



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2015-23

Date: June 4, 2015

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 198 Central Street

Applicant & Owner Name: Dean Casassa

Applicant & Owner Address: 13 Highland View Ave. Winchester, MA 01890

Alderman: Mark Neidergang

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner, Dean Casassa, seek a Special Permit to alter rear decks into rear egress on a nonconforming 3-family. RA zone. Ward 5.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – June 10, 2015

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 2,560 square foot lot with an existing 3-family, row house type, dwelling unit. These row houses are part of a local historic district. Vehicular access on the site is from Adams Street. The rear yard is a parking lot.
2. Proposal: The proposal is to alter the existing rear decks to provide egress for the second floor unit. There are other renovations being done on all three units. The egress will be in the same footprint as the existing decks. The third floor will still be access from a fire escape.
3. Green Building Practices: None listed on the application.
4. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted and has no comments at this time.

Historic Preservation: The project was reviewed by the HPC on May 19, 2015. The applicant has been given a certificate of appropriateness for the work on the back of the house.

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

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT:

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 nonconforming structures other than one- and two-family dwellings may be enlarged, extended, renovated or altered only by special permit. Structural changes to a 3-family require a special permit.

In considering a special permit 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 promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville and to preserve the historical and architectural resources of the City.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the 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." This property is a three-family home but the alterations are minor and not visible from Central Street.

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 residential with a mix of building forms, this block of Central Street has beautiful, well-preserved houses. The subject property is near Broadway on the top of Winter Hill. There are a couple of religious buildings nearby including Temple Bnai Brith and Vida Real.

There are little to no impacts to the surrounding property except those associated with residential use.

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

There will be no impact on 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.*

This project does not contribute to the goals and policies of SomerVision but will allow a homeowner to modify their property in a modest way.

III. RECOMMENDATION

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 alteration of the rear decks into rear egress. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/ Plng.							
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>April 30, 2015</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>May 29, 2015</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A1.0 Floor Plans, A1.1 Floor Plans, A2.0 Existing Elevations, A2.1 New Elevations)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	April 30, 2015	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	May 29, 2015	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A1.0 Floor Plans, A1.1 Floor Plans, A2.0 Existing Elevations, A2.1 New Elevations)
	Date (Stamp Date)				Submission					
	April 30, 2015				Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office					
	May 29, 2015				Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A1.0 Floor Plans, A1.1 Floor Plans, A2.0 Existing Elevations, A2.1 New Elevations)					
Any changes to the approved plans or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
Construction Impacts										

2	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	
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	
Miscellaneous				
4	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	
Public Safety				
5	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
Final Sign-Off				
6	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.	

