



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

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF

GEORGE PROAKIS, *DIRECTOR OF PLANNING*
LORI MASSA, *SENIOR PLANNER*
AMIE HAYES, *PLANNER*
MELISSA WOODS, *PLANNER*
DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

Case #: ZBA 2014-64

Date: July 31, 2014

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 55 Putnam St #1

Applicant and Owner Name: Michael Reed

Applicant Address: 55 Putnam St #1, Somerville, MA 02143

Alderman: Robert J. McWatters

Legal Notice: Applicant & Owner Michael Reed seeks a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming structure by adding an exterior spiral stair as a third floor egress. RA zone. Ward 3.

Dates of Public Hearing: August 6, 2014

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject parcel is a 5,500 square foot residential lot with a 2 ½ story, two-family dwelling.
2. Proposal: The Applicant proposes to install an exterior spiral stair as a third floor egress. The structure is currently non-conforming with varying 3.3-7.3 foot setbacks on the side of the proposed stair. The proposed stair would not further decrease the setbacks.
3. Green Building Practices: New outdoor lighting would be compact fluorescent, and door framing to be cellular PVC with high recycled content.
4. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.



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



55 Putnam: Front and side of proposed stair



55 Putnam: Rear and side of proposed stair

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."*

Lawfully existing two-family dwellings, which are nonconforming with respect to dimensional requirements, may be enlarged, expanded, renovated, or altered by special permit granted by the SPGA in accordance with the procedures of Article 5. The structure is nonconforming in terms of side setbacks, which vary from 3.3 feet to 7.3 feet.

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 providing for and maintaining the uniquely integrated structure of uses in

the City and conserving the value of land and buildings; 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 as it is being done as part of a renovation to a residential property.

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 surrounding neighborhood is a mix of 1- and 2- family homes. As noted by the applicant, some other homes of this size use spiral staircases. Additionally, since the stair would be mostly hidden from street view, it would have minimal impact on neighborhood character.

7. Housing Impact: *This proposal 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.*

<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 safety and livability.

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 20, 2014</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>(July 15, 2014)</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (Site plans showing proposed location, plan, elevation and perspective of proposed stair.)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	June 20, 2014	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	(July 15, 2014)	Plans submitted to OSPCD (Site plans showing proposed location, plan, elevation and perspective of proposed stair.)
	Date (Stamp Date)				Submission					
	June 20, 2014				Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office					
	(July 15, 2014)				Plans submitted to OSPCD (Site plans showing proposed location, plan, elevation and perspective of proposed stair.)					
Any changes to the plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
Construction Impacts										
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							
Final Sign-Off										
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	Plng.							

