



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Case #:** PB 2013-08

**Date:** June 13, 2013

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 181 & 197 Washington St

**Applicant Name:** CPI-SCC, LCC

**Applicant Address:** 337 Somerville Ave 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Somerville, MA 02143

**Property Owner Name:** The Somerville Community Corporation, Inc and A&M Realty Trust

**Agent Name:** Adam Dash

**Agent Address:** 48 Grove Street, Suite 304 Somerville, MA 02144

**Alderman:** Thomas Taylor

Legal Notice: Applicant CPI-SCC, llc and Owners The Somerville Community Corporation, Inc and A&M Realty Trust seek a Special Permit with Site Review (SZO §5.2) to construct two mixed use buildings of approx 34,696 nsf and approx 32,466 nsf under §6.1.22.D.1 and §6.1.22.D.2. The uses include small and medium retail of approx 6,500 84 residential units per SZO §7.13.B, §7.13.C, & §7.13.E and a by-right office use of approx 2,770 sf per §7.13.A. The applicant seeks a Special Permit under SZO §5.1 to reduce the number of parking spaces SZO 9.13.F and 9.17.2.A, to share a driveway and access per SZO §9.17.2.B and shared parking and loading per SZO §9.17.2.B. Article 13 Inclusionary Housing will apply. CCD55 zone. Ward 3.

Zoning District/Ward: CCD55 / Ward 3

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit with Site Review under SZO §5.2

Date of Application: April 16, 2013

Dates of Public Hearing: Planning Board - June 20, 2013

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: The subject properties are 181 and 197 Washington Street. 181 Washington Street is a 27,225 square foot lot with a 17,526 square foot 3 story brick building (approximately 40' tall along a portion of Washington Street plus penthouses/roof equipment) with parking in the rear. It was



most recently used as the Somerville Boys and Girls Club which closed in 2010. Prior to that, it was the Charles G. Pope School.

The 197 Washington Street address is a 24,063 square foot lot with an 8,283 square foot building. The subject property, circa 1860, was a 2½ story, single-family dwelling of the Italianate style that was converted for use as a funeral parlor as early as 1933. The Cota-Struzziero Funeral Home operates from the location approximately 2 days a week for an average of 4-6 hours per visit. There is a well maintained lawn, circular driveway, and ancillary parking.

A stone marker is located on the sidewalk directly in front of the subject structure states, “On this hillside, James Miller Minute Man, was slain by the British, April 19, 1775, ‘I am too old to run.’” James Miller is reputed to have been slain as the British made their way around Prospect Hill to Charlestown, retreating from Lexington.

2. Proposal: The proposal is to demolish the existing structures for new development. The Boys and Girls Club was not found to be “Significant” and has no demolition delay. The Cota-Struzziero Funeral Home was found “Significant” and “Preferably Preserved.” It is currently in the 9 month demo delay process which ends on November 19, 2013. During this time, the Applicant has participated in meeting with the Historic Commission on whether alternatives to demolition are possible.

Two mix-use buildings are proposed for 181 & 197 Washington Street. The lots will have one owner upon execution of the Purchase and Sale. Planning Staff determined that this should be one application because of the future ownership of the property as well as the shared driveway and parking. The properties are also able to exist independently in terms of meeting zoning dimensional requirements and parking with the special permit approval for the parking arrangement that is part of this application. The property at 181 Washington Street, also referred to as the SCC building, will be 55,326 gross square feet. It is five stories tall and 52’ high. There will be 2,841 square feet of retail and 2,770 square feet of office space on the ground floor. There will be 40 affordable rental units ranging from studios to 3 bedroom units on floors 2-5.

The proposed building at 197 Washington Street, also referred to as the CPI building, will be 47,916 gross square feet. It is five stories tall and 54’ high. There will be 3,725 square feet of commercial/retail on the first floor and 44 rental units, of which 5 will be affordable, on floors 2-5.

#### *Commercial Space*

One to three tenants will occupy the 2,841 square feet of retail in the SCC building and the 3,725 square feet of retail in the CPI building. The Applicant’s market research suggests that there is an absence of mid-size commercial space available in Union Square. They are applying for small and medium retail uses and satisfying the parking requirement for the larger requirement, medium retail. All of the commercial entrances are along Washington Street.

Somerville Community Corporation will occupy 2,770 square feet of ground level space in their building. The entrance to their space is off of the courtyard on the east end of the building.

#### *Residential Units*

The residential units will be on Levels 2-5 of the buildings. There will be 40 affordable rental units ranging from 1 to 3 bedroom units in the SCC building. The average unit size is 867 net square feet. The CPI will have 44 rental units ranging from studios to 2 bedroom units. The average unit size is 737 net square feet. Five of the units will be designated with an affordability restriction in perpetuity as required by Somerville Zoning Ordinance Article 13, Inclusionary Housing. The buildings are accessible off of

their respective courtyards and from the parking area. Both buildings have roof terraces accessible by all of the occupants in the building.

#### *Sidewalk Depth*

At the Planning Staff's request, a site plan was submitted that includes Washington Street sidewalk improvements such as an increased depth in the sidewalk, street trees, metered parking spaces in front of the building, and a bike lane on Washington Street.

#### *Site & Landscaping*

The site will have two courtyards, at the eastern and western edges of the site. There will be a mix of landscaping and paver area. The historical marker will be moved to the CPI building's courtyard. The Boston Street edge will have five new trees and shrub and groundcover. There will be the required landscaping buffer on the rear lot line. The new sidewalk depth accommodates eight street trees.

#### *Parking & Traffic*

The buildings will share driveways off of Washington and Boston Streets and a loading area off of Washington Street. There will be a total of 86 parking spaces. Sixty-three will be accessible on the ground level via Washington Street that will be used by both the SCC and CPI buildings. Twenty-three will be available in a structure upper level parking deck accessible via Boston Street. Those spaces will be assigned to SCC residents because of the direct access to the building. There will also be 4 shared spaces in the garage. Three of the four spaces will be for car sharing services such as Zipcar. The other would be shared between an SCC employee and a building resident.

The traffic and parking assessment for the project estimates that there will be 788 trips on a daily basis, 47 trips in the AM peak hour (7-9 am) and 67 trips in the PM (4-6 pm) peak hour. The previous use, the Boys and Girls Club, had an estimated 550 vehicle trips per day. The traffic assessment of nearby intersections, including McGrath Highway and Washington, shows that the Level of Service will be maintained at the current level. There has not been a mode split conducted for the site. There was a 10% reduction for public transportation; however, a further reduction was not taken into account for the walking and bicycle trips that are typical in an urban area. This reduction will be further relevant when the Green Line Extension opens. The study notes that, "...additional reductions in peak hour vehicle-trips will most likely occur [because of GLX], and the vehicle-trips shown on the following figures represent a conservatively high estimate." The PM peak of 67 trips will translate to 1 car every 1 minute 48 seconds entering or exiting the site.

The parking portion of the study confirmed that there is a range of 31-36 parking spaces available within 500 feet of the site: 36 spaces at 7am and 7pm on a weekday and 31 parking spaces at 7am and 7pm on a Saturday. As part of the additional site plan submitted, 12 metered spaces will be added as part of the project. The only parking relief sought is a 20% reduction for the 45 affordable units and 1 shared space. The applicant submitted parking utilization of other affordable housing projects (Linden Street and Mystic Ave) and found that the parking demand was less than the 0.8 parking space per unit requirement in the SZO and was actually around 0.58 at peak times. Based on similar projects, this project meets the parking demand.

The Applicants are also applying for parking on a separate lot so that the required parking for each building can be located on the abutting parcel.

#### *Building Design*

The buildings are aligned with the curvature of Washington Street and have a base, middle, and top. The building will be primarily the Hardie 'Artisan' fiber cement plank as well as metal and precast panels.

The top floor of the building, along Washington and Boston Street, is slightly set back and metal panel to add variety to the façade and make it recede from view. The Hardie plank will be a variety of colors to break up the mass of the building.

#### *Lighting and Signage*

There is an up/down accent light proposed for the building. This is appropriate for a commercial corridor district. Signage locations are shown above the doors of the retail spaces and will be reviewed when a tenant is secured. Materials of the signage will be a condition of approval and if additional signage locations are desired, a new special permit will be required.

#### *Trash/Utilities*

There is a room for trash and recycling that is accessed from the rear of each building from the parking area for all of the uses on-site.

The mechanical equipment for the building will be located on the roof of the CPI building and the lower roofs of the SCC building. Both areas will be screened from view.

The transformer will be located at grade off of Washington Terrace. There is also an emergency generator that is accessible from the parking area.

3. Nature of Application: This project is the third significant proposal before the Planning Board under the CCD-55 zoning district. The CCD-55 district was created (originally as the “CCD” district) as a part of the Union Square rezoning study in 2009. The district was approved and applied in the Union Square area in April of 2009. Additional refinements were made when the zoning was applied to Broadway in Winter Hill and East Somerville in February 2010. Prior to this change the project area was in a Business B zoning district which allowed for a 50’ building height with a 15’ minimum front setback.

Generally the buildings and uses capture the intentions of the CCD-55 district. The building reflects the intention to provide for 55-foot buildings with a step down towards the residential neighborhood on the north side, provides adequate parking without developing excessive parking within this urban neighborhood, and encourages retail storefronts that will engage the pedestrian while improving the impact of the block. The project also provides on-site affordable housing.

Below is an explanation of how the project meets the zoning requirements:

#### *Uses*

Under SZO section 6.1.22.D, if some uses in new development are by-right and some are allowed by Special Permit, the entire development shall be subject to Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) review. Since the residential use requires a special permit, the entire development requires SPSR review. The residential use falls under Use Cluster E, §7.13.E, Residential, and any number of residential units requires a special permit.

The commercial uses are by-right. The two retail components fall into the Use Cluster B §7.13.B, Small Retail and Service, and Use Cluster C §7.13.C, Medium Retail and Service. Small Retail and Service comprises establishments of up to 1,500 net square feet and a total square footage of all of the establishments up to 10,000 net square feet is allowed by-right. This application includes the flexibility to have up to 3 - 1,170 square feet establishments in the CPI building and 3 – 954 square feet establishments in the SCC building or 1 – 3,510 square foot establishment in the CPI building and 1 – 2,861 square foot establishment in the SCC building. The use of these spaces may be any use allowed in

this Use Cluster or another Use Cluster that is allowed by-right at this size, although if changing to a different Use Cluster the parking requirements would need to be evaluated and therefore may require zoning approval to be established.

### *Dimensional Requirements*

The proposal complies with the dimensional requirements of the zoning district. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit is 600 square feet. The CPI building has 601.6 and the SCC building has 620.4. The maximum ground coverage is 80% and the proposed building covers 44% of the lot. The proposal meets the minimum landscaped area of 10% with the site landscaped along the rear property line. The maximum gross floor area ratio is 3 and the proposed building has an FAR of 1.5. The height of the building will not be taller than the 55 foot height limit.

<b>181 Washington Street</b>		
<b>Requirements</b>	<b>CCD-55</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
Min Lot Size	NA	24,814 sf
Min Lot Area/Dwelling Unit	600 sf	620.4 sf
Max Ground Coverage	80%	51%
Min Landscaped Area % of lot	10%	13%
Floor Area Ratio (based on gsf)	3	1.6
Max Height	55'	54'
Max Height Abutting RB	35'	35'
Min Front Yard	NA	0'
Min Side Yard (Left)	NA	7'2"
Min Side Yard (Right)	NA	2'5"
Min Rear Yard Abutting RB	20' (10' exclusively landscaped)	31'3" (10' exclusively landscaped)
Min Frontage	30'	145'

<b>197 Washington Street</b>		
<b>Requirements</b>	<b>CCD-55</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
Min Lot Size	NA	26,474 sf
Min Lot Area/Dwelling Unit	600 sf	601.6 sf
Max Ground Coverage	80%	40%
Min Landscaped Area % of lot	10%	15%
Floor Area Ratio (based on gsf)	3	1.4
Max Height	55'	54'
Max Height Abutting RB	35'	35'
Min Front Yard	NA	0'
Min Side Yard (Left)	NA	7'2"
Min Side Yard (Right)	NA	13'6"
Min Rear Yard Abutting RB	20' (10' exclusively landscaped)	56' (10' exclusively landscaped)
Min Frontage	30'	200'

### *Affordable Housing*

Projects in the CCD are subject to a 12.5% inclusionary housing requirement. For the proposed project, this translates into the creation of five permanently affordable units at a location where none exist today. The five permanently affordable units will be made available to households in accordance with the City's

inclusionary housing ordinance. The SCC building will include a mix of affordable housing units and there are appropriate restrictions to ensure that the affordable housing units in this building will be retained.

#### *Parking & Loading Requirements*

The Applicant is seeking a Special Permit under SZO §9.17.2.B for shared parking between the required residential and commercial parking spaces and SZO §9.13.F to reduce the required parking for the affordable units.

Eighty-six parking spaces will be provided on site. One of the parking spaces needs to be shared between a residential unit and a user of the commercial space. An additional 3 spaces will be used for car sharing; however, these spaces can count towards the requirement per SZO section 9.3.

The breakdown of the required parking spaces is as follows:

CPI Residential Units – 1 per unit, 39 units = 39 spaces

CPI Affordable Residential Units – .8 per unit, 5 affordable units = 4 spaces

SCC Residential Units – .8 per unit, 40 units = 32 spaces

Use cluster B – Medium Retail and Service, 1 per 800 nsf

3 establishments totaling 9173 sf / 800 = 11.46 or 11 spaces

Project Total – 86 Spaces

The applicant is also seeking a Special Permit to share a driveway and access per SZO §9.17.2.B and shared parking and loading per SZO §9.17.2.B. There are two driveways as a part of the project, one between the buildings and one off of Boston Street. The shared loading is located between the buildings. Occupants of the buildings will share the parking spaces behind the building on the abutting lots. The 44 bicycle parking spaces are accommodated by bicycle storage areas in each building. Four bike racks (accommodating 2 bikes each) will be on the sidewalk.

The sites accessible off of Boston Street will be assigned to SCC building residents because of the direct access. Part of the Applicant's Traffic and Parking Study suggested that Boston Street be changed to two-way to the access point of the parking area. Planning Staff does not support this suggestion.

#### 4. Project Siting:

##### *Smart Growth, Transit-Oriented Development and Union Square:*

In 1835, a passenger railroad station opened near Union Square. By 1845, horse car services provided transport between Union Square and Harvard Square. Union Square became a hub of activity with streetcars making over 80 stops each day by 1900. Despite the removal of the streetcar Union Square continues to be a commercial core. With the re-installation of mass transit with the MTBA Green Line extension project, this area is a prime place for transit-oriented development (TOD). The subject property is less than a quarter of a mile from the proposed station. The area was rezoned in April of 2009 to allow for appropriate development around the new Green Line Station and allow Union Square to have a built form that is similar to what it was in the past before the streetcar network was removed.

Transit oriented developments present an alternative to suburban lifestyle preferences, with the ability to walk to shops, live in a culturally diverse setting, take advantage of enhanced mobility and create a

neighborhood where there is a mix of housing, jobs, shops and recreation within access to multiple modes of transportation. Successful TODs provide opportunities to live without daily dependence on a car or a need to use a car for daily convenience trips and opportunities for car-free residents to access jobs and daily needs.

TOD is a popular housing type in today's real estate market, and likely to remain so for the future. Demand for TOD housing continues to exceed supply, and some estimates suggest that by 2030, almost 25% of new buyers are going to be seeking TOD living arrangements. TOD residents appreciate the benefits of transit access and studies indicate that residents within ½ mile of transit are five times more likely to take it than those who are not. If these trends continue until 2030, despite needing no new large suburban family housing, there will be a need for millions of new residential housing near transit to meet existing demand. Reconnecting America estimates that there will be an additional demand for 10 million Americans who want to live near transit by 2030. Around the 295 stations on the Boston MBTA system, there are 396,000 households, with an expected demand for 750,000 additional households by 2030. Meeting this demand would require building over 1000 new units of housing around each transit station in the Boston area. Failure to meet this demand would push development further out to the fringes of the region and exacerbate existing traffic problems throughout the Boston area. Therefore, areas like Union Square are likely to be a top choice for residents seeking an urban community with eclectic shopping opportunities, nearby jobs, and access to transit.

### *Surrounding Neighborhood*

The Washington Street corridor was rezoned in 2009 to a CCD-55 district as part of the Union Square Rezoning process. The surrounding neighborhood holds a mix of uses and structures. To the north is the Prospect Hill neighborhood with two- and three-story houses. The properties across Washington Street and to the southern neighborhood are primarily triple deckers with small convenience stores in the first floor. There is 1-story commercial storefront across Boston Street (163 Washington Street), and commercial and residential condos at the corner of Washington Terrace and Washington Street. There are some auto-oriented uses along Washington Street including Monro Muffler and Valvoline. The Somerville Police Station is also nearby. The future Green Line Station at Washington Street will be located approximately a quarter of a mile east of the site. The Sullivan Square station on the Orange line is .85 miles east on Washington Street.





5. Impacts of Proposal: The proposal will redevelop the sites in a way that fulfills the purpose of the zoning district by creating an appropriate infill development that provides a scale and uses that are desired along the commercial corridor. The development will improve the streetscape by providing an attractive building that creates a street wall where there is currently a vacant property and an underutilized property. This site will be one of the first redevelopments in the area and it will hopefully be a catalyst along with the City's work to revitalize the neighborhood.

The retail component of the building will ensure that the ground floor is active and interesting for pedestrians. It will also provide a service for the residents in the area. The retail spaces will start to create a link between the existing storefronts at 163 Washington Street and Union Square. The commercial tenant, SCC will bring a stable presence like the Somerville Boys and Girls Club used to be. The residential component will add more residents to the Square to support the businesses and add to the vibrancy of the Square. The housing will also help meet the demand for housing near transit both nationally and in the Boston area. In rezoning Union Square careful consideration was taken to map the rezoning in areas where infill or redevelopment was desired, leaving the existing intact neighborhoods out of the study area. The intent was to increase the housing supply in certain areas so that supply meets the increased demand with the introduction of the new Green Line station, thereby reducing the potential for dramatic spikes in housing prices that could cause displacement of existing residents. Even before the Green Line station is built there is a demand for housing in the area. It is located near Union Squares and along three bus routes, the 86, 88, 91, and CT2.

The existing Cota-Struzzio funeral home is located along the rear property line which abuts the residential district. The Boys and Girls Club is along Washington and Boston Street, the site is mostly paved. The proposed buildings will be setback from the rear property line and will have a staggered height to provide a transition to the abutting house and more space for light and air for the neighbor. Also, there will be a heavily landscaped area on the southeastern property line that will buffer the site from the neighbors. This property is designed to CCD requirements but the proposed development is taller than the existing buildings on the sites. The CCD zoning district allows for a building 5 feet taller than the previous zoning district for this property. This will obstruct views for some properties along Washington Terrace and Munroe Street. The Applicant has been sensitive to feedback and kept the development along Washington Street as well as removing equipment from the SCC roof. The proposed buildings should block some traffic noise from Munroe Street. A shadow study was submitted with the application. In a shadow study submitted with the application, the shadows from the new development rarely reach abutting properties. Portions of the property at 205 Washington Street will be shadowed in the mornings.

The traffic study states that the proposal is expected to add a small amount of traffic to the roadway system; however, the level of service will be maintained. Two curb cuts will be eliminated as part of the project and the streetscape will be improved.

6. Green Building Practices: The building will meet the stretch energy code.

7. Comments:

*Fire Prevention:* A code compliant sprinkler and fire alarm system with radio master box will be required. Fire department access is required on two sides of each structure.

*Traffic & Parking:* The applicant proposes a mixed used development project at 181 & 197 Washington Street. The proposed site encompasses two parcels. The portion of the site at 181 Washington Street was previously occupied by the Somerville Boys and Girls Club. The portion of the site at 197 Washington St is occupied by a Funeral Home.



The proposed mixed used development project will consist of 84 residential apartment units, 6,500 sf of commercial retail space and 2,500 sf of office space. Proposed access/egress will be via driveways on Washington St and Boston Street. Per the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) 87 off street parking spaces are required. 86 parking spaces are provided including parking spaces for zip cars and a shared retail/residential parking space.

The applicant has hired a professional Transportation Firm, Design Consultants, Inc. (DCI) to prepare both a Parking Assessment and a Traffic Assessment of the proposed development. DCI has performed a comprehensive Parking and Traffic Assessment of the proposed project.

Based on the components of the Parking Assessment as prepared by DCI, the 86 parking spaces to be provided on the project site are expected to be sufficient for the parking demands of this mixed used development. Traffic and Parking does not disagree with this statement. However as a result of not providing the required 87 parking spaces, there will be a slight increase in vehicle delay, vehicle congestion and vehicle queues in the vicinity of the proposed development.

Based on the components of the Traffic Assessment as prepared by DCI, there will be minimal impact on the surveyed intersections in the immediate area of the proposed development. The Level of Service for these intersections will remain the same. It should be noted that there is a range within a Level of Service. Although the Level of Service will be the same, there can be a degradation in vehicle congestion, vehicle delay and vehicle queues. Traffic and Parking does not disagree with this aspects of the Traffic Assessment that the Level Of Service will be the same but there will be adverse impacts on vehicle traffic in this area.

Concerning making Boston Street two ways from Washington St to the curb cut on the development on Boston St, if there is community/neighborhood support for this proposal then Traffic and parking has no objections to this concept.

Based on the submitted Parking Assessment and Traffic Assessment by DCI, Traffic and Parking has no objections to this application.

*Wiring Inspection:* The Transformer should be accessible on all sides.

*Lights and Lines:* The sidewalk reconstruction work will require coordination with several City Departments, NStar, Comcast, RCN, etc.

*Engineering:* Engineering Department reviewed the application and is requiring a condition that the updated project plans meet the current City of Somerville Sewer Policy as it relates to wastewater generation and an increase greater than 2,000 GPD.

*Historic Preservation:* The HPC issued a memo to the DRC dated May 9, 2013 which is in full below.

As part of the Demolition Review Ordinance, during the nine (9) month demolition delay, the Applicant, Owner, and the Historic Preservation Commission are required to actively pursue alternatives to demolition of the preferably preserved building or structure. While demolition is the preference of the Applicant, the following are recommendations from the HPC to the DRC regarding design solutions that concern how to incorporate building components and materials, which are common to historic mixed-use buildings in Somerville, with specific consideration given to compatibility with historic structures in Union Square.

*Recommendation:*

*The preference of the Historic Preservation Commission is to retain and preserve the c.1860 Italianate structure at 197 Washington Street. This preference is compatible with the CCD zoning as one purpose of this District is to “preserve and complement historic structures,” (SZO §6.1.22.A.3).*

*Preservation of the historic building at 197 Washington Street, either on the current site or elsewhere on the property, could be accomplished by reducing the quantity of on-site parking spaces. The HPC notes two possible solutions to reduce the number of parking spaces, so more space can be designated for equally important uses, such as open space. The Applicant could provide parking off site or, in accordance with SZO §6.1.22.G.7, Payment in Lieu of Parking. This means the Applicant may make either a cash payment in lieu of providing the required parking, or a partial cash payment combined with a partial provision of the required vehicle or bicycle parking.*

*If preservation of the historic structure is not feasible, to make the proposed structures more compatible with the existing historic building stock in Union Square and to provide an appropriate historical reference to the site, the HPC recommends the following:*

- 1. Be more consistent with regard to articulating a clear base, middle, and top; while an effort has been made to recreate the base, middle, and top pattern for the façade of both proposed buildings, further attention to detail could enhance the perception of these horizontal elements.*
- 2. The vertical rhythm, or vertical articulation of bays, should be consistent between both buildings.*
- 3. The top of both buildings should feature a parapet, roof element, or change in massing to further visually differentiate the “top” from the stories below, and the building bays should be reflected in the design of the building “top,” to visually break up the length of the cornice and the overall massing.*
- 4. Regarding dimension, a cornice that is either more bold in design or has more depth would add dimension and shadow while the use of light and dark building materials, as well as projecting bays above the first story, could also be used to add dimension.*
- 5. Concern regarding the variety of window styles was expressed.*
- 6. Traditional storefront components should be included, such as awnings, vertically divided storefronts that are well defined, and a continuous knee-wall above the sidewalk grade.*
- 7. The historic marker should be relocated to a more appropriate location and a conservation plan should be provided to articulate a long-term plan to conserve this marker as well as note the type of treatment this historic artifact requires.*
- 8. The use of artwork to illustrate the historic structure could be done by incorporating an image(s) of the historic structure, as well as various other Union Square scenes, onto exterior building materials (such as a porcelain panel) at street level.*

*Design Review Committee:* The applicant presented to the DRC on May 9<sup>th</sup>. The following are two of the images presented and subsequent minutes from the meeting.



*SCC Building*



*CPI Building*

The DRC recommended the following:

- Develop an upper story setback. This will reduce the scale of the building and will break up the elevation.
- Complete the metal panel on the 5th story to give the appearance of a 'top.'
- Redesign the Boston Street side plaza retaining wall to maintain visual accessibility of plaza.
- Develop and strengthen the vertical separation in the elevation.
- The elevation is reading as planar and flat. Projection and recesses will help break up wide expanses of the same material.
- The DRC appreciated the deeper profile of the Hardie Artisan product and neighborhood context of the material.
- The storefront design will be reviewed with the DRC prior to the Certificate of Occupancy or when a tenant is signed.

*Ward Alderman:* Alderman Taylor was contacted and responded that he feels that the building has too many residential units.

## **II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT with SITE PLAN REVIEW (SZO §5.2):**

In order to grant a special permit with site plan review, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.2.5 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.2.5 in detail.

1. Information Supplied: The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.2.3 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project.
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 with site plan review.”

The development standards for the CCD (SZO §6.1.22.G) are met.

6.1.22.G CCD. All new developments shall meet the following standards:

1. Penthouses and Mechanical Equipment. The applicant has been sensitive to neighborhood concerns regarding views. The SCC building will have no equipment on the roof. The elevator and stairwell penthouses and mechanical areas are shown on the roof plan

and will be setback from the street edge and rear edge of the building by more than a 45 degree angle.

2. Service Areas and Loading Spaces. The loading area is between the two buildings and provides turn around space so that delivery vehicles can enter and exit the site forward facing. The mechanical spaces and trash room are accessible from the rear of the property.

3. Pedestrian Oriented Requirements. The building has separate pedestrian entrances for the residential use and retail spaces. There will be up to six (depending on tenants secured) entrances along Washington Street from a 10' wide sidewalk. The entrances to the SCC office space and residences are off of the courtyards.

4. Lighting. There are two light fixtures proposed on the site, a pole mounted parking deck fixture and an up/down accent fixture for use on the building. A standard condition is part of this report that exterior lighting should not trespass onto adjacent properties. The accent fixture is appropriate for the CCD district.

5. Transition to Abutting Residential Districts. The applicant has been responsive to neighborhood concerned about the large development and complying with CCD-55 regulations by placing the building along Washington Street. The site plan complies with the setbacks for CCD districts abutting a residential zones. There is a 31-foot setback from the rear lot line, the outermost 10 feet will be landscaped.

6. Parking Design. Parking will be accessible from Washington and Boston Street and be hidden from view by the buildings. Views of the parking from Washington Street will be limited to the extent between the buildings which serves as the drive aisle for the parking area. Views of the parking from Boston Street will be relieved by plantings at the lot line and a resident recreation area.

All new development must undergo design review under Section 5.6 of this Ordinance, with findings giving consideration to the Design Guidelines of Section 6.1.22.H.

- i. The building will fill in approximately 270 feet of streetwall along Washington Street.
- ii. The massing and the height of the building are articulated in a manner that is compatible with the physical character of the mixed use buildings in the surrounding area. A rhythm to the building is established with a base, middle and top, with cornice lines and vertical accents to break up the building's massing.
- iii. The mass of the structure is proposed along Washington Street, away from the residential neighborhood to the north.
- iv. The retail portions of the building have storefront systems and are shown with 3 individual entrances each, which are typical elements for Somerville storefronts. However, there is potential that a single tenant would occupy more than one bay. The retail portions of the façade meet the guideline for having 75 percent transparent material on the ground floor. The windows will be conditioned to maintain the ability for pedestrians to view the interior of the space as specified in this guideline. The residential upper floors will have sufficient, typical residential windows.

Flat facades have been avoided in a variety of ways. There are vertical accent bands to break up the length of the buildings. The 5<sup>th</sup> floors are slightly setback and use an accent material to create a 'top' to the building. There is a variety of materials including hardie plank, metal panel, and storefront systems.

- v. The exterior building materials will be high quality, durable materials including the Artisan line by Hardie in more than one color, metal panel, and precast.
- vi. The Washington Street and Boston Street elevations have the same materials and a base, middle, and top. The other elevations are the Artisan product line by Hardie. The windows on both buildings will be the same quality and pattern as the Washington and Boston Street elevations.
- vii. A signage band has been provided on the building but there are no additional details about signage at this time. Review and approval of the specifications of the lighting scheme and materials of the signage will be a condition of approval and if additional signage locations are desired, a new special permit will be required.
- viii. The uses on the ground floor will be pedestrian-oriented as they are proposed to be in the retail and service cluster. The Somerville Zoning Ordinance classifies these uses to be pedestrian-oriented uses because they are typically uses that people frequent and are open to passersby.
- ix. The proposal does not include artist live/work spaces.
- x. Units in the CPI building range from 470 to 908 square feet and the average is 738 square feet per unit. There are studios, one, and two bedroom units. SCC's building has units that range from 627 to 1,214 square feet and the average is 867 square feet per unit. There are one, two, and three bedroom units proposed. The affordable rental units will accommodate a variety of family sizes. The CPI building does not provide family housing but does provide a variety of unit types.
- xi. The existing sidewalks in front of the site are roughly 6' wide. The Site Layout Plan proposes a new sidewalk ranging from 9.5' wide at Washington Terrace to 21.5 feet wide at Boston Avenue. The changes in width are due to the curvature of the street. This satisfied the requirements of the SZO. However, the design also includes a bike lane in each direction, 12 parking spaces, and the existing bus stop. The sidewalk extension and striping would be an improvement for Washington Street since the current striping is vague for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

There are several transportation planning initiatives affecting this area of Washington Street. Due to this, Planning Staff has suggested an and/or condition (A+B or C below).

A. Build the sidewalk and related street trees, etc. from the corner of Boston Ave to the Corner of Washington Terrace

B. Install pavement markings from Boston Ave to the Post Office, including the crosswalks, bike lanes, etc. with thermoplastic in a format acceptable to the city

OR:

C. If, in the sole discretion of the City of Somerville, the City determines that adjacent work and forthcoming projects on Washington Street deem it necessary to delay a portion of or all of this work, then the applicant will pay the City the cost of having the City complete this work, based upon a construction estimate provided to the City by the City's own consultant team.

3. Purpose of District: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with the intent of the specific zoning district as specified in Article 6".

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the CCD district and the Arts Overlay district. The purpose of a CCD district is, "to promote appropriate infill development along heavily traveled transportation corridors." The proposal will increase investment in the neighborhood in the heavily travelled Washington Street corridor. There is a mix of commercial space and residential units that will contribute to the active mix of uses. Parking behind the building will improve pedestrian safety on the block. Cyclist access will improve with the bike lane along Washington Street. The entrances along the sidewalk promote pedestrian activity.

4. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the existing natural features of the site and is compatible with the characteristics of the surrounding area, and that the scale, massing and detailing of the buildings are compatible with those prevalent in the surrounding area".

The building form is appropriate for the site because the massing is along the Washington Street corridor and completes the streetwall. This building will be a new landmark for the area. The proposed building includes detailing to break up the façade including vertical bays, a top story setback, cornice lines, and a variety of materials that creates a modern looking building that relates to the surrounding area. Although the current site has a front lawn, it is underutilized and not used as a civic space. The courtyards in the current proposal are more likely to be used by the public. The land uses of retail and service tenants with residential units above are compatible with the uses in the surrounding area.

5. Functional Design: The project must meet "accepted standards and criteria for the functional design of facilities, structures, and site construction."

The buildings will function well as a mixed-use building. The retail spaces and residential lobby are accessible from the street and courtyards. The parking behind the building provides spaces for the residential units and retail uses of the project.

6. Impact on Public Systems: The project will "not create adverse impacts on the public services and facilities serving the development, such as the sanitary sewer system, the storm drainage system, the public water supply, the recreational system, the street system for vehicular traffic, and the sidewalks and footpaths for pedestrian traffic."

The Drainage Report submitted with the application confirms that this project adheres to the City storm water management policy. The design includes collection, detention, and infiltration of storm water to achieve reduction of offsite flows. As conditioned, the Applicant will work with City Engineering Staff to comply with all regulatory requirements.

7. 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."

The proposed primarily residential building will not result in any environmental impacts beyond activities that are typically associated with residential units.

8. Consistency with Purposes: “Is consistent with: 1) the purposes of this Ordinance, particularly those set forth in Article 1 and Article 5; and 2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit with site plan review which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those at the beginning of the various sections.”

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 encourage housing for persons of all income levels; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality. The proposal fills two underutilized parcels with development that’s appropriate for Commercial Corridor Districts. The development provides new options for housing including 44 affordable rental units.

9. Preservation of Landform and Open Space: The Applicant has to ensure that “the existing land form is preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing grading and the erosion or stripping of steep slopes, and by maintaining man-made features that enhance the land form, such as stone walls, with minimal alteration or disruption. In addition, all open spaces should be designed and planted to enhance the attractiveness of the neighborhood. Whenever possible, the development parcel should be laid out so that some of the landscaped areas are visible to the neighborhood.”

Due to the existing funeral home lawn the site will be less pervious post construction. However, developing around the hill is not practical and does not comply with the street wall requirements of the CCD districts. Landscaping will be added to the site to buffer the residential neighbors to the north and some landscaping will be added to the courtyards. Landscaped areas in this infill districts are encouraged to be along residential abutters.

10. Relation of Buildings to Environment: The Applicant must ensure that “buildings are: 1) located harmoniously with the land form, vegetation and other natural features of the site; 2) compatible in scale, design and use with those buildings and designs which are visually related to the development site; 3) effectively located for solar and wind orientation for energy conservation; and 4) advantageously located for views from the building while minimizing the intrusion on views from other buildings.”

There are no natural features that remain on the eastern portion of the site where the Boys and Girls Club building is located. The hill that leads to the Cota-Struzziero Funeral Home will be removed. The existing retaining wall at the back of the property will be maintained. The building design visually relates to the development site as detailed in the design guidelines in finding 2. The building is oriented to the street and the massing is shifted away from the residential abutters.

11. Stormwater Drainage: The Applicant must demonstrate that “special attention has been given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Storm water shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, and powered area, and routed through a well-engineered system designed with appropriate storm water management techniques. Skimming devices, oil, and grease traps, and similar facilities at the collection or discharge points for paved surface runoff should be used, to retain oils, greases, and particles. Surface water on all paved areas shall be collected and/or routed so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved area. In larger developments, where practical, the routing of runoff through sheet flow, swales or other means increasing filtration and percolation is strongly encouraged, as is use of retention or detention ponds. In instances of below grade parking (such as garages) or low lying areas prone to flooding, installation of pumps or other devices to prevent backflow through drains or catch basins may be required.”



The project meets the stormwater and sanitary sewer requirements. The Engineering Department will contact the Applicant's engineer to obtain this information and it is a condition of approval.

12. Historic or Architectural Significance: The project must be designed "with respect to Somerville's heritage, any action detrimental to historic structures and their architectural elements shall be discouraged insofar as is practicable, whether those structures exist on the development parcel or on adjacent properties. If there is any removal, substantial alteration or other action detrimental to buildings of historic or architectural significance, these should be minimized and new uses or the erection of new buildings should be compatible with the buildings or places of historic or architectural significance on the development parcel or on adjacent properties."

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission deemed the Cota-Struzziero Funeral Home significant and preferably preserved. The HPC did not find the Boys and Girls Club preferably preserved. See the Historic Preservation comments section above for more detail.

13. Enhancement of Appearance: The Applicant must demonstrate that "the natural character and appearance of the City is enhanced. Awareness of the existence of a development, particularly a non residential development or a higher density residential development, should be minimized by screening views of the development from nearby streets, residential neighborhoods of City property by the effective use of existing land forms, or alteration thereto, such as berms, and by existing vegetation or supplemental planting."

The proposal replaces two underutilized buildings with two mixed use buildings. The proposal includes landscaped buffers along the residential district and courtyards accessible to the public.

14. Lighting: With respect to lighting, the Applicant must ensure that "all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be adequately lit and designed as much as possible to allow for surveillance by neighbors and passersby."

All site lighting will be directed downward without spilling onto adjacent properties and the night sky.

15. Emergency Access: The Applicant must ensure that "there is easy access to buildings, and the grounds adjoining them, for operations by fire, police, medical and other emergency personnel and equipment."

The building will be accessible from Washington and Boston Streets and between the two buildings.

16. Location of Access: The Applicant must ensure that "the location of intersections of access drives with the City arterial or collector streets minimizes traffic congestion."

One existing curbcut will be maintained on Washington Street as well as the existing curbcut on Boston Street. Two curb cuts on Washington Street will be closed.

17. Utility Service: The Applicant must ensure that "electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment are placed underground from the source or connection, or are effectively screened from public view."

All utilities will be located underground. The HVAC units will be located on the lower portions of the roof of the SCC building and in the middle of the building surrounded by a perforated metal screen.

18. Prevention of Adverse Impacts: The Applicant must demonstrate that “provisions have been made to prevent or minimize any detrimental effect on adjoining premises, and the general neighborhood, including, (1) minimizing any adverse impact from new hard surface ground cover, or machinery which emits heat, vapor, light or fumes; and (2) preventing adverse impacts to light, air and noise, wind and temperature levels in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development;”

The proposal will maintain the minimum amount of landscaping required on the site. The proposed residential building will not result in any adverse impacts beyond activities that are typically associated with residential units. The trash room is in the building and not visible from a public view.

19. Signage: The Applicant must ensure that “the size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall reflect the scale and character of the proposed buildings.”

A signage band has been provided on the building but there are no additional details about signage at this time. Review and approval of the specifications of the lighting scheme and materials of the signage will be a condition of approval and if additional signage locations are desired, a new special permit will be required.

20. Screening of Service Facilities: The Applicant must ensure that “exposed transformers and other machinery, storage, service and truck loading areas, dumpsters, utility buildings, and similar structures shall be effectively screened by plantings or other screening methods so that they are not directly visible from either the proposed development or the surrounding properties.”

There is a transformer located in the landscaped area behind the CPI building and an emergency generator in the parking area. There are evergreen proposed between the transformer and Washington Terrace. The other utility rooms are accessed from the rear of the building.

21. Screening of Parking:

The parking spaces will be located behind the building. The rear lot line will be landscaped.

### **III. RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §5.2**

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 with SITE PLAN REVIEW**.

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 a Special Permit with Site Review (SZO §5.2) to construct two mixed use buildings of approx 34,696 nsf and approx 32,466 nsf under §6.1.22.D.1 and §6.1.22.D.2. The uses include small and medium retail of approx 6,500 84 residential units per SZO §7.13.B, §7.13.C, & §7.13.E and a by-right office use of approx 2,770 sf per §7.13.A. The applicant seeks a Special Permit under SZO §5.1 to reduce the number of parking spaces SZO 9.13.F and 9.17.2.A, to share a driveway and access per SZO §9.17.2.B and shared parking and loading, and parking on a separate lot per SZO §9.17.2.B. Article 13 Inclusionary Housing will apply. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	CO / BP	ISD/Plng.							
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>April 16, 2013</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>Dates Vary (June 11, 2013)</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A0.01-Project Summary, C1.00-Existing Conditions, C2.00-Certified Plot Plan, C3.00-Site Layout Plan, C4.00-Site Grading and Utilities Plan, C5.00-Site Sections and Construction Details, L1.00-Landscape Plan, A1.00-First Floor Plan, A1.01-Second Floor Plan, A1.02-Third Floor Plan, A1.03-Fourth Floor Plan, A1.04-Fifth Floor Plan, A1.05-Roof Plan, A3.00-Exterior Elevations, A3.01-Shadow Study 2 pm, A3.02-Shadow Study 9am, A3.03-3D Views, A3.04-3D Views, A3.05-3D views, A7.10-SCC Bldg Unit Plans, A7.11-CPI Bldg Unit Plans )</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	April 16, 2013	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	Dates Vary (June 11, 2013)	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A0.01-Project Summary, C1.00-Existing Conditions, C2.00-Certified Plot Plan, C3.00-Site Layout Plan, C4.00-Site Grading and Utilities Plan, C5.00-Site Sections and Construction Details, L1.00-Landscape Plan, A1.00-First Floor Plan, A1.01-Second Floor Plan, A1.02-Third Floor Plan, A1.03-Fourth Floor Plan, A1.04-Fifth Floor Plan, A1.05-Roof Plan, A3.00-Exterior Elevations, A3.01-Shadow Study 2 pm, A3.02-Shadow Study 9am, A3.03-3D Views, A3.04-3D Views, A3.05-3D views, A7.10-SCC Bldg Unit Plans, A7.11-CPI Bldg Unit Plans )
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Any changes to the approved site plan, elevations, or use that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
<b>Affordable Housing/Linkage</b>										
2	Written certification of the creation of affordable housing units, any fractional payment required, or alternative methods of compliance, must be obtained from the Housing Department before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.).	CO	Housing							

3	Affordable Housing Implementation Plan (AHIP)	BP	SPGA/ Housing	
4	Written certification of the creation of affordable housing units, any fractional payment required, or alternative methods of compliance, must be obtained from the Housing Department before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.).	CO	Housing	
<b>Pre-Construction</b>				
5	The Applicant will be required to demonstrate that the updated project plans meet the current City of Somerville Sewer Policy as it relates to wastewater generation and an increase greater than 2,000 GPD.	BP	Eng.	
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	
<b>Construction Impacts</b>				
7	The applicant shall post the name and phone number of the general contractor at the site entrance where it is visible to people passing by.	During Construction	Plng.	
8	The Applicant shall at his 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	
9	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>				
10	The vertical expression of metal panels on the SCC building should be connected. The Applicant will resubmit the elevations for final approval.	BP	Plng/ ISD	
<b>Site</b>				
11	Landscaping should be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards;	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
13	The electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment shall be placed underground from the source or connection. The utilities plan shall be supplied to the Wiring Inspector before installation.	Installation of Utilities	Wiring Inspector	
14	All new sidewalks will be installed by the Applicant in accordance with the specifications of the Highway Superintendent. Specifically, all driveway aprons shall be concrete;	CO	Plng.	

15	The Applicant will A. Build the sidewalk and related street trees, etc. from the corner of Boston Ave to the Corner of Washington Terrace B. Install pavement markings from Boston St to the Post Office, including the crosswalks, bike lanes, etc. in a format acceptable to the city OR: C. If, in the sole discretion of the City of Somerville, the City determines that adjacent work and forthcoming projects on Washington Street deem it necessary to delay a portion of or all of this work, then the applicant will pay the City the cost of having the City complete this work, based upon a construction estimate provided to the City by the City's own consultant team.	CO	Plng.	
<b>Traffic &amp; Parking</b>				
16	Parking spaces off of Boston Street will be marked to ensure that they are dedicated to the tenants of the SCC residences.	CO	Plng	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>				
17	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.	Cont.	ISD	
<b>Public Safety</b>				
18	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
19	To the extent possible, all exterior lighting must be confined to the subject property, cast light downward and must not intrude, interfere or spill onto neighboring properties.	CO	Plng.	
<b>Signage</b>				
20	Signage will be limited to the signage band on the elevations. Signage plans shall be submitted to Planning Staff for review and approval when a tenant is secured. Signage lighting after 10p.m. facing residential property will be turned down or off.	CO/Cont.	Plng.	
<b>Final Sign-Off</b>				
21	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.	

