



**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 2014-81

**Date:** October 30, 2014

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 142 Holland Street

**Applicant Name:** Putnam Realty Trust

**Applicant Address:** 996 Broadway Somerville, MA 02144

**Agent:** Rich Di Girolamo

**Agent Address:** 424 Broadway Somerville, MA 02143

**Alderman:** Katjana Ballantyne

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner, Putnam Realty Trust, seek a Special Permit per SZO §4.4.1 to expand a nonconforming structure to build a by-right 3-family structure and a Special Permit per SZO §9.13 for modification of the parking design standards. RC Zone. Ward 7.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – November 5, 2014

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 4,155 square foot lot with a 2 ½ story, two-family house. Previous owners started to do some work on the property, the house has a partially deconstructed side porch and an evergreen tree from the front yard was removed about a year ago. The property is typical of Somerville in which there is a conforming driveway side of the house and an opposite nonconforming narrow side yard.
2. Proposal: The proposal is to modify the house from a 2 ½ story structure to a 3 story structure/triple decker. The property will be converted from a 2-family to a 3-family. Each unit will be 3 bedrooms. There will be three parking spaces provided on site.
3. Green Building Practices: None listed on the application.



4. Comments:

*Fire Prevention:* Have been contacted and have no comments at this time.

*Traffic & Parking:* A traffic memo is required for the narrow driveway.

*Engineering:* Have been contacted, there are conditions proposed as part of this report. The Applicant is encouraged to meet with engineering staff in the early stages of construction documentation.

*Ward Alderman:* Alderman Ballantyne has been contacted and hosted a neighborhood meeting on October 27, 2014.

**II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §4.4.1 & 9.13):**

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 §4.4.1 lawfully existing nonconforming structures other than one- and two-family dwellings may be enlarged, extended, or renovated by special permit. The alterations to the nonconforming sideyard require a special permit. In addition, the project requires a special permit per SZO §9.13 for a narrow driveway. The existing condition is a one-way driveway. The proposed condition is a 2-way driveway that will be 8' to 10' wide. There is no parking relief required; the current parking requirement is four spaces. The proposed parking requirement is 6 spaces. An additional two spaces have been added to the site.

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 promoting 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; and to encourage housing for persons of all income levels.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RC district, which is, “To establish and preserve a district for multi-family residential and other compatible uses which are of particular use and convenience to the residents of the district.”

In considering a special permit under §9.13 of the SZO the SPGA may grant such a special permit only when consistent with the purposes set forth in Section 9.1. The project will comply with the purposes of §9.1 by providing storage for vehicles, reduce hazards to pedestrians by having vehicles exit forward facing, and providing adequate landscaping to buffer neighbors from vehicle headlights.

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 primarily residential but is just outside Davis Square. The property is opposite of Traffic and Parking and has close proximity to Hodgkins Curtin Park, the TAB Building, and is between Teele and Davis Squares. Although this is an RC corridor between Davis and Teele, the far majority of uses are residential.

There are little to no impacts to the proposal. The site is converting from a house to triple decker form which fits in context with the neighborhood since two other structures on the block are triple deckers.

5. 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.*

The vehicles will exit the site forward facing. The circulation around the site will remain the same.

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

The project will add one unit of housing and improve on a vacant property.

7. 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.*

<u>SomerVision Summary</u>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
<i>Dwelling Units:</i>	2	3
<i>Parking Spaces:</i>	1	3

The project is in an enhance area on the SomerVision map. The project complies with the SomerVision plan by enhancing the site and providing more housing in Somerville.

**III. RECOMMENDATION****Special Permit under §4.4.1 & 9.13**

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 expand a nonconforming structure to build a by-right 3-family structure and a Special Permit per SZO §9.13 for modification of the parking design standards. 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>August 7, 2014</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>(October 29, 2014)</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A-000 Cover, Landscape Plan, Z-002 Site Context, SHD – Shadow Study, EX-100 Existing Plans, EX-300 Existing Elev, A-010 Site Plan, A-100 Floor Plans, A-101 Floor Plans, A-102 Roof Plan, A-300 Elev, A-301 Perspectives)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	August 7, 2014	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	(October 29, 2014)	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A-000 Cover, Landscape Plan, Z-002 Site Context, SHD – Shadow Study, EX-100 Existing Plans, EX-300 Existing Elev, A-010 Site Plan, A-100 Floor Plans, A-101 Floor Plans, A-102 Roof Plan, A-300 Elev, A-301 Perspectives)
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Any changes to the approved site plan and elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
<b>Pre-Construction</b>										
2	The Applicant will be required to demonstrate that the updated project plans meet the current City of Somerville stormwater policy. Utility, grading, and drainage plans/reports must be submitted to the Engineering Department for review and approval.	BP	Eng.							
<b>Construction Impacts</b>										

3	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	
4	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	
<b>Design</b>				
5	Applicant shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors to Planning Staff for review and approval prior to construction. No vinyl siding will be permitted.	BP	Plng.	
6	An exterior light and electrical receptacle is required for the first (or all) level of the porch and an electrical receptacle is required for the second level (if there is no access to the ground).	Final sign off	Wiring Insp	
<b>Site</b>				
7	Landscaping should be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards.	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>				
8	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	
<b>Public Safety</b>				
9	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
10	To the extent possible, all exterior lighting must be confined to the subject property, cast light downward and must not intrude, interfere or spill onto neighboring properties.	CO	Plng.	
<b>Final Sign-Off</b>				
11	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.	

