



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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**PLANNING DIVISION**

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FREDERICK J. LUND, *SENIOR DRAFTSMAN*

**Case #:** PB 2010-13  
**Date:** June 9, 2010  
**Recommendation:** Conditional approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 9 Sanborn Court, aka 251-255 Washington Street

**Applicant Name:** Summer and Hancock LLC

**Applicant Address:** 297 Walden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

**Property Owner Name:** Kepnes Brothers Realty Trust

**Property Owner Address:** c/o Henry Patterson, 78 Harding Road, Lexington, MA 02420

**Agent Name:** none

**Alderman:** Thomas Taylor

Legal Notice: Applicant, Summer and Hancock LLC, and Owner, Kepnes Brothers Realty Trust, seek a special permit under SZO §6.1.22.D.5 to alter signage on the building.

Zoning District/Ward: CCD55/ 3

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit §5.1

Date of Application: June 1, 2010

Dates of Public Hearing: Planning Board 6/24/10

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: The property is a unit in a one-story commercial building located off of Washington Street in Union Square and facing Sanborn Court, a thirty-foot private way. The unit was previously vacant but will be occupied by a small restaurant called the Journeyman. The unit's existing brick façade consists of a steel door and a window covered by boards. Other businesses on the property include the Little Pearl, Ronnarong Thai Tapas Bar, Vango Convenience Store, Union Square Chiropractic, and Elegant Salon. The only prior zoning permit issued for the site was for a separate retail unit within the property which was approved for a special permit in 1989 in order to convert a retail space into a small grocery store.



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2. Proposal: The proposal is to add signage and lighting to the restaurant's facade. The tenant of the building is applying for funding through the City's Storefront Improvement Program. A 4' x 1' unfinished steel sign will hang perpendicular to the building and have the name "Journeyman" cut into it. "Journeyman" will also be cut into one of four new 6" wide safety bollards placed in front of the entrance and exit. The existing boarded up opening to the left of the door will be replaced with a window. Since this is an existing opening it does not need special permit approval. Lighting will include three lamps across the 10' x 12' window, 1 lamp illuminating the hanging sign from above, and a wall sconce by the door.



*9 Sanborn Court*



*Looking north into Sanborn Court from Union Square, property on the right*

3. Nature of Application: In the CCD, the SZO §6.1.22.D.5 states that any change in signage, other than a one-for-one replacement of an existing sign, and alterations to facades shall require a Special Permit. A restaurant of less than 1,500 sf (Use Cluster D) is allowed by-right in this district.
4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The property is located in the heart of Union Square and there are many other restaurants and businesses in the area. Other uses on Sanborn Court include residences, Stone Place park and parking lots.
5. Impacts of Proposal: New signage and lighting on this building will be an improvement to the current façade. The lighting is proposed to shine on the building and not interfere with the house at the end of Sanborn Court. The additions will help the restaurant ensure its visibility on Sanborn Court and indicate that the unit is not vacant.
6. Green Building Practices: The new lighting fixtures will have energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.
7. Comments:  
*Ward Alderman:* Has been contacted but has not provided comments.

## **II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §5.1):**

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 sign design complies with the design guideline for signage in the CCD (§6.1.22.H). The sign respects the building's context. The sign's material will be unfinished mild steel and it will not be lit from within. These characteristics comply with the list of materials and sign technologies that are recommended and the materials complement the existing brick façade and the building's industrial style. The sign is legible and does not have excessive wording. The sign will be subordinate to the overall building in its size and appearance and will not conceal important façade details such as the brick patterns.

No "signage line" currently exists on this side of the building. The perpendicular placement of the sign was chosen due to the orientation of the restaurant and the desire to inform pedestrians of the new use in the private way. The height of the sign is necessary to ensure visibility above the existing lattice screen of an adjacent restaurant. The lighting will be focused on the unit's sign, window, and door, enhancing safety and security while minimizing glare and light trespass.

The pedestrian oriented requirements of this district will be improved by the proposal. The signage and lighting will encourage pedestrian activity on Sanborn Court and the adjacent Stone Place Park, helping link Homer Square and Stone Place to Union Square.

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 and the purpose of the CCD by promoting pedestrian activity and an active mix of uses.

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 signage and lighting will be compatible with the building's design as explained in finding two. The design of the lighting is also similar to that of a neighboring restaurant, The Independent.

### III. RECOMMENDATION

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

Based on the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes										
1	Approval is for the proposed signage and lighting. 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>June 1, 2010</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>May 5, 2010</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (1-Plan, 2-Elevations)</td></tr><tr><td>May 31, 2010</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (1-Plan and Elevation)</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (Hanging sign)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	June 1, 2010	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	May 5, 2010	Plans submitted to OSPCD (1-Plan, 2-Elevations)	May 31, 2010	Plans submitted to OSPCD (1-Plan and Elevation)		Plans submitted to OSPCD (Hanging sign)
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Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval. Sign replacement of the same size within the same sign footprint and using the same sign technology shall be permitted by right.														

2	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.	
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