



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2016-39

Date: May 4, 2016

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 47 Dane Street

Applicant Name: Bill Mandell

Applicant Address: 20C DelCarmine Street, Suite 101, Wakefield MA, 01880

Owner Name: 47 Dane Street LLC

Owner Address: 20C DelCarmine Street, Suite 101, Wakefield MA, 01880

Agent Name: NA

Agent Address: NA

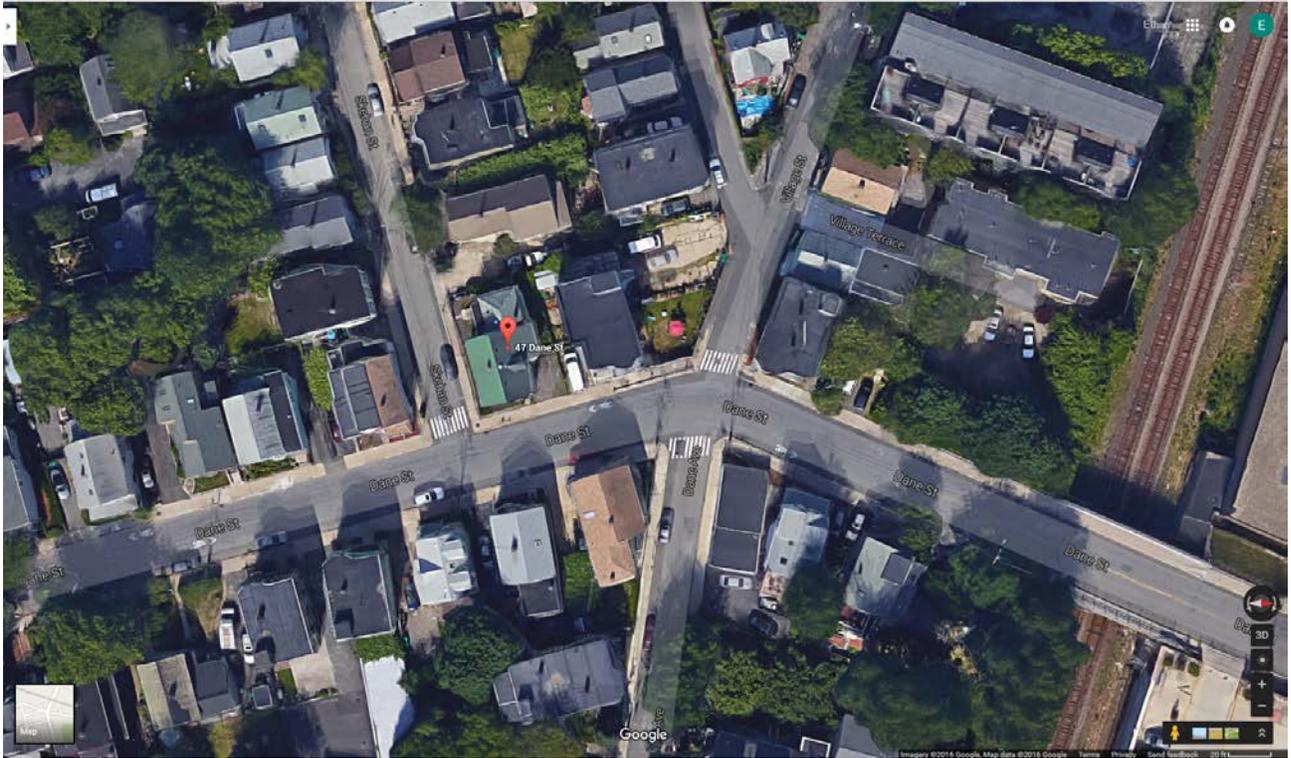
Alderman: Maryann Heuston

Legal Notice: Applicant Bill Mandell, and Owner 47 Dane Street LLC, seek a Special Permit to modify a nonconforming structure by adding living space in the basement. Zone RB, Ward 2.

Dates of Public Hearing: April 20, 2016

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 2,771sf lot containing a 3,800sf 2-1/2 story 2-family structure with a gable roof and rear decks.



Aerial view of property



Street view of property

2. Proposal: The proposal is to finish part of the basement by adding two bedrooms and a bathroom. The total number of bedrooms will increase from 5 to 6, not changing the parking requirement. The floor area ratio increases from .82 to .99 and remains conforming.

3. Green Building Practices: All construction will meet the Mass Energy code and Energy Star compliance.

4. Comments:

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §4.4):

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 structure is currently nonconforming with respect to the following dimensional requirements: all setbacks and parking.

The addition of bedrooms in the basement necessitates the addition of window wells for egress. This alteration to a nonconforming structure requires the Applicant to obtain special permits under §4.4.1 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO). The side yard setback where the window wells are proposed is 5'3", the window wells will project into that side yard by approximately 40".

Section 4.4.1 states that "[l]awfully existing one-and two-family dwellings which are only used as residences, which are nonconforming with respect to dimensional requirements, may be enlarged, extended, renovated or altered by special permit granted by the SPGA in accordance with the procedures of Article 5."

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.

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 The purposes of the Ordinance are 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 lessen congestion in the streets; to protect health; to secure safety from

fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to preserve the historical and architectural resources of the City; to adequately protect the natural environment; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; to protect and promote a housing stock that can accommodate the diverse household sizes and life stages of Somerville residents at all income levels, paying particular attention to providing housing affordable to individuals and families with low and moderate incomes; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district, 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."*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The surrounding neighborhood contains multi-family homes of various architectural styles.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): *The impacts of the proposal on the neighborhood will be minimal.*

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.*

Impacts of Proposal (Environmental): No adverse impacts on the surrounding area anticipated as a result of excessive noise, illumination, glare, dust smoke or vibration, or from emissions of noxious materials, or pollution of water ways or ground water, or interference with radio or television signals.

6. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation: *The circulation patterns for motor vehicles and pedestrians which would result from the use or structure will not result in conditions that create traffic congestion or the potential for traffic accidents on the site or in the surrounding area.*

Impacts of Proposal (Circulation): No traffic congestion or potential for accidents are anticipated as a result of this 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.

9. **Impact on Affordable Housing:** *In conjunction with its decision to grant or deny a special permit for a structure of four or more units of housing, the SPGA shall make a finding and determination as to how implementation of the project would increase, decrease, or leave unchanged the number of units of rental and home ownership housing that are affordable to households with low or moderate incomes, as defined by HUD, for different sized households and units.*

No impact on affordable housing.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under §4.4

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 special permit to modify a nonconforming structure. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant: | BP/CO | ISD/Plng. | | | | | | | |
| | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date (Stamp Date)</th> <th>Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>March 23, 2016</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April 28, 2016</td> <td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (1-3)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | Date (Stamp Date) | Submission | March 23, 2016 | Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office | April 28, 2016 | Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (1-3) |
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| March 23, 2016 | Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office | | | | | | | | | |
| April 28, 2016 | Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (1-3) | | | | | | | | | |
| Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations/use that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Applicant shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors to Planning Staff for review and approval prior to construction. | BP | Plng. | | | | | | | |
| Final Sign-Off | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 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. | | | | | | | |

