



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2012-47

Date: July 5, 2012

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 10 Cleveland Street

Applicant Name: Alan Peterson

Applicant Address: 7 Fairfield Street, Medford, MA 02155

Property Owner Name: Art of Building LLC

Property Owner Address: 7 Fairfield Street, Medford, MA 02155

Alderman: Thomas Taylor

Legal Notice: Applicant, Alan Peterson, and Owner, Art of Building LLC, seek a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming two-family dwelling that includes rearranging windows and doors on each façade of the building and modifying the front porch.

Zoning District/Ward: Residence B / Ward 3

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit

Date of Application: June 12, 2012

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – **Wednesday, July 11, 2012**

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject parcel is a 3,190 square foot sloped lot in the Spring Hill neighborhood near the corner of Central and Cleveland streets in a Residence B district. The parcel contains a two-family gable-end dwelling with 3,172 usable square feet. There are two-story enclosed porches on both the front and rear of the building. The parcel is located within a Residence B district and is adjacent to multi-family dwellings and a parochial school on Central Street.

2. **Proposal:** The Applicant, Alan Peterson, is currently rehabilitating this two-family dwelling and seeks a Special Permit to alter the location of multiple windows and doors as well as



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modify the front entry porch. Various windows and doors will be altered according to changes with the interior plan of the building. Upon completion, Unit 1 will have a master bedroom and bathroom in the basement and a second bedroom on the first floor. Unit 2 will have a master bedroom on the second floor and the attic will contain two additional bedrooms and a bathroom.

The front entry porch, which was previously enclosed, will be modified to re-open the left side and center of the porch. 36" railings will be added as well as handrails, and the porch stairs will be rebuilt and relocated slightly to the left. The right portion, to remain enclosed, will have one new double-hung window installed on the front façade, two windows on the right side façade, and an entrance to the second floor unit on the left side of the enclosure that will open into a mudroom with a staircase. The second story of the front porch will gain four new double-hung windows, grouped in two pairs, and both pairs will be centered on this portion of the front façade. Like the first story, two windows will be located on the right side façade of the porch and one window will be located on the left side of the front porch enclosure. There are also two windows located under the gable that will each be given replacement sashes.

Doors and windows located on the projecting porch of the rear façade will also be altered. Currently, the two-story enclosed rear porch has six windows on the rear façade of the first and second story, and two windows on each side façade of each story. The windows for the rear façade of the first and second story porch will be replaced with two new centrally located sliding windows that are six feet wide and five feet in height. One window on each side façade of each story will also replace the two existing windows. However, two windows on the left side of the first story will be replaced with sliding glass doors that open onto a new rear stair which will extend down the side of the building. The existing stair to the right of the rear porch will be retained but will be reconstructed.

Due to the sloping nature of the lot, four additional windows are located at the basement level, inset beneath the projecting porch on the rear façade. The windows and enclosed area beneath the porch at the basement level will be removed and this space will be reframed to be slightly smaller, as the right side will remain open. One new sliding window, consistent with those above, and one new fixed window, two feet wide by five feet in height, will be placed on the new re-enclosed façade. A new door will be installed on the left side façade, under the new rear stair, where there is currently a door and a window.

The right side elevation, or west façade, will have two new windows added near the front of the building, two other windows will be rearranged to accommodate interior changes, and two more windows will be removed from the basement at grade level. The two new windows added to this façade will be in the front stairwell, one located on each floor. The first floor window will be small, 2.5 feet in width by 2 feet in height, and have an awning while the second story window will be 2'-2" in width by 4 feet in height. The two windows being modified on this façade are located on the second floor toward the rear of the building. One opening will have a casement window installed that is shorter than the present window and the other will be moved approximately one foot toward the front of the building. The two basement windows to be removed are located beneath the new windows that are to be located in the front stairwell.

The left side elevation, or east façade, will have three windows modified to accommodate interior changes. These windows are all located near the rear façade, one on each floor and in the basement. The basement and first floor windows will lose some of their height and the second story window will be moved approximately 2.5 feet toward the front façade.

Two new AC condenser units will be installed, one for each unit. One will be located beneath the existing rear stair and the other will be located beneath the new stair to be constructed on the left side of the enclosed porch.



10 Cleveland Street, front and right side façade

3. Nature of Application: The structure is nonconforming due to various dimensional requirements including minimum lot size and front, side and rear yard setbacks. This proposal alters multiple nonconformities as the Applicant is remodeling the interior plan of this two-family dwelling. According to the SZO §4.4.1, a nonconforming two-family dwelling can only alter a nonconformity through Special Permit.
4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The subject property is located in the Spring Hill neighborhood within a Residence B district and abuts several other two- and three-family dwellings. An 8-unit apartment building is immediately adjacent, located on the corner of Cleveland and Central streets. There are multiple historic properties within the immediate area and a parochial school is located nearby along Central Street.
5. Impacts of Proposal: The proposal to alter a nonconforming two-family dwelling, which includes rearranging windows and doors on each façade of the building and modifying the front porch, will not be detrimental to the structure. This proposal will not only restore the structure and enhance the building, this proposal will also improve the streetscape of the entire block. These modifications will also enable new residents to better utilize the interior space of this two-family dwelling.
6. Green Building Practices: The application states that new foam insulation will be used to achieve better energy efficiency. High performance AC mechanicals will also be installed as part of this proposal.
7. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted and explained that a code compliant fire alarm system will need to be installed.

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted and per an email to Staff on Monday, June 25, 2012, Alderman Taylor stated his support of this proposal.

Historic Preservation: Historic Preservation Staff indicated the following comments to Planning Staff on Monday, July 02, 2012. Although this two-family dwelling is not designated historic at the local or national level, Preservation Staff supports this renovation project as the Applicant has taken the historic nature and architectural quality of the building into consideration during this process. This proposal will not only restore some of the original architectural details but will also enhance some of the later additions, such as the two-story enclosed front porch.

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."

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. This proposal will restore the structure and enhance the building as well as improve the streetscape of the entire block. These modifications will also enable new residents to better utilize the interior space of this two-family dwelling.

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; 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; to preserve the historical and architectural resources of the City; and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the Residence B district, §6.1.2, which is, "[t]o 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 proposal to alter this nonconforming two-family dwelling has been designed to be compatible with the built and unbuilt surrounding area. The proposed changes restore the structure, enhance the building,

and improve the overall streetscape. These modifications only alter the exterior to allow better use of the interior space.

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 a Special Permit to alter a nonconforming two-family dwelling, which includes rearranging windows and doors on each façade of the building and modifying the front porch. 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>(June 12, 2012)</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>June 25, 2012 (July 3, 2012)</td><td>Plot & proposed plans submitted to OSPCD (A-00, A-01, A-02, A-03, A-04, A-05, A-06, A-07, A-08, and A-09)</td></tr><tr><td>June 14, 2012 (July 3, 2012)</td><td>Existing building elevation plans submitted to OSPCD</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(June 12, 2012)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	June 25, 2012 (July 3, 2012)	Plot & proposed plans submitted to OSPCD (A-00, A-01, A-02, A-03, A-04, A-05, A-06, A-07, A-08, and A-09)	June 14, 2012 (July 3, 2012)	Existing building elevation plans submitted to OSPCD
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Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
2	New siding type and color, roofing, trim and similar materials shall match or be complimentary to the existing materials.	CO	Plng.									
3	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau’s requirements, which includes the installation of a code compliant fire alarm system.	CO	FP									

4	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	
5	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.	

10 Cleveland Street

