



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

PLANNING DIVISION

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Case #: ZBA 2010-81
Date: January 20, 2011
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 12 Skehan Street

Applicant and Property Owner Name: Mark Falvey
Applicant and Property Owner Address: 12 Skehan Street, Somerville, MA 02143
Agent Name: Jean-Yves Nayl
Agent Address: 12 Skehan Street, Somerville, MA 02143
Alderman: Maryann Heuston

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner, Mark Falvey, seeks a special permit to alter a non-conforming structure under SZO §4.4.1 to construct an addition to first floor in the rear of an existing single-family residence. RB zone.

Zoning District/Ward: RB Zone / Ward 2

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1

Date of Application: December 28, 2010

Dates of Public Meeting • Hearing: Planning Board **1/20/11** • Zoning Board of Appeals **2/2/11**

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 2,550 square foot lot with a single-family residence situated on Skehan Street between Hanson Street and Dane Street. The structure has 1,200 square feet of habitable space. The residence is two stories not including the basement level.

2. Proposal: The Applicant is proposing a one-story, approximately 135 gross square foot addition at the rear of the structure. The addition would extend the non-conforming east side of the existing dwelling deeper into the lot approximately 11 feet and bring it flush with the existing rear bulkhead. A proposed landing and stairwell would extend off the addition another six feet into the lot to continue



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to provide access to the backyard for the Applicant. The addition would eliminate an existing open deck and covered porch. On the east façade, one existing window would be removed and three half windows would be installed in the new addition. On the south elevation an existing window would be enlarged and a new sliding door would be installed to provide rear egress. Additionally, a new window would be added to the west façade. The existing roof slope on the east side of the home would be continued to the rear and matched on the roof slope of the addition. The existing first floor roof line in the rear of the home would be altered to give the south façade a gable-like appearance, which would be similar to the roof line of the second story.

As a result of the exterior changes above, the existing study would be expanded and converted to a living room that connects to the kitchen and the existing living room would then become the study. The basement of the subject property would not be expanded as concrete sonotubes would be used for structural support for the proposed addition. This would create a small crawl space under the addition but it would be fenced off and inaccessible.

3. Nature of Application: This is a residential property within a Residence B (RB) district. The structure is currently non-conforming with respect to the minimum side yard setback. The Applicant is seeking a Special Permit to alter a non-conforming structure under Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) §4.4.1 to construct a one-story addition at the rear of the existing single-family residence within the non-conforming side yard setback.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: This property is located in a Residence B district. The structures in the surrounding neighborhood are primarily single and two-family homes between 1.5 and 3 stories. There are also four, 3 story, three-family homes in the immediate vicinity, two of which are on Skehan Street.

5. Impacts of Proposal: There shall be minimal impacts to the surrounding neighborhood as the proposed addition would not appear to be detrimental to the immediate abutters or the surrounding area. The proposed addition is in the rear of the home and would not alter the streetscape along Skehan Street in any way. The addition would extend the non-conforming eastern side of the existing dwelling deeper into the lot approximately 11 feet but the structure would still be well within the minimum rear yard setback of 20 feet, with over 30 feet of setback from the rear lot line. The structural portion of the proposed addition would not extend past the eastern abutter's building and the new stairwell would only extend past the eastern abutting structure approximately three feet. Including the proposed addition, the floor area ratio of the structure would be .50 which is still below the 1.0 FAR maximum for an RB district. The character of the original house will remain intact as the Applicant is proposing to install siding and shingles on the addition that match those on the existing structure. Furthermore, the same roof line that already exists on the eastern portion of the structure would be continued around to the rear and matched on the addition.

All construction activities for this project will be occurring at the rear of the existing building with the structure and the remaining rear setback area acting as buffers to the residences nearby. The deck and portions of the roof that need to be disassembled and removed will be done so by a removal service. No on-site dumpster will be used at the property due to space constraints. With construction impacts limited to the rear of the building, no significant disruption to the neighborhood is anticipated. Staff has included conditions in this Special Permit to help alleviate the potential dust, noise, and air quality issues that may arise from the demolition and construction processes.

6. Green Building Practices: The Applicant has indicated that the addition will contain wall, floor, and roof insulation as well as insulated windows.

7. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Have been notified and are awaiting comments.

Ward Alderman: Alderman Heuston has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Historic Preservation: Preservation Planner Kristi Chase states that the proposed alteration in the rear of the building is unlikely to affect the historic streetscape. Please see her attached memorandum.



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §5.4.1 and §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."

In considering a special permit under §4.4.1 of the SZO, Staff find that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure.

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 "promote 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 provide

adequate light and air; 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.”

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the 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.”

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 is compatible with the characteristics of the surrounding area. The Applicant is proposing to extend the non-conforming setback side of the existing structure by 11 feet and add a small six foot long stairwell and landing that will provide access to the backyard. The property will remain a two-story, single-family residential use which is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

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 effect is anticipated.

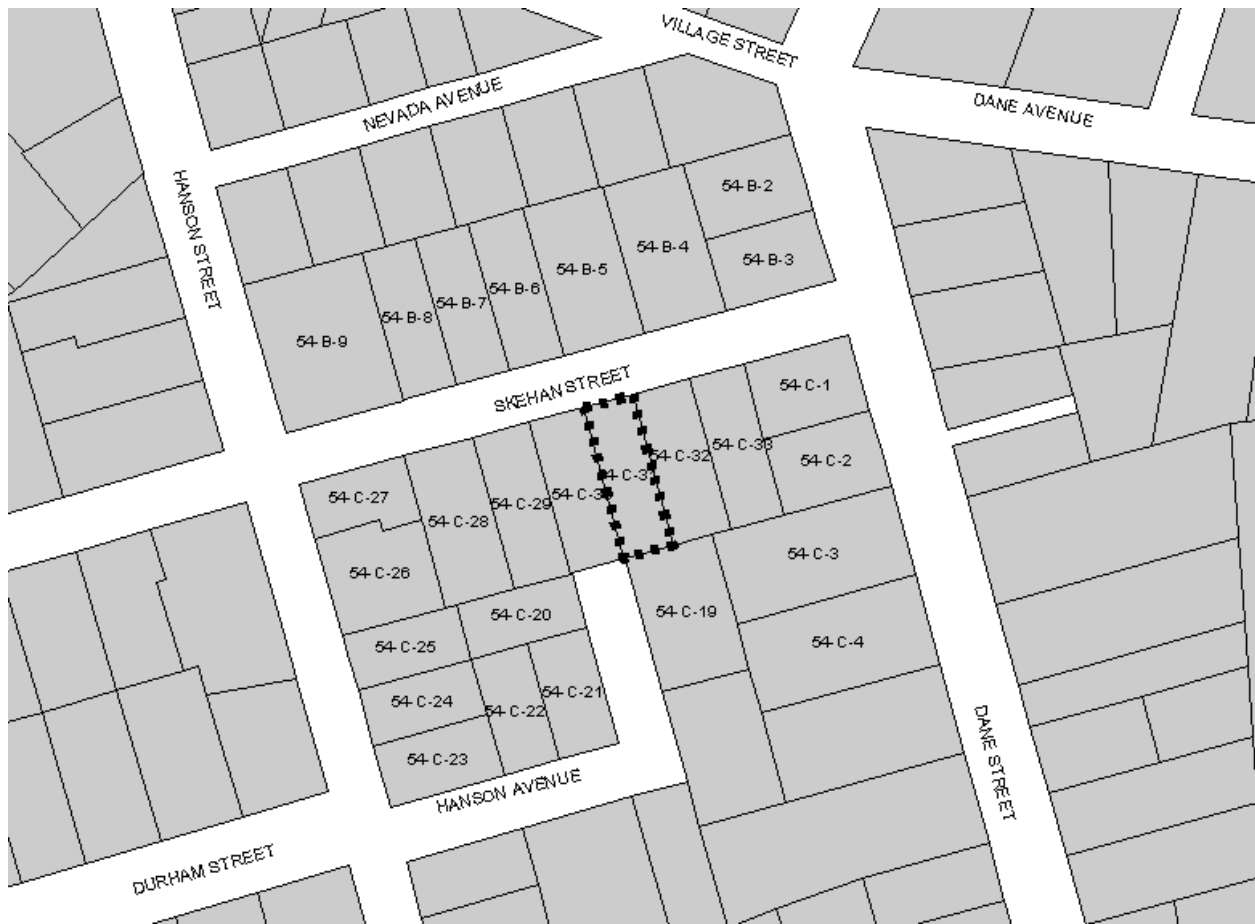
III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under §4.4.1

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

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes								
1	Approval is to alter a non-conforming structure under SZO §4.4.1 to construct an addition to first floor in the rear of an existing single-family residence. 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>(December 28, 2010)</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>December 17, 2010 (December 28, 2010)</td><td>Plot Plan</td></tr><tr><td>December 18, 2010 (December 28, 2010)</td><td>Plans submitted with application: Site Plan, Existing and Proposed Floor Plans, and Proposed Elevations (A.00 – A.04)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(December 28, 2010)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	December 17, 2010 (December 28, 2010)	Plot Plan	December 18, 2010 (December 28, 2010)	Plans submitted with application: Site Plan, Existing and Proposed Floor Plans, and Proposed Elevations (A.00 – A.04)
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Any changes to the approved site plans, elevations, or use that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
2	The Applicant shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau’s requirements.	CO	FP									
3	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.	During Construction	T&P									
4	To the maximum extent feasible the Applicant will utilize strategies during construction to mitigate dust and control air quality, to minimize noise and to implement a waste recycling program for the removed debris.	During Construction	OSE/ISD									
5	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/OSE									

6	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	
7	The Applicant shall install siding and roofing on the proposed addition that compliments the color and texture of the siding and roofing on the existing structure.	CO	Plng.	
8	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.	



12 Skehan Street



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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

To: Planning Division
From: Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner
Date: January 10, 2011
Re: HPC 11.05 – 12 Skehan Street

Staff has reviewed the proposed plans to alter the rear of the building at 12 Skehan Street. It has never been surveyed and not much is known about its owners. It lies in the neighborhood known as Duck Village, an area of workers houses on small lots. Quick map research indicates that the house was constructed between 1852 and 1874. The first owner shown on the maps is John O'Brien, a laborer at the American Tube Works according to the 1884 City Directory. There were only 4 other houses on both sides of the street at that time. The 1884 Hopkins Atlas shows that the south side of the street was totally built out by then and only 1 empty lot on the north side.

This building is not included in the City's Map of Historic Properties and therefore does not fall under HPC jurisdiction. The proposed alteration is in the rear of the building and unlikely to affect the historic streetscape



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