



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2007-22-R0210
Date: March 11, 2010
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 14-18 Main St

Applicant Name: Jim Murray

Applicant Address: J Murray & Sons Cont., 114 Broadway, Somerville MA

Property Owner Name: J Murray & Sons

Property Owner Address: same as applicant

Agent Name: Jai Singh Khalsa, Khalsa Design Inc.

Agent Address: 17 Ivaloo St, Ste 400, Somerville, MA 02143

Alderman: Walter Pero

Legal Notice: Applicant, Jim Murray, & Owner, J Murray & Sons, seek a revision to Special Permit ZBA 2007-22 (SZO §5.3.8). The revision is to construct balconies and alter the garage door and location of windows.

Zoning District/Ward: NB / 4

Zoning Approval Sought: Revision to Special Permit (SZO §5.3.8)

Date of Application: February 26, 2010

Dates of Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals 3/17/10

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: In 2007, the Applicant received special permits and a variance from maximum height (SZO § 8.5.F) and parking requirements (SZO §9.5) to construct a new four-story, six-unit dwelling (ZBA 2007-22).
2. Proposal: The proposed revisions are shown on the elevations dated January 26, 2010 and the site plan dated December 23, 2009.



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The applicant is proposing the following revisions to the original proposal:

- a. Add two balconies (one with stairs) to the north elevation, two balconies to the Edgar Ave elevation, and one balcony to the roof of the three story bump out in the rear of the structure. The purpose of the balconies is to provide the residential units with a small amount of outdoor space.
- b. Eliminate a window to the left of the front door. The view inside of the window would be of the interior staircase.
- c. Change the garage door from two smaller doors to a single large door to better serve circulation into the garage. The egress door from the garage would be relocated from the Edgar St elevation to the rear of the building.
- d. Lower the height of the stucco finish in the rear of the building and replace with clapboard.
- e. Shift two windows in the rear bump out on the Edgar Ave elevation to coordinate with stair landings. This change is on the plans; however, the built structure does not include windows on this portion of the building.



14-18 Main St: (top left) View from Main St - front and left side of building, (top right) View from Edgar Ave – right side of building, (below) Rear view of building



3. Nature of Application: Section 5.3.8 of the SZO states “Revisions that are not *de minimis* shall be subject to the full notice and hearing provisions of §5.3.2 of this Ordinance, but shall not be subject to review by additional boards, departments, city agencies or commissions except as requested by the SPGA or upon the recommendation of the Planning Director. Applicable findings shall be made in accordance with the type of permit(s) being revised.” Notices have been mailed to abutters and the case was advertised in the newspaper.

4. Impacts of Proposal: The balconies are not anticipated to negatively impact the neighbors. The two balconies along the Edgar Ave elevation would be located along the street. The balconies on the north elevation would be located in the front yard of the house next door and the balcony in the back would be at a distance of 27 feet from the rear property line and behind the rear of the adjacent property. The balconies would not detract from the design of the building and would make the building more interactive with the street. The elimination of the window on the front façade would impact the symmetry of the building. The Applicant is concerned that, from the

street, there would be a view of the staircase through the window. This is not a concern of Staff. It is not unusual to see stairs when looking through a window and having natural light in the stairwell can be an advantage. The Applicant stated that he could add this window. The stucco wall along Edgar Ave was originally shown with a soldier course (brickwork detail) along the top portion to add an interesting element to the otherwise blank large stucco wall. The revised plans do not show this detail nor do they show the landscaping in the 3 foot buffer between the sidewalk and this wall; however, the Applicant stated that he would be able to add these details to the plans before the ZBA hearing. The revised plans would show the following which were on the originally approved plans: the window to the left of the front door, a brick soldier course or similar detail along the Edgar Ave elevation, vertical elements in the stucco below the column lines that extend to the ground, and landscaping for the 3 foot buffer along Edgar Ave, showing at least 15 bushes. The other changes proposed are not anticipated to negatively impact the development.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §5.3.8):

There are not specific required findings for a revision to a special permit. Rather, staff review the original findings for the specific zoning relief requested and identify any findings that have changed as a result of the proposed revision. Below, staff have reviewed the findings that are affected by the revisions.

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."

As noted in the "Impacts of Proposal" section above, the revisions, except for the elimination of the front window, are designed in a manner that is compatible with the built and unbuilt surrounding area. The balconies are placed so that they would not closely abut an adjacent residential structures nor negatively impact the appearance of the building. The other alterations including the size of the garage door, elimination of windows in the rear of the house, and reduction in the amount of stucco in the rear are compatible with the original approval. The elimination of the front window disrupts the symmetry of the building and creates a blank wall along the sidewalk. The Applicants will be submitting a revised plan before the ZBA meeting showing that this window will be installed. Revised plans will also ensure that the detailing and landscaping shown along the large stucco wall will remain a part of the project to visually break down the large blank wall along the street. Details include: a brick soldier course or similar detail along the Edgar Ave elevation, vertical elements in the stucco below the column lines that extend to the ground, and landscaping for the 3 foot buffer along Edgar Ave, showing at least 15 bushes.

III. RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **REVISIONS TO PRIOR PERMITS**. Changes from the existing condition are shown below, with additions marked in underline, deletions in ~~strikethrough~~.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes												
1	Approval is for the construction of six one- or two-bedroom units and 8 concealed parking spaces. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	Plng.													
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>Feb 26, 2010</td><td>Initial revision application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>(Aug 14, 2007)</td><td>Original plans submitted to OSPCD (proposed parking plan & front/right elevations: A.1c, rear elevation: A.2A)</td></tr><tr><td><u>Jan 26, 2010</u></td><td><u>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (N & E elevations: A-300, Main St & Edgar Ave elevations: A-301)</u></td></tr><tr><td><u>Dec 23, 2009</u></td><td><u>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Arch Site Plan: A-020)</u></td></tr><tr><td><u>TBD</u></td><td><u>Modified front elevation and Edgar St elevation (with landscaping)</u></td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	Feb 26, 2010	Initial revision application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	(Aug 14, 2007)	Original plans submitted to OSPCD (proposed parking plan & front/right elevations: A.1c, rear elevation: A.2A)	<u>Jan 26, 2010</u>	<u>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (N & E elevations: A-300, Main St & Edgar Ave elevations: A-301)</u>	<u>Dec 23, 2009</u>	<u>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Arch Site Plan: A-020)</u>	<u>TBD</u>	<u>Modified front elevation and Edgar St elevation (with landscaping)</u>
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Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive ZBA approval.																
2	The garage access shall be revised so that inbound access is on the right of the entryway and outbound egress is on the left	CO	T&P													
3	Landscaping should be installed in compliance with National Nurserymen's Standards	Perpetual	ISD													
4	The Applicant is responsible for notifying the Planning Staff at least five (5) working days in advance of a request for a final sign-off on a building permit from ISD. Issuance of a building permit shall be contingent upon a satisfactory inspection of site work to ensure compliance with the conditions of this special permit and variance.	Final sign off	Plng.													