



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Case #:** ZBA 2014-61

**Date:** July 31, 2014

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 14 Greenville St

**Applicant and Owner Names:** Greg Bowne and Mark Staloff

**Applicant Address:** 14 Greenville St, Somerville, MA 02143

**Alderman:** Robert McWatters

Legal Notice: Applicants & Owners Greg Bowne and Mark Staloff seek a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a 2.5 story, 2-family nonconforming structure by adding a shed dormer. RA zone. Ward 3.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals 8/6/2014

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: The subject parcel is a 4,831 square foot residential lot near City Hall. The structure is a 2½ story, two-family dwelling, with 2 parking spaces on-site.
2. Proposal: The Applicant proposes to build a 24.5-foot long third floor shed dormer (1/2 the length of the roof line, as allowed by code). The dormer would contain a new bathroom and an expanded master bedroom, with one window in the bathroom and a double window in the bedroom.
3. Green Building Practices: None listed on the application
4. Comments:

*Fire Prevention:* The Applicant should install hard-wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.



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



*14 Greenville Street*

## **II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §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."***

Under SZO §4.4.1, an existing single or two-family dwelling may alter a nonconformity through the granting of a Special Permit. Therefore, due to the existing nonconforming side yard setback (about 4.2' versus 6'-8" minimum allowed) the proposed change requires a Special Permit.

In considering a Special Permit under §4.4 of the SZO, Staff find that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The changes proposed will minimally increase the habitable space and not affect the streetscape, or negatively impact the adjacent property.

### **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 promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to conserve the value of land and buildings; and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RA district, which is, “To establish and preserve quiet neighborhoods of one- and two-family homes, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts.”

The proposal to add a third floor shed dormer will enable the occupants to add a bathroom and improve the third floor bedroom. The addition is contextual to the existing structure and to surrounding properties. This proposal would not negatively impact the streetscape, nor be detrimental to adjacent properties.

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 parcel is located in a Residence A zoning district near City Hall and McGrath Highway. The neighborhood is composed of one-, two-, and three-family dwellings, and a larger apartment buildings and low-scale retail along McGrath Highway. The surrounding dwellings along Greenville Street are predominantly similar in that they are 2½ story structures, most with either gable-end or mansard roofs.

The additional living space will have minimal to no impact on abutters, will enhance the interior plan, and is contextual with the existing structure.

7. Housing Impact: *Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.*

8. 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>	2	No change
<i>Parking Spaces:</i>	2	No change

This proposal does not significantly impact the Somervision goals, but does help to preserve the residential areas by improving livability and building in a contextually-sensitive way.

**III. RECOMMENDATION****Special Permit under §4.4.1**

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 **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

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. 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								
1	Approval is for the shed dormer. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Pln g.									
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>(June 30, 2014)</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>(July 16, 2014)</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (Site survey, front and side elevations, floor and roof plans)</td></tr><tr><td>(July 25, 2014)</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Front and side elevations)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(June 30, 2014)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	(July 16, 2014)	Plans submitted to OSPCD (Site survey, front and side elevations, floor and roof plans)	(July 25, 2014)	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (Front and side elevations)
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Any changes to the plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
<b>Construction Impacts</b>												
2	The Applicant shall at his or her 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									
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									
<b>Design</b>												
4	The dormer shall match the material and finish of the home.	BP	Plng.									

5	The dormer shall be less than 50% of the length of the roofline of the home.	BP	PIng.	
<b>Final Sign-Off</b>				
7	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	PIng.	

