:

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

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, nonconforming structures other than one- and two-family dwellings may be enlarged, extended, renovated or altered only by special permit; therefore, as an existing three-family dwelling, the addition of a second-story front porch requires Special Permit approval.

In considering a special permit under §4.4 of the SZO, Staff do not find that the alterations proposed would be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. A second-story porch is common within Somerville neighborhood's and serves to keep eyes on the street as well as provide additional outdoor space for residents. As proposed, this porch will retain the character of the building and enhance the streetscape.

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 secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to conserve the value of land and buildings; and to preserve the historical and architectural resources of the City.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the Residential A district, §6.14.1, 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."

The dwelling is currently a three-family home. This proposal is in keeping with the residential use and is compatible in character with the neighborhood.

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."*

Located across from Prospect Hill Park on Spring Hill, the surrounding neighborhood is predominantly residential with single, two- and three-family dwellings.

A second-story porch is common within Somerville neighborhood's and serves to keep eyes on the street as well as provide additional outdoor space for residents. As proposed, this porch will retain the character of the building and enhance the streetscape.

5. 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.*

<u>SomerVision Summary</u>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
<i>Dwelling Units:</i>	3	3

The proposal complies with the goals of the SomerVision Plan. The second story porch will serve to enhance the character of the City through the addition of an appropriate architectural feature, keep eyes on the street, and retain the existing character of the three-family dwelling and the streetscape.

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
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1	Approval is for a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming three-family structure to create a second-story front porch. 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>(October 2, 2014)</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June 2, 1998 (October 23, 2014)</td> <td>Plot plan submitted to OSPCD</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(October 23, 2014)</td> <td>Partial elevation and porch plan submitted to OSPCD</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(October 2, 2014)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	June 2, 1998 (October 23, 2014)	Plot plan submitted to OSPCD	(October 23, 2014)	Partial elevation and porch plan submitted to OSPCD
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Any changes to the approved elevation that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
Design												
2	The Applicant shall use a metal railing that is similar to and compatible with the first floor porch railings. The new door shall be centered on the second story of the façade.	BP	Plng.									
3	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												
4	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP									
Final Sign-Off												
5	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.									

