



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2013-64-R1-12/2014

Date: January 15, 2014

Recommendation: Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 23-25 Calvin Street

Applicant & Owner Name: Philip Weiss

Applicant & Owner Address: 102 Wallace Street Somerville, MA 02144

Alderman: Maryann Heuston

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner, Philip Weiss, seek a revision to a special permit to change the approved exterior material, roof height behind the parapet wall, and window alterations. RB Zone. Ward 2.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – January 21, 2015

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is currently under construction. A triple decker was approved (ZBA #2013-64) after a fire destroyed the subject and surrounding properties.
2. Proposal: The proposal is to make minor modification to the original approval that are not De Minimis changes. The first is to change the exterior cladding on the front façade from siding to a metal panel and wood treatment. The second is to increase the height of the building. The building, as approved, had a parapet roofline. The proposal is to increase the height on the third floor but keep it within the original height of the parapet. Lastly, there are some window and door alterations.
3. Green Building Practices: None listed on the application.
4. Comments:



Fire Prevention: Fire prevention has reviewed the plans and has no comments at this time.

Ward Alderman: Alderman Heuston has been contacted and has no comments at this time.

II. FINDINGS FOR REVISION (SZO §5.3.8):

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."

Per SZO 5.3.8 revisions in the plan may be made to the plan so long as there is full notice and public hearing.

In considering a revision under §5.3.8 of the SZO, Staff find that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The previously approved height of the structure was 32'-4" and will be increased to 35'-9" which is within the allowed height of 40'. The window changes match the style of the proposed cladding of the home which is shiplap wood siding, metal siding, and cementitious clapboard on the sides and rear.

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, providing for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; and to encourage housing for persons of all income levels.

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."

The surrounding neighborhood is densely developed, comprised of two- and three-family homes, most of which are triple-deckers with flat roofs. The neighborhood is in an accessible, walkable, and bikeable location to Beacon Avenue, Harvard University, and Union Square. Calvin Street is narrow with parking only allowed on the even side of the street.

There are no impacts to the proposal.

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

This revision will have no effect on the stock of existing affordable housing.

6. 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.*

The proposal will not make a contribution to the SomerVision target numbers but will allow a homeowner to resume rebuilding after a fire.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under §5.3.8

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the requested **REVISION**.

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. The original conditions will stand.

