



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: PB 2016-79

Date: September 4th 20th, 2016

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 1060 Broadway

Applicant Name: PowderHouse Living, LLC
Applicant Address: 202 River Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
Owner Name: City of Somerville
Owner Address: 93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143
Agent Name: Steven Azar
Agent Address: 202 River Street, Cambridge, MA 02139
Alderman: Katjana Ballantine (Ward 7)

Legal Notice: Applicant, PowderHouse Living, LLC. and owner, City of Somerville, request a Design and Site Plan Approval under Section 5.4 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance per Section 6.7, Powderhouse School Redevelopment District, to subdivide the parcel into two parcels, and to renovate the existing Powderhouse Community School into 48 units of housing and approximately 15,000 square feet of non-residential space permitted under Section 6.7.4. Powderhouse School Redevelopment District (PRD) and Open Space, (OS) zones. Ward 7.

Dates of Public Hearing: August 18, September 12, and September 22nd, 2016

Items that no longer pertain have been struck through and new information has been highlighted

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The property is a two-story brick and concrete school building built in the 1970's and vacant since 2004. The property's lot area is 1.86 acres and the existing structure contains a building area of approximately 90,000 gross square feet. The property requires extensive remediation and structural improvements including a seismic retrofit and all systems are in general disrepair. The property is regulated under the Powderhouse School Redevelopment District (Section 6.7).



2. Proposal: The subject lot is proposed to be divided into two lots. Lot A will ~~be acquired from the PowderHouse Living, LLC and is 27,767 SF. Lot B will~~ be retained by the City of Somerville and is ~~27,767~~ 55,998 SF. This application refers to the development of Lot ~~AB~~ which is 55,998 SF and includes the existing building. (Lot ~~BA~~ will be a separate application for development as a park by the Applicant on behalf of the City of Somerville.)

For the Site Plan Approval, the building use (Lot ~~AB~~) shall change from a vacant school to 48 residential units and 15,000 square feet of commercial space. The residential program will be 12 age-in-place condominiums, 3 age-in-place rental apartments, 8 artist live/work/sell rental units, and 25 market rate rentals. These units will include 6 required inclusionary units and 2 voluntary. The Affordable Housing Implementation Plan is not finalized at this time.

A garage will be accessed from Broadway to provide the required 48 parking spaces and more than the 100 required bicycle parking spaces, along with 1 loading space for the commercial uses. The existing building's walls are being removed and the remaining structure will be the concrete columns, floor slabs, and beams. The floor slab will be cut open in some instances to allow for more light and ventilation. A new slab will be added to enclose the garage and provide an internal courtyard for the residential units.

3. Green Building Practices: The building will be designed to be able to achieve a minimum of a LEED Silver certifiable ranking. The building will include a photo voltaic array on the roof and include stormwater management infrastructure in the form of a rain garden, which is still being sized and designed.

4. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has no comment at this time

Traffic & Parking: Has no comment at this time

Wiring Inspection: Has no comment at this time

Lights and Lines: Has no comment at this time

Engineering: Has no comment at this time

Ward Alderman: Please see attached letter. "I am a strong supporter of this project . . . Their project reflects a strong community input with open space (ownership being retained by the city), re-using the existing building, condominiums for seniors, affordable housing, commercial space, artist lofts and maker space. It will be a welcomed addition to the neighborhoods."

II. FINDINGS FOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL (SZO §5.4.6):

The Planning Board shall approve a design and site plan upon making positive findings as indicated for the specific district where the design and site plan review process is authorized.

1. Information Supplied:

The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.4 of the SZO and to allow for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the requirements.

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."*

Nature of Application: Section 6.7 Powderhouse School Redevelopment District (PRD)

6.7.3 Development Review.

The project has received approval by the Design Review Committee. An Affordable Housing Implementation Plan has been approved by the Director of Housing.

6.7.4 Use Standards.

The Principal uses are permitted according to Table 6.7.4 and commercial space of 15,000 gross square feet surpasses the required 10,000 gross square feet fronting onto Broadway.

6.7.5 Dimensional Standards.

As this is a renovation of an existing building many of the dimensional standards are met with a lot area per dwelling unit of 1687 sq. ft. The amount of landscaped area and pervious area was verified by the Applicant with respect to the subdivision of the parcel into two lots and the drainage issues to the satisfaction of Parks and Engineering.

6.7.6 Inclusionary Housing.

The draft Affordable Housing Implementation Plan shows a minimum of sixteen percent (16%) of the total dwelling units to be affordable housing units.

6.7.7 Parking.

Forty-eight (48) automobile parking spaces are provided on-site in a garage, and the minimum of one hundred (100) bicycle parking spaces is surpassed. The dimensional requirements are also met and a loading dock for the commercial space is provided even though it is not required.

Currently there is not enough information on the submitted plans to determine if the appearance of any walkway (ie. scoring pattern or special paving) is proposed across any driveway or alley to indicate that, although a vehicle may cross, the area traversed by a vehicle remains part of the sidewalk.

6.7.8 Development Standards.

All storage, dumpsters, and mechanical equipment is located in the garage and, therefore, internal to the building.

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 maintaining the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; facilitating the adequate provision of parks and other public requirements; and protecting and promoting a housing stock that can accommodate the diverse household sizes and life stages of Somerville residents at all income levels.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district, which is, “To redevelop the former Powderhouse Community School as an inclusive and diverse mix of complimentary urban uses, and intergenerational housing options that is respectful of the surrounding 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."*

The building is existing and currently has a Brutalist 1970's ribbed brick exterior on the concrete structure. The proposed elevations show an articulated façade with new fenestration and varied materials. The renovated building will be more appropriate to the surrounding residential structures and improve the neighborhood with energy efficient and green infrastructure features.

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>	0	48
<i>Affordable Units:</i>	0	8
<i>Commercial Sq. Ft.:</i>	0	15,000
<i>Parking Spaces:</i>	-	48

III. RECOMMENDATION

Site Development Plan Approval under §5.4.6

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 **SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL**.

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.

Updated Recommendations for 09/22/2016 meeting:

The applicant provided additional information and exhibits that were request by staff in order to present the project to the Board prior to a vote. The attached package show that the requirements for overall open space, stormwater drainage, and the program of the Affordable Housing Implementation Program are completed.

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						
	<p>Approval is for the_____. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:</p> <table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>June 24th, 2016</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>September 15th, 2016</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD</td></tr></table> <p>Any changes to the approved site plan that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.</p>	Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	June 24 th , 2016	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	September 15 th , 2016	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD	BP/CO	ISD/Pln g.	
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June 24 th , 2016	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office									
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Affordable Housing/Linkage										
	Affordable Housing Implementation Plan (AHIP) should be approved by the OSPCD Housing Division and executed prior to issuance of Building Permit. Affordable units shall be provided on-site.	BP	Housing							
	Written certification of the creation of affordable housing units, any fractional payment required, or alternative methods of compliance, must be obtained from the OSPCD Housing Division before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.). No C.O. shall be issued until the OSPCD Housing Division has confirmed that the Affordable Housing Restriction has been approved and recorded and the developer has provided the promised affordable units on-site.	CO	Housing							
	No Certificate of Occupancy shall be issued until the OSPCD Housing Division has confirmed that: the Condominium Documents have been approved and the Developer has agreed to a form of Deed Rider for the Affordable Unit(s).	CO	Housing							
Pre-Construction										
	The Applicant shall complete the Site Plan Review Checklist and supply the information to the Engineering Office. The plans must comply with the City’s Stormwater Management Policy.	BP	Eng.							
	The Applicant shall submit a proposed drainage report, stamped by a registered PE in Massachusetts that demonstrates compliance with the City’s stormwater policy.	BP	Eng.							

	The Applicant must contact the Engineering Department to coordinate the timeline for cutting or opening the street and/or sidewalk for utility connections or other construction. There is a moratorium on opening streets from November 1st to April 1st and there is a list of streets that have additional opening restrictions.	BP	Eng	
	New sanitary connection flows over 2,000 GPD require a removal of infiltration and/or inflow by the Applicant. This will be achieved by submitting a mitigation payment, established by the City Engineers Office, to the City based on the cost per gallon of I/I to be removed from the sewer system and a removal ratio of 4:1. If a different ratio of removal or mitigation payment amount is adopted by the Board of Aldermen prior to the Applicant receiving a Certificate of Occupancy, payment will be adjusted to the BOA rate. The Applicant shall work with Engineering and meet this condition before a certificate of occupancy is issued.	BP	Eng.	
	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.	Demolition Permitting	ISD	
Construction Impacts				
	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.	
	Approval is subject to the Applicant's and/or successor's right, title and interest in the property.	Cont.	Plng.	Deed submitted & application formed signed
	The Applicant shall at their 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	
	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite (Lot B) – or Lot A. 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				
	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.	
Site				

	Landscaping should be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards;	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
	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	
	All new sidewalks will be installed by the Applicant in accordance with the specifications of the Highway Superintendent. Specifically, all driveway aprons shall be concrete.	CO	Plng.	
Miscellaneous				
	The Applicant, its successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for maintenance of both the building and all Lot B 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	
Public Safety				
	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
	Any transformers should be located as not to impact the building or landscaped area, and shall be fully screened.	Electrical permits &CO		
	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.	
	The Applicant shall provide notice of intent to strictly comply with applicable State and Federal regulations regarding air quality including without limitation continuous dust control during demolition and construction.	CO	Plng/OS E	
Final Sign-Off				
	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.	