



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

**PLANNING DIVISION**  
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FREDERICK J. LUND, *SENIOR DRAFTSMAN*

**Case #:** PB2009-12  
**Date:** November 13, 2009  
**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 282 Somerville Ave (Dunkin Donuts)

**Applicant Name:** Viewpoint Sign and Awning and Paul Rebelo PGR Construction

**Applicant Address:** 35 Lyman St, Northboro, MA 01532

**Property Owner Name:** D'Alelio LLC

**Property Owner Address:** One Smith Farm Trail, Lynnfield, MA

**Agent Name:** Darlene McCarthy

**Agent Address:** 35 Lyman St, Northboro, MA 01532

**Alderman:** Maryann Heuston

Legal Notice: Applicant, Viewpoint Sign and Awning, and Paul Rebelo, PGR Construction, & Owner, D'Alelio LLC, requests a Special Permit to alter the façade and signage for an existing fast order food establishment (SZO §5.1 & 6.1.22.D.5).

Zoning District/Ward: Corridor Commercial District (CCD) / Ward 2

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit §5.1 & §6.1.22.D.5

Date of Application: November 5, 2009

Dates of Public Hearing: Planning Board 12/3/09

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: The property is a one-story commercial structure that is set back from Somerville Ave. There is a parking lot in the front yard. Dunkin Donuts occupies the building as a "fast order food establishment without drive-up service" within Use Cluster D, which is by-right in the Corridor Commercial District (CCD). The building was built in 1965 and the Planning Board issued a special permit in 1987 for a 13x21 foot addition. The conditions attached to the Special Permit included submitting a revised landscape plan, a plan for drainage of the dumpster at the rear of the site, and a final plan for the two signs on the building.



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2. Proposal: The proposal is to renovate the building's façade and signage. The façade materials would be glazing, painted insulated panels, and fiber cement board in the front, EIFS stucco on the sides and painted concrete block in the rear. The signs would be vinyl and would be internally-illuminated. There would be an opaque white backspray around the letters so that at night only the letters and the cup graphic would illuminate. The change to the pylon sign is by-right. The opaque white backspray is proposed for the pylon sign as well.

Many Dunkin Donuts are being renovated to have a similar appearance. The Dunkin Donuts in Magoun Square recently completed similar renovations.

The proposal also includes adding gooseneck lighting around the front and left side of the building. The landscaping on the site would also be expanded slightly and replanted with dwarf rhododendron, spreading juniper, azalea, and yew plantings.

3. Nature of Application: In the CCD, the SZO §6.1.22.D.5 states that any change in an existing façade or signage, other than a one-for-one replacement of an existing sign, shall require a Special Permit. Findings for a Special Permit should give consideration to the Design Guidelines in Section 6.1.22.H.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: There are various businesses in the immediate area of Union Square. Signage in neighborhood is not consistent; however, the district has recently been rezoned and design guidelines will help to improve the design of buildings and signs.

5. Impacts of Proposal: The structure is a traditional, stand-alone Dunkin Donuts. The renovations will give the building a face lift; however, the changes do not comply with some of the newly created design guidelines. In an effort to improve the pedestrian experience of the site, the applicants have proposed adding gooseneck lighting to improve the lighting situation, which is currently dark at night, expanding and replanting landscaped areas, and "blacking-out" parts of the internally-lit vinyl signs so that they are subdued at night.

6. Green Building Practices: None.

7. Comments:

*Fire Prevention:* Have been contacted but have not provided 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 façade and sign design complies with some but not all of the design guidelines for the CCD (§6.1.22.H). The building does have a large portion of transparent glass that provides unobstructed views

into the building. The sign design fits with the style of a traditional, stand-alone Dunkin Donuts; however, the signs are more oriented to automobiles than pedestrians. The signs are large and interior-lit, which are discouraged. The proposed materials include those on the list of discouraged materials such as EIFS-type finishes and vinyl signs. Since the application is only for modest sign and façade changes, adherence to all of the design guidelines is not essential. In reviewing new structures and signs the design guidelines should be followed.

Because the applicants are keeping with the traditional Dunkin Donuts appearance that does not follow the design guidelines, they have incorporated other elements into the building and site that will improve the pedestrian experience. They are proposing to add gooseneck lighting that will help to illuminate the site, which is currently dark at night. They are also proposing to deepen the landscape bed along Prospect St from 3 to 5 feet and remove three trees and replace them with shrubs. The proposed vegetation is hardy, consisting of 4-season plants; however, the height of the vegetation would only be a maximum of 3-4 feet tall. In order to further soften this corner and make it more pedestrian friendly, a condition has been added that would require the 3 trees to be replaced, the landscaping to be extended along Somerville Ave to the curb cut, and screening of cars with landscaping or fencing that would not interfere with sight lines of traffic. The landscape plan should be finalized with Planning Staff approval.

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 conserving the value of land and buildings and the purpose of the CCD by increasing the commercial investment in the area.

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 façade and sign would be compatible with the building's design and the site improvements would be compatible with the pedestrian oriented nature of Union Square.

**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 alteration of the façade and signage. 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>Nov 5, 2009</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>Oct 26, 2009</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (sign design)</td></tr><tr><td>Aug 12, 2009</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (A-4-A-5: façade materials)</td></tr><tr><td>Jun 3, 2009</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (EX-1: existing elevations &amp; floor plan)</td></tr><tr><td>Nov 27, 2009</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (SP-2: lighting &amp; landscaping)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	Nov 5, 2009	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	Oct 26, 2009	Plans submitted to OSPCD (sign design)	Aug 12, 2009	Plans submitted to OSPCD (A-4-A-5: façade materials)	Jun 3, 2009	Plans submitted to OSPCD (EX-1: existing elevations & floor plan)	Nov 27, 2009	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (SP-2: lighting & landscaping)
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Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive ZBA approval.																
2	The Applicant/Owner shall submit a final landscape plan that incorporates the replacement of 3 trees, the extension of landscaping along Somerville Ave, and screening of cars with landscaping or fencing that would not interfere with sight lines of traffic. The plan shall be approved by Planning Staff.	BP	Plng.													
3	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													

4	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final inspection	Plng.	
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