



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2012-34-R1-5/2014

Date: June 12, 2014

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 92-100 Properzi Way

Applicant Name: Safdie Architects

Applicant Address: 100 Properzi Way, Somerville, MA 02143

Property Owner Name: Moshe Safdie and Michal Ronnen Safdie

Property Owner Address: 100 Properzi Way, Somerville, MA 02143

Alderman: Maryann Heuston

Legal Notice: Applicant, Safdie Architects, and Owners, Moshe Safdie and Michal Ronnen Safdie, seek a revision to the Special Permit ZBA 2012-34 to substantially demolish the existing two-family historic structure and to reconstruct this structure in-kind. The original Special Permit was under SZO §4.4.1, to retain a portion of the existing structure and construct a two-story rear addition to add a third dwelling unit. 92 Properzi Way is located in the Residential B zone; 100 Properzi Way is located in the Neighborhood Business zone. Ward 2.

Zoning Approval Sought: Revision to Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1

Date of Application: May 29, 2014

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – **June 18, 2014**

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: 92 Properzi Way is a 7,591 square foot lot composed of a gable-end two-family dwelling. Located near the intersection of Properzi Way and Beacon Street, this structure has 1,694 square feet of habitable space. The adjacent building, 100 Properzi Way, is a two-story structure with the offices for Safdie Architects. This is a 21,807 square foot lot with 16,540 square feet of habitable space. The Applicant owns both 92 and 100 Properzi Way.

100 Properzi Way was granted zoning relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals in November of 2003 and Site Plan Approval was granted from the Planning Board to subdivide 154 square feet from 100 Properzi Way to 92 Properzi Way to make the lot at 92 Properzi conforming with the minimum lot size requirement of the RB district. December 2003, 100 Properzi Way was awarded a Special Permit to alter the nonconforming structure and a Special Permit to expand the nonconforming use, an office building, to construct a three-story addition on the existing building. January 2008, 100 Properzi Way was awarded another Special Permit to expand a nonconforming use to build a two-story front addition, extending 14 feet into the required front yard setback, and to construct a two-story rear addition with a basement and mezzanine. April 2008, 100 Properzi Way was awarded a revision to the Special Permit to alter portions of the exterior cladding, modify doors and windows near the front elevation, raise the height of the rear stairwell, and to add a roof deck.

ZBA 2012-34: August 2012, 92 & 100 Properzi Way was awarded relief for the original proposal, to which this is a revision. A Special Permit was granted to alter a nonconforming structure by constructing a two story rear addition at 92 Properzi Way, to add an additional dwelling unit. This project received a Variance for relief from the minimum side and rear yard setbacks as well as a Special Permit for relief from three additional off-street parking spaces. The project at this time sought to establish a three-family residence at 92 Properzi Way, which included retaining the existing structure, and to use a portion of the structure for activity accessory to the use at 100 Properzi Way.

2. Proposal: The previous proposal sought to repair and restore the existing gable-end two-family dwelling at 92 Properzi Way as part of larger alterations to the building. These alterations include removing the one-story rear addition, and the construction of a new two-story rear addition. Due to framing deficiencies, a collapsed foundation wall, and deteriorated materials, the Applicant has decided to pursue a reconstruction of the existing building. There is minimal original material that would remain and what could be salvaged would not be visible upon completion.

A full basement is still proposed below the proposed historic reconstruction and new portion of the structure to provide storage space for the adjacent Safdie Architects building. The use of the proposed project will remain as a residential use, housing a 397 square foot studio apartment in the historic reconstruction and two 1,200 square foot, one-bedroom residences on each of the two floors in the rear addition.



92 Properzi Way – left 2012, right present day

Building materials for the historic reconstruction are proposed and conditioned as follows:

- Rift cut smooth cedar clapboards for exterior sheathing (4 ¾" exposure horizontal , vertical to be determined)
- CertainTeed Landmark asphalt shingles (or equal to)
- Double-hung wood windows to be 6 over 6 (may be aluminum clad) with simulated true divided light grilles
- Wood doors (may be aluminum clad)
- Wood trim will be reconstructed in the existing dimensions (windows & doors - 4.5")
- Corner boards to be 8" in width
- Wood sill to be 9.5" in height

3. Green Building Practices: Consistent with the previous approval, the Applicant has indicated that lighting sensor controls, passive day lighting, and flow efficiency fixtures will be used. Natural shade from existing mature trees to remain. Utilizing connections to local infrastructure (sewer, water, electricity) already present.

4. Comments:

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

Wiring Inspection: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

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

Engineering: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Ward Alderman: Alderman Heuston 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."*

The existing historic structure is currently nonconforming with respect to the left side yard setback as the building is one foot from the left side property line. Alterations to nonconforming single- and two-family dwellings that affect the nonconforming aspect of the structure require a Special Permit under Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) §4.4.1 before the alterations can occur. Three-family structures in a residential district requires a Special Permit for any exterior alteration that is not considered cosmetic.

In considering a Special Permit under §4.4.1 of the SZO, Staff finds that the modifications to the existing structure would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. Due to the framing deficiencies, collapsed foundation wall and deteriorated materials, retaining any of this structure make reconstruction necessary. Therefore, while it is unfortunate to lose a historic structure, the historic reconstruction is able to maintain 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 provide for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; to protect health; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; 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 RB district (6.1.2. RB - Residence Districts), 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 is also consistent with the purpose of the NB district (6.1.4. NB - Neighborhood Business Districts), which is, "To establish and preserve areas for small-scale retail stores, services and offices which are located in close proximity to residential areas and which do not have undesirable impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods."

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 project site spans two zoning districts with 92 Properzi Way being located in an RB zone and 100 Properzi Way located in an NB zone. The surrounding neighborhood is predominantly residential consisting of a mixture of single-, two-, three-, and multi-family dwellings. For the most part, all of the structures in the area are between 2½ and 3 stories in height, but there are two larger multi-family structures at the intersection of Properzi Way and Beacon Street that are four and five stories in height. Across Beacon Street from Properzi Way is the City of Cambridge boundary.

While it is unfortunate to reconstruct this historic structure, due to framing deficiencies, a collapsed foundation wall, and deteriorated materials, a reconstruction would not be substantially different from what would be feasible with the existing materials. At this point, there is minimal original material that would remain and what could be salvaged would not be visible upon completion. The reconstructed building would also fit into the context of the neighborhood and not adversely affect the streetscape.

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.

No adverse environmental impacts are anticipated from this project. No new noise, glare, smoke, vibration, nor emissions of noxious materials nor pollution of water ways or ground water nor transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception are anticipated as part of the proposal.

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

The proposal will not adversely impact the existing affordable housing.

7. 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 proposal preserves and enhances the character of Somerville’s neighborhood as the historic reconstruction does not alter the intent of the original project, but maintains the streetscape and emulates what was original to the site.

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	<p>Approval is to seek a revision to the Special Permit ZBA 2012-34 to substantially demolish the existing two-family historic structure and to reconstruct this structure in-kind. The original Special Permit was under SZO §4.4.1, to retain a portion of the existing structure and construct a two-story rear addition to add a third dwelling unit. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="248 493 886 903"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="248 493 565 527">Date (Stamp Date)</th> <th data-bbox="565 493 886 527">Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="248 527 565 632">(May 29, 2014)</td> <td data-bbox="565 527 886 632">Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="248 632 565 737">May 31, 2014 (June 10, 2014)</td> <td data-bbox="565 632 886 737">Proposed Site Plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="248 737 565 903"><u>July 12, 2012</u> (July 18, 2012)</td> <td data-bbox="565 737 886 903">Approved Plan Set – ZBA 2012-34 (Floor Plans, Elevations, Sections, & Street Views)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Any changes to the approved plans or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.</p>	Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(May 29, 2014)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	May 31, 2014 (June 10, 2014)	Proposed Site Plan	<u>July 12, 2012</u> (July 18, 2012)	Approved Plan Set – ZBA 2012-34 (Floor Plans, Elevations, Sections, & Street Views)	BP/CO	ISD/PIng.	
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2	<p>The Applicant shall develop a demolition plan in consultation with the City of Somerville Inspectional Services Division. Full compliance with proper demolition procedures shall be required, including timely advance notification to abutters of demolition date and timing, good rodent control measures (i.e. rodent baiting), minimization of dust, noise, odor, and debris outfall, and sensitivity to existing landscaping on adjacent sites.</p>	Demolition Permitting	ISD									
3	<p>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.</p>	During Construction	T&P									
4	<p>The Applicant will be required to demonstrate that the project meets the current City of Somerville stormwater policy. Utility, grading, and drainage plans must be submitted to the Engineering Department for review and approval.</p>	BP	Eng.									
5	<p>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.</p>	Installation of Utilities	Wiring Inspector									
6	<p>The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.</p>	CO	FP									

7	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	
8	The Applicant shall purchase and deliver to the City four (4) Pedestrian Impact Recovery Systems.	CO	T&P	
9	Any transformers should be located as not to impact the landscaped area and shall be fully screened.	CO	Plng.	
10	The Owner shall remove the subterranean link at the basement level if the properties are ever sold to different owners.	Perpetual	ISD	
11	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.	Perpetual	ISD	
12	Landscaping should be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards.	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
13	If dumpsters, trash, or recycling bins are kept outside they shall be screened by fencing or vegetation that blocks any view of them.	Perpetual	Plng.	
14	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.	Perpetual	ISD	
15	No vehicles shall be permitted to park on the sidewalk in front of the buildings at both 92 and 100 Properzi Way.	Perpetual	T&P	
16	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.	
17	The Applicant or Owner shall install translucent glass in lieu of transparent glass at the north facing Level 1 and Level 2 bathrooms adjacent to the stairway at 92 Properzi Way.	CO	Plng.	
18	If the chain link fence between 88 and 92 Properzi Way proves to be an obstruction to the planting of the proposed closely space evergreens that will form a buffer between the two properties, the Applicant or Owner will remove the fence along the property line.	CO	Plng.	
19	The Applicant and Owner shall work with the neighbors to determine the species of the evergreen plantings along the property line discussed in Condition 18.	CO	Plng.	
20	The Applicant or Owner shall engage an acoustician to develop design strategies to minimize the noise generated by the proposed roof top mechanical unit(s).	CO	Plng.	

21	<p>Building materials for the historic reconstruction are conditioned as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rift cut smooth cedar clapboards for exterior sheathing (4 ¾" exposure horizontal , vertical to be determined) • CertainTeed Landmark asphalt shingles (or equal to) • Double-hung wood windows to be 6 over 6 (may be aluminum clad) with simulated true divided light grilles • Wood doors (may be aluminum clad) • Wood trim will be reconstructed in the existing dimensions (windows & doors - 4.5") • Corner boards to be 8" in width • Wood sill to be 9.5" in height <p>Any changes to the materials are subject to Staff approval.</p>	Final Sign Off	Png.	
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92-100 Properzi Way

