



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2012-27

Date: August 9, 2012

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 11 Linden Avenue

Applicant and Property Owner Name: Linden Tree Realty Trust

Applicant and Property Owner Address: 11 Linden Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143

Agent Name: Richard G. Di Girolamo, Esq.

Agent Address: 424 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145

Alderman: Sean O'Donovan

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner Linden Tree Realty Trust, seek a Special Permit with Site Plan Review under SZO §7.2 to construct a second principal structure at the property containing two additional dwelling units. RB zone. Ward 5.

Zoning District/Ward: RB zone / Ward 5

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit with Site Plan Review under SZO §7.2

Date of Application: April 3, 2012

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – **May 2, 2012**

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject property is rather large at 12,480 square feet with 80 feet of frontage and 156 feet of depth. The property contains a 2½ story single-family dwelling in a designated Local Historic District and is situated near the corner of Linden Avenue and Elm Street. The existing gable roofed single-family structure contains 3,267 gross square feet and 1,749 square feet of living space. There is an existing large gravel parking area on the right side of the property near the front of the lot and the entire rear portion of the lot is greenspace.

2. **Proposal:** The Applicant is proposing to construct a second principal structure in the rear portion of the property that would contain two new dwelling units. As instructed by the Historic Preservation Commission, the new structure would be designed to look like a barn and be approximately



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2½ stories in height. A patio would lead from the parking area to the front of the barn structure which would have two functioning wooden sliding doors below a shed roof canopy that would open up to the recessed front entrances for each of the units. A gooseneck light fixture would sit directly over the sliding barn doors. To the right and left of the front entrance would be large windows that would span the first and second floors and look into the internal stairway. Each side of the structure would contain numerous windows, all double hung in a two over one style, with the exception of the small windows on the third floor which would be fixed along with the windows that looked into the stairway. The back of the structure would contain the most windows with large floor to ceiling fenestration on the first floor. A single door at the rear of each unit would open out onto the 10 foot by 15 foot patios at the rear. Each unit would also contain a basement which could be accessed through an internal stairwell. One unit will also have an external stairway that will lead down to the basement from grade level.

The exterior siding of the new building would consist primarily of four inch wood or fiber cement clapboards. The siding on the forward projection of the barn structure would contain wood shingles on all sides and these same shingles would be used on the rear dormer and on the upper portions of each side of the building. On the interior of the second principal structure, the two new dwelling units would be mirror images of each other. The first floor would contain an entry hall, dining room, living room, kitchen, pantry, half bath, and access out to the rear patio. The second floor would contain two bedrooms, two full bathrooms, a study, and a laundry area. The third floor would contain the master bedroom with a large master bathroom, a walk-in closet, and space for the mechanical equipment for each unit.

As required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO), six parking spaces, side by side, would be provided in a defined area on the right side of the property allowing ample room for each car to back out and exit from the site in a forward manner. The existing curb cut at the site on Linden Avenue will be widened to 18 feet to provide for emergency vehicle and fire access to the property. A new six foot high fence and heavy landscaping would be implemented in the area that separates the parking spaces from the right side property line. While some blue spruce, white pines, and a sugar maple tree will be removed from the site to make room for the new building, three new white pines will be planted along the right property line to help screen the proposed second principal structure. Other new landscaping at the site will include plantings, a rail fence, and concrete unit pavers in front of the main entrance to the proposed structure, as well as increased plantings between the parking area and the Linden Avenue streetscape.

As part of this overall project, the Applicant will also be making some as of right alterations to the existing historic single-family structure. On the exterior, a second story deck will be rebuilt on the right side that will be accessed off of one of the bedrooms and a new window will also be added to the right rear first floor. On the interior, the second internal stairway would be removed to allow for a first floor renovation that will provide for a more open floor plan between the living room, dining room, and family room. On the second floor a study would be turned into a second full bathroom and closet space would be created for one of the existing bedrooms.

3. Nature of Application: The proposed project, which is located in an RB zoning district, requires a Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SZO §5.2) under SZO §7.2 to allow more than one principal structure to be located on the lot. The proposed barn building at the rear of the property containing the two additional dwelling units is a second principal structure.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The property is located in an RB district near intersection of Linden Avenue and Elm Street. The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of mixture of single-, two-, three-, and multi-family homes. The forms of the surrounding buildings are typically 2½ and 3 story buildings. The Kennedy Elementary School is located close to the site as well as Porter Square. The site is a third of a mile to the MBTA Porter Square Red Line Station.

5. Impacts of Proposal: The existing lot is quite large compared to most of the properties in the surrounding area. The largest impact of this proposal will be changing the lot from a single dwelling unit property to a three dwelling unit property, which will lower the lot area per dwelling unit to 4,160 square feet per unit. However, the impact of having additional residences in this location is anticipated to be minimal as there are a number of multi-unit properties in the surrounding area already. The left side of the subject property abuts a lot that contains two principal structures with a total of three dwellings units. Abutting the subject property on its right rear is a 27 unit condominium building that fronts onto Elm Street. Just two lots to the north are several three- and multi-family dwellings situated on Gilson Terrace and Linden Circle. To the right, across the street, and to the rear of the project site are single- and two-family dwellings. The remainder of the surrounding neighborhood is a complete mixture of single-, two-, three-, and multi-family dwellings. The new principal structure would also increase the building footprint ground coverage from 21% to 42%, decrease the landscaped area from 62% to 41%, increase the property's net floor area from 2,290 square feet to 9,321 square feet, and increase the Floor Area Ratio from 0.18 to 0.74. The rear yard setback of the property will also be reduced from 85 feet to 20 feet. However, it should be noted here that all of these figures meet the dimensional requirements of Section 8.5 of the SZO.

The design and location of the proposed second principal structure will assist the new building to blend into the existing residential fabric of the neighborhood. The barn-like appearance of the proposed building will provide the feeling that the structure has always been used as an accessory structure for the single-family dwelling at the front of the property. Additionally, the location of the new structure at the rear of the lot will give the building the feeling that it is secondary in nature to the existing historic structure at the front of the property. Many other properties in Somerville, especially historic ones, contain these types of secondary accessory outbuildings at the rear of their lots and this proposed structure would fit into that context. The second principal structure's location, design, and the proposed landscaping at the property will all help to prevent the streetscape of Linden Avenue from being altered in any way. The actual viewshed to the back of the property is much narrower than the entire 80 feet of property frontage, as views to the rear of the property are screened by the existing single-family home on the property, neighboring buildings, and the existing vegetation on and around the property. While landscaping at the property will be decreased by 20%, the property will still maintain 41% landscaping at the site, which is far greater than most properties throughout the City.

The number of vehicles traveling to and from the site will likely increase as a result of the project as the number of dwelling units at the property is being increased by three times the existing number. However, due to the property's close proximity to the MBTA's Porter Square Red Line Station (1/3 of a mile), it is anticipated this will help to reduce any potential traffic impacts that the project may create by reducing vehicular trips to and from the site. The parking situation for the project is not anticipated to greatly impact the surrounding neighborhood either. By situating the second principal structure at the rear of the lot and pushing it towards the left property line, this has allowed for all of the required off-street parking to be situated on the site adjacent to the existing single-family dwelling. This is where the existing parking is currently located at the property. The spaces are located side by side and have ample room for a driver to back out and exit the site in a forward direction, which results in a safer environment for both pedestrians and other motorists. The existing curb cut at the site on Linden Avenue will be widened to 18 feet to provide for emergency vehicle and fire access to the property. The new six foot fence and heavy landscaping along the right property line should help to reduce the sound, odor, and light impacts that the vehicles may have on neighboring properties. Furthermore, there will also be an approximately 19 foot deep landscaped buffer between the parking area and the streetscape. This will help to screen the view of the parked vehicles on the site and therefore the parking area should not greatly impact the view along the Linden Avenue streetscape. Ultimately, the property will remain in a residential nature similar to that of

the surrounding area and therefore will not be more detrimental to the abutters or the surrounding neighborhood than the existing use at the property.

6. Green Building Practices: None indicated.

7. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Indicated to Planning Staff in a meeting on April 25, 2012 that a curb cut and a fire lane 18 feet in width will be needed to access the two units in the proposed rear structure.

Ward Alderman: Alderman O'Donovan has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Historic Preservation: Please see the attached documents from Preservation Planner Kristi Chase.

Traffic & Parking: Indicated in phone conversation with Planning Staff on April 25, 2012 that they have no objections to the project.

DPW/Lights & Lines/Highway: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Housing: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Conservation Commission: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments

Engineering: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Wiring Inspector: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.



Aerial Image:

11 Linden Avenue

(Boundary is Only Approximate)



Existing Single-Family Dwelling at 11 Linden Avenue

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT with SITE PLAN REVIEW (SZO §5.2 & §7.3)

In order to grant a Special Permit with Site Plan Review, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.2.5 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.2.5 in detail.

1. Information Supplied: The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.2.3 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project.
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 with site plan review.”

In considering a Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §7.2 of the SZO, the Staff finds that the use proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing use. Additionally, the Applicant’s proposed second principal structure on the lot will meet all the dimensional requirements of Section 8.5 of the SZO.

3. Purpose of District: The Applicant has to ensure that the project “is consistent with the intent of the specific zoning district as specified in Article 6.”

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district (6.1.2. RB - Residence Districts), 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.” The property will remain in a residential nature similar to that of the surrounding area and therefore will not be more detrimental to the abutters or the surrounding neighborhood than the existing use at the property.

4. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant has to ensure that the project “is designed in a manner that is compatible with the existing natural features of the site and is compatible with the characteristics of the surrounding area, and that the scale, massing and detailing of buildings are compatible with those prevalent in the surrounding area.”

The proposed three unit residential use would be compatible with the surrounding residential uses of the existing neighborhood. The impact of having two additional residences in this location is anticipated to be minimal as there are a number of multi-unit properties in the surrounding area already. The left side of the subject property abuts a lot that contains two principal structures with a total of three dwellings units. Abutting the subject property on its right rear is a 27 unit condominium building that fronts onto Elm Street. Just two lots to the north are several three- and multi-family dwellings situated on Gilson Terrace and Linden Circle. To the right, across the street, and to the rear of the project site are single- and two-family dwellings. The remainder of the surrounding neighborhood is a complete mixture of single-, two-, three-, and multi-family dwellings, for the most part all of which are between 2½ and 3 stories.

The design and location of the proposed second principal structure will assist the new building to blend into the existing residential fabric of the neighborhood. The barn-like appearance of the proposed 2½ story building will provide the feeling that the structure has always been used as an accessory structure for the single-family dwelling at the front of the property. Additionally, the location of the new structure at the rear of the lot will give the building the feeling that it is secondary in nature to the existing historic structure at the front of the property. Many other properties in Somerville, especially historic ones, contain these types of secondary accessory outbuildings at the rear of their lots and this proposed structure would fit into that context. The second principal structure’s location, design, and the proposed landscaping at the property will all help to prevent the streetscape of Linden Avenue from being altered in any way. The actual viewshed to the back of the property is much narrower than the entire 80 feet of property frontage, as views to the rear of the property are screened by the existing single-family home on the property, neighboring buildings, and the existing vegetation on and around the property. There will also be an approximately 19 foot deep landscaped buffer between the parking area and the streetscape. This will help to screen the view of the parked vehicles on the site and therefore the parking area should not greatly impact the view along the Linden Avenue streetscape either. The impact of having additional residences in this location is anticipated to be minimal as there are a number of multi-unit properties in the surrounding area already. The property will remain in a residential nature similar to that of the surrounding area and therefore will not be more detrimental to the abutters or the surrounding neighborhood than the existing use at the property.

5. Functional Design: The project must meet “accepted standards and criteria for the functional design of facilities, structures, and site construction.”

The site meets the accepted standards for a functional design. The design and location of the proposed second principal structure will assist the new building to blend into the existing residential fabric of the neighborhood. The barn-like appearance of the proposed building will provide the feeling that the structure has always been used as an accessory structure for the single-family dwelling at the front of the property. Additionally, the location of the new structure at the rear of the lot will give the building the

feeling that it is secondary in nature to the existing historic structure at the front of the property. Many other properties in Somerville, especially historic ones, contain these types of secondary accessory outbuildings at the rear of their lots and this proposed structure would fit into that context. The second principal structure's location, design, and the proposed landscaping at the property will all help to prevent the streetscape of Linden Avenue from being altered in any way. While landscaping at the property will be decreased by 20%, the property will still maintain 41% landscaping at the site, which is far greater than most properties throughout the City.

The number of vehicles at the site will likely increase as a result of the project as the number of dwelling units at the property is being increased by three times the existing number. However, due to the property's close proximity to the MBTA's Porter Square Red Line Station (1/3 of a mile), it is anticipated this will help to reduce any potential traffic impacts that the project may create. The parking situation for the project is not anticipated to greatly impact the surrounding neighborhood either. The off-street parking spaces on the site are located side by side and provide ample room for a driver to back out and exit the site in a forward direction which results in a safer environment for both pedestrians and other motorists. The new six foot fence and heavy landscaping along the right property line should help to reduce the sound, odor, and light impacts that the vehicles may have on neighboring properties. Furthermore, there will also be an approximately 19 foot deep landscaped buffer between the parking area and the streetscape. This will help to screen the view of the parked vehicles on the site and therefore the parking area should not greatly impact the view along the Linden Avenue streetscape. The Applicant will need to confirm with the City Engineer that the drainage system is acceptable, as conditioned.

6. Impact on Public Systems: The project will "not create adverse impacts on the public services and facilities serving the development, such as the sanitary sewer system, the storm drainage system, the public water supply, the recreational system, the street system for vehicular traffic, and the sidewalks and footpaths for pedestrian traffic."

The approval of the Special Permit with Site Plan Review shall be contingent upon the City Engineer's determination that no adverse impacts on public systems will result from the development. The existing use at the site is a single-family residence, but an additional two units at the site would not appear to greatly impact the City's sanitary sewer system. Planning Staff has proposed a condition that requires the Applicant to demonstrate that the project is in compliance with the City's stormwater policy. The number of vehicles at the site will likely increase as a result of the project as the number of dwelling units at the property is being increased by three times the existing number. However, due to the property's close proximity to the MBTA's Porter Square Red Line Station (1/3 of a mile), it is anticipated this will help to reduce any potential traffic impacts that the project may create. The parking situation for the project is not anticipated to greatly impact the surrounding neighborhood either. However, it should be noted that the existing curb cut at the site will be widened to 18 feet to provide for emergency vehicle and fire access to the property. By situating the second principal structure at the rear of the lot and pushing it towards the left property line, this has allowed for all of the required off-street parking to be situated on the site adjacent to the existing single-family dwelling. The spaces are located side by side and have ample room for a driver to back out and exit the site in a forward direction which results in a safer environment for both pedestrians and other motorists.

7. Environmental Impacts: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "will not create adverse environmental impacts, including those that may occur off the site, or such potential adverse impacts will be mitigated in connection with the proposed development, so that the development will be compatible with the surrounding area."

Due to the residential nature of the proposed structure, minimal negative environmental impacts are foreseen as a direct result of this development. Landscaping at the site will be reduced from 62% to 41% but the project will still retain a large portion of the site for landscaping. In fact, 41% landscaping is far greater than most properties throughout the entire City. Additionally, supplemental landscaping will be added throughout the site including substantial new plantings, a rail fence, and concrete unit pavers in front of the main entrance to the proposed structure, as well as increased plantings between the parking area and the Linden Avenue streetscape. The new six foot fence and heavy landscaping along the right property line should help to reduce the sound, odor, and light impacts that the vehicles may have on neighboring properties. There will also be an approximately 19 foot deep landscaped buffer between the parking area and the streetscape. This will help to screen the view of the parked vehicles on the site and therefore the parking area should not greatly impact the view along the Linden Avenue streetscape.

8. Consistency with Purposes: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the purposes of this Ordinance, particularly those set forth in Article 1 and Article 5; and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit with site plan review which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those at the beginning of the various sections."

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; to lessen congestion in the streets; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to preserve the historical and architectural resources of the City; to adequately protect the natural environment; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; and to encourage housing for persons of all income levels."

The proposal is also consistent with the purpose of the district (6.1.2. RB - Residence Districts), 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."

9. Preservation of Landform and Open Space: The Applicant has to ensure that "the existing land form is preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing grading and the erosion or stripping of steep slopes, and by maintaining man-made features that enhance the land form, such as stone walls, with minimal alteration or disruption. In addition, all open spaces should be designed and planted to enhance the attractiveness of the neighborhood. Whenever possible, the development parcel should be laid out so that some of the landscaped areas are visible to the neighborhood."

The existing land form of the lot will be maintained as the proposed structure at the rear of the lot will minimize the need for grading at the site. The second principal structure will contain basements for each of the units and one basement will be able to be accessed from the outside via stairs that will lead downward from grade level. Other than the excavation for the basement and this exterior stairway, there will be minimal grade changes at the site. While landscaping at the property will be decreased by 20%, the property will still maintain 41% landscaping at the site, which is far greater than most properties throughout the City. The second principal structure's location, design, and the proposed landscaping at the property will all help to prevent the streetscape of Linden Avenue from being altered in any way. The actual viewshed to the back of the property is much narrower than the entire 80 feet of property frontage, as views to the rear of the property are screened by the existing single-family home on the property, neighboring buildings, and the existing vegetation on and around the property.

10. Relation of Buildings to Environment: The Applicant must ensure that “buildings are: 1) located harmoniously with the land form, vegetation and other natural features of the site; 2) compatible in scale, design and use with those buildings and designs which are visually related to the development site; 3) effectively located for solar and wind orientation for energy conservation; and 4) advantageously located for views from the building while minimizing the intrusion on views from other buildings.”

The existing lot is quite large compared to most of the properties in the surrounding area. The largest impact of this proposal will be changing the lot from a single dwelling unit property to a three dwelling unit property, which will lower the lot area per dwelling unit to 4,160 square feet per unit. However, the impact of having additional residences in this location is anticipated to be minimal as there are a number of multi-unit properties in the surrounding area already. The left side of the subject property abuts a lot that contains two principal structures with a total of three dwellings units. Abutting the subject property on its right rear is a 27 unit condominium building that fronts onto Elm Street. Just two lots to the north are several three- and multi-family dwellings situated on Gilson Terrace and Linden Circle. To the right, across the street, and to the rear of the project site are single- and two-family dwellings. The remainder of the surrounding neighborhood is a complete mixture of single-, two-, three-, and multi-family dwellings. The new principal structure would also increase the building footprint ground coverage from 21% to 42%, decrease the landscaped area from 62% to 41%, increase the property's net floor area from 2,290 square feet to 9,321 square feet, and increase the Floor Area Ratio from 0.18 to 0.74. The rear yard setback of the property will also be reduced from 85 feet to 20 feet. However, it should be noted here that all of these figures meet the dimensional requirements of Section 8.5 of the SZO.

The design and location of the proposed second principal structure will assist the new building to blend into the existing residential fabric of the neighborhood. The 2½ story, barn-like appearance of the proposed building will provide the feeling that the structure has always been used as an accessory structure for the single-family dwelling at the front of the property. Additionally, the location of the new structure at the rear of the lot will give the building the feeling that it is secondary in nature to the existing historic structure at the front of the property. Many other properties in Somerville, especially historic ones, contain these types of secondary accessory outbuildings at the rear of their lots and this proposed structure would fit into that context. The second principal structure's location, design, and the proposed landscaping at the property will all help to prevent the streetscape of Linden Avenue from being altered in any way. The actual viewshed to the back of the property is much narrower than the entire 80 feet of property frontage, as views to the rear of the property are screened by the existing single-family home on the property, neighboring buildings, and the existing vegetation on and around the property. While landscaping at the property will be decreased by 20%, the property will still maintain 41% landscaping at the site, which is far greater than most properties throughout the City.

11. Stormwater Drainage: The Applicant must demonstrate that “special attention has been given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Storm water shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, and powered area, and routed through a well-engineered system designed with appropriate storm water management techniques. Skimming devices, oil, and grease traps, and similar facilities at the collection or discharge points for paved surface runoff should be used, to retain oils, greases, and particles. Surface water on all paved areas shall be collected and/or routed so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved area. In larger developments, where practical, the routing of runoff through sheet flow, swales or other means increasing filtration and percolation is strongly encouraged, as is use of retention or detention ponds. In instances of below grade parking (such as garages) or low lying areas prone to flooding, installation of pumps or other devices to prevent backflow through drains or catch basins may be required.”

While additional review is required of drainage plans, any approval of the Special Permit with Site Plan Review should be conditional upon the City Engineer's approval of such plans and determination that no adverse impact will result to the drainage system from the project's design. Planning Staff is therefore proposing a condition that the Applicant be required to demonstrate that the project meets the current City of Somerville stormwater policy and that utility, grading, and drainage plans must be submitted to the Engineering Department for review and approval.

12. Historic or Architectural Significance: The project must be designed "with respect to Somerville's heritage, any action detrimental to historic structures and their architectural elements shall be discouraged insofar as is practicable, whether those structures exist on the development parcel or on adjacent properties. If there is any removal, substantial alteration or other action detrimental to buildings of historic or architectural significance, these should be minimized and new uses or the erection of new buildings should be compatible with the buildings or places of historic or architectural significance on the development parcel or on adjacent properties."

Please see the attached documents from Preservation Planner Kristi Chase.

13. Enhancement of Appearance: The Applicant must demonstrate that "the natural character and appearance of the City is enhanced. Awareness of the existence of a development, particularly a non residential development or a higher density residential development, should be minimized by screening views of the development from nearby streets, residential neighborhoods of City property by the effective use of existing land forms, or alteration thereto, such as berms, and by existing vegetation or supplemental planting."

The design and location of the proposed second principal structure will assist the new building to blend into the existing residential fabric of the neighborhood. The 2½ story, barn-like appearance of the proposed building will provide the feeling that the structure has always been used as an accessory structure for the single-family dwelling at the front of the property. Additionally, the location of the new structure at the rear of the lot will give the building the feeling that it is secondary in nature to the existing historic structure at the front of the property. Many other properties in Somerville, especially historic ones, contain these types of secondary accessory outbuildings at the rear of their lots and this proposed structure would fit into that context. The second principal structure's location, design, and the proposed landscaping at the property will all help to prevent the streetscape of Linden Avenue from being altered in any way. The actual viewshed to the back of the property is much narrower than the entire 80 feet of property frontage, as views to the rear of the property are screened by the existing single-family home on the property, neighboring buildings, and the existing vegetation on and around the property.

A new six foot high fence and heavy landscaping would be implemented in the area that separates the parking spaces from the right side property line. While some blue spruce, white pines, and a sugar maple tree will be removed from the site to make room for the new building, three new white pines will be planted along the right property line to help screen the proposed second principal structure. Other new landscaping at the site will include plantings, a rail fence, and concrete unit pavers in front of the main entrance to the proposed structure, as well as increased plantings between the parking area and the Linden Avenue streetscape. The property will remain in a residential nature similar to that of the surrounding area and therefore will not be more detrimental to the abutters or the surrounding neighborhood than the existing use at the property.

14. Lighting: With respect to lighting, the Applicant must ensure that “all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be adequately lit and designed as much as possible to allow for surveillance by neighbors and passersby.”

The lighting will be residential in nature and conditioned to not interfere with neighboring properties. Planning Staff is proposing a condition that 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.

15. Emergency Access: The Applicant must ensure that “there is easy access to buildings, and the grounds adjoining them, for operations by fire, police, medical and other emergency personnel and equipment.”

Emergency vehicles will have access to the existing single-family building directly off of Linden Avenue through the front entrance. Emergency vehicles and personnel will also be able to reach the proposed rear structure by traveling into the parking area on the site. The existing curb cut at the property will be widened to 18 feet to accommodate for this. The 18 foot driveway will provide access to the proposed two rear units at the site, directly through their front doors.

16. Location of Access: The Applicant must ensure that “the location of intersections of access drives with the City arterial or collector streets minimizes traffic congestion.”

All vehicles entering or exit the site will do so in a forward manner onto and off of Linden Avenue. By situating the second principal structure at the rear of the lot and pushing it towards the left property line, this has allowed for all of the required off-street parking to be situated on the site adjacent to the existing single-family dwelling. The spaces are located side by side and have ample room for a driver to back out and exit the site in a forward direction, which results in a safer environment for both pedestrians and other motorists. Linden Avenue is a two way street and this will provide the opportunity for motorists exiting the site to travel towards Elm Street or Summer Street, dividing in half the direction of traffic flow going to and from the site. Additionally, due to the property’s close proximity to the MBTA’s Porter Square Red Line Station (1/3 of a mile), it is anticipated this will help to reduce any potential traffic impacts that the project may create.

17. Utility Service: The Applicant must ensure that “electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment are placed underground from the source or connection, or are effectively screened from public view.”

The Applicant is proposing to tie into the existing City services for electric, telephone, and cable. Any new lines would be placed underground from the source or connection in accordance with the SZO and the policies of the Superintendent of Lights and Lines.

18. Prevention of Adverse Impacts: The Applicant must demonstrate that “provisions have been made to prevent or minimize any detrimental effect on adjoining premises, and the general neighborhood, including, (1) minimizing any adverse impact from new hard surface ground cover, or machinery which emits heat, vapor, light or fumes; and (2) preventing adverse impacts to light, air and noise, wind and temperature levels in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development.”

Minimal negative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed second principal structure and additional residential use. The design and location of the proposed second principal structure will assist the new building to blend into the existing residential fabric of the neighborhood. The barn-like

appearance of the proposed 2½ story building will provide the feeling that the structure has always been used as an accessory structure for the single-family dwelling at the front of the property. Additionally, the location of the new structure at the rear of the lot will give the building the feeling that it is secondary in nature to the existing historic structure at the front of the property. Many other properties in Somerville, especially historic ones, contain these types of secondary accessory outbuildings at the rear of their lots and this proposed structure would fit into that context. The second principal structure's location, design, and the proposed landscaping at the property will all help to prevent the streetscape of Linden Avenue from being altered in any way. The actual viewshed to the back of the property is much narrower than the entire 80 feet of property frontage, as views to the rear of the property are screened by the existing single-family home on the property, neighboring buildings, and the existing vegetation on and around the property. While landscaping at the property will be decreased by 20%, the property will still maintain 41% landscaping at the site, which is far greater than most properties throughout the City.

19. Signage: The Applicant must ensure that "the size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall reflect the scale and character of the proposed buildings."

Due to the residential nature of the property and the proposed residential nature of the new rear building, signage is not anticipated at the site. Any signage in the future would have to conform to the sign standards for residential districts.

20. Screening of Service Facilities: The Applicant must ensure that "exposed transformers and other machinery, storage, service and truck loading areas, dumpsters, utility buildings, and similar structures shall be effectively screened by plantings or other screening methods so that they are not directly visible from either the proposed development or the surrounding properties."

The Applicant has not indicated where or if a trash enclosure will be located on the site. Planning Staff is proposing a condition that if trash and recycling bins are kept outside they shall be screened by fencing or vegetation that blocks any view of them. Much of the mechanical equipment for the proposed new second principal structure will be situated in the interior of the third floor of the proposed structure. Planning Staff is also proposing a condition that if air conditioner compressors, transformers, or other external mechanical equipment needs to be located for the project, it will be screened with vegetation or fencing subject to Planning Staff sign off.

21. Screening of Parking: The Applicant must ensure that "the parking areas should be screened or partitioned off from the street by permanent structures except in the cases where the entrance to the parking area is directly off the street."

All six of the proposed parking spaces will be located adjacent to the existing single-family structure and will be screened with vegetation. The new six foot fence and heavy landscaping along the right property line should help to reduce the sound, odor, and light impacts that the vehicles may have on neighboring properties. Furthermore, there will also be an approximately 19 foot deep landscaped buffer between the parking area and the streetscape. This will help to screen the view of the parked vehicles on the site and therefore the parking area should not greatly impact the view along the Linden Avenue streetscape.

III. RECOMMENDATION**Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §5.2 & §7.2**

Based on the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT with SITE PLAN REVIEW**.

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 to construct a second principal structure at the property under SZO §7.2 containing two additional dwelling units. 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 3, 2012)</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>March 14, 2012 (April 6, 2012)</td><td>Plot Plan</td></tr><tr><td>March 15, 2012 (April 6, 2012)</td><td>Site Plan – Existing</td></tr><tr><td>August 7, 2012 (August 8, 2012)</td><td>Site Plan – Proposed</td></tr><tr><td>March 15, 2012 (April 6, 2012)</td><td>Unit 1 Floor Plans – Existing, Unit 1 Floor Plans – Proposed, Unit 1 Elevations – Existing, Unit 1 Elevations – Proposed, Units 2 & 3 Floor Plans – Proposed, and Units 2 & 3 Elevations – Proposed</td></tr><tr><td>March 15, 2012 (August 8, 2012)</td><td>Planting Plan (L 1)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(April 3, 2012)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	March 14, 2012 (April 6, 2012)	Plot Plan	March 15, 2012 (April 6, 2012)	Site Plan – Existing	August 7, 2012 (August 8, 2012)	Site Plan – Proposed	March 15, 2012 (April 6, 2012)	Unit 1 Floor Plans – Existing, Unit 1 Floor Plans – Proposed, Unit 1 Elevations – Existing, Unit 1 Elevations – Proposed, Units 2 & 3 Floor Plans – Proposed, and Units 2 & 3 Elevations – Proposed	March 15, 2012 (August 8, 2012)	Planting Plan (L 1)
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	March 15, 2012 (August 8, 2012)				Planting Plan (L 1)													
Any changes to the approved use, site plans, or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.																		

2	The Applicant will be required to demonstrate that the project meets the current City of Somerville stormwater policy. Utility, grading, and drainage plans must be submitted to the Engineering Department for review and approval.	BP	Eng.	
3	The Applicant shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors for the proposed new structure to the Planning Staff for review and approval prior to construction.	BP	Plng.	
4	The Applicant shall submit an updated Planting Plan to Planning Staff that replaces the proposed Naked Clumping Bamboo (<i>Fargesia denudate</i> 'Rufa') with another, less invasive type of vegetation that will still provide ample screening for the parking area.	BP	Plng.	
5	The Applicant/Owner is required receive a Certificate from the Historic Preservation Commission prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.	BP	Historic	
6	All construction materials and equipment must be stored on-site. 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	
7	New electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment shall be placed underground from the source or connection. The utilities plan shall be supplied to the Wiring Inspector before installation.	Installation of Utilities	Wiring Inspector	
8	All fences at the property shall be in compliance with Section 10.7.1 of the SZO. Specifically, fences that are closer than four (4) feet to windows of a dwelling unit shall be at least seventy-five (75) percent open face.	CO	Plng.	
9	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
10	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	
11	Any transformers, air conditioner compressors, or other external mechanical equipment shall be fully screened with vegetation or non-vegetative materials.	CO	Plng.	
12	The Applicant, its successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for maintenance of both the buildings 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.	Perpetual	ISD	

13	Vehicles exiting this property must exit in a forward direction.	Perpetual	T&P	
14	Landscaping should be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards.	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
15	If trash and/or recycling bins are kept outside they shall be screened by fencing or vegetation that blocks any view of them.	Perpetual	Plng.	
16	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.	Perpetual	Plng.	
17	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.	



11 Linden Avenue

To: Planning Division
From: Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner
RE: Staff Recommendations 4/25/12

HPC 12.044 - 11 Linden Avenue

Applicant: Linden Tree Realty Trust

Historic and Architectural Significance

See attached Form B. The form was done as part of the original 1985 surveys, which is why it has far less information about the building and its owner than would be expected today. Its architecture and setting on its original grounds, however, are noted as significant on both a local and a national level.

Existing Conditions

The house is in good condition although the last time major repairs were done in 1994. According to the available building permits, the fieldstone wall and granite steps were constructed in 1997. It has a large open yard, with the side area used for parking in recent years.

The house is on its original lot which never had a carriage house. The fact that this house remains preserved in its original context is one of the primary reasons that this property is both listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a Local Historic District. This is a true rarity in Somerville where lots have been typically subdivided and often intensely developed over time.

As seen in the accompanying maps, some of the buildings in the neighborhood that were constructed during the same era included carriage houses and barns on the same lot. Typically these accessory structures were smaller than the main house and were located on the edge of the property and usually on the rear lot line. See attached photos of carriage houses throughout the City for size and context of these buildings. None of the buildings are more than 2 ½ stories and most are at 1 ½ stories including the hayloft. A few have been converted to residential or other uses. If properly scaled and located, the proposal to build additional housing in the style of a carriage house could be an appropriate addition to the property.

Recommendations

The Applicants met with the Commission and Staff several times between the November 15, 2011 meeting when the Commission approved the idea of a second free standing 2-unit structure designed to resemble a barn on the lot and the February 21, 2012 when a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted by a unanimous vote (7-0) to:

1. Add 1 additional window on rear ell that matches all properties of the existing adjacent window, including style, material, casing, muntin profile, and reflectivity of the glass;
2. Rebuild porch without a roof on 2nd floor south side, based on the undated plans presented and marked approved on 2/21/12 and as located on the circa 1985 photograph on the Form B; and
3. Construct a free standing 2-unit building on the lot near to the existing 1-family dwelling with:
 - a. the general location and footprint as shown on the site plan dated 2/10/12;
 - b. a design that resembles a barn/stable, constructed as shown in the conceptual elevations dated 2/10/12 that include:
 - i. massing, scale, and height of the building;
 - ii. placement, and scale of the roof forms, including the cupola;
 - iii. placement, scale and arrangement of the windows;
 - iv. placement and detailing of the trim, and both siding and door design

because they met HPC Guidelines for additions and infill construction.

HPC 12.044 - 11 Linden Avenue

It should be noted that all other site plan details, yet to be refined, including landscaping, parking, and walls are subject to review and final approval by the Commission

There was concerted attempt to ensure that the building met HPC Guidelines for infill construction. The applicants extensively redesigned the proposed carriage house/barn in response to the Commission's request to make the building subsidiary to the historic building. The proposed building is now 12'6" narrower than originally planned. While at 2 ½ stories, it is taller and has more mass than traditional carriage houses have, it is located on the lower slope. The building is also located nearly halfway behind the original building, making it less prominent and giving it a more traditional relationship to the original house. The building has been moved over another 1'6", meeting the minimum 8' side yard required by Zoning. On the other side, a 22' side yard leaves more open space in the lot.

The lowered central pavilion is narrower than was originally envisioned. The pitch of the roof echoes the existing historic house. Details would include 1" x 8" corner boards, flared siding/trim between the first and second floors, a mix of clapboards, shingles and decorative shingles to break up the massing, and the top casing trim on the windows would slightly overlap the side trim. These details, especially the playful use of shingles do not give a false sense of historicity to the building, being completely modern in their inventive use.

While two Commissioners said that the building was too large compared to the historic building, but that they were in support of the proposal due to the high quality of the design. The Commission that the proposed 2-family building meets the HPC guidelines for massing, building height, and location, references the idea of a barn/carriage house in the architecture through the use of the cupola, barn doors, and materials but does not replicate any particular structure or style.

SOMERVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT ORDINANCE:

(6/a) In the case of new construction or additions to existing buildings or structures, the Commission shall *consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure both in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to buildings and structures in the vicinity*, and the Commission may in appropriate cases impose dimensional and set back requirements in addition to those required by applicable ordinance or by-law.

The Commission shall not make any recommendation or requirement except for *the purpose of preventing developments incongruous to the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the surroundings and of the historic district.*

HPC GUIDELINES FOR INFILL CONSTRUCTION

A. Size, Shape and Proportion

New building facades should be designed to look appropriate to, and compatible with, adjacent buildings. *If there are no immediately adjacent structures, the applicant should look to nearby structures and blocks.*

1. *Building height should be similar to nearby buildings, respecting the predominant heights of existing houses or commercial structures.*

HPC 12.044 - 11 Linden Avenue

2. *Facade proportions (ratio of width to height) should be similar to those of surrounding buildings to create or complement streetscapes and views with the area.*
3. *Roof forms should follow predominant styles of adjacent buildings.*
4. *Utility connections should be placed to minimize visibility from the street.*

B. Materials.

1. *Materials should be compatible with those used in adjacent structures or, when there are no immediately adjacent structures, buildings within the surrounding area. Exterior surfaces should be painted or otherwise finished in a similarly compatible manner.*
2. *Materials of foundation walls should be compatible with those of nearby buildings. If use of matching materials is impractical, substitutions that are not obtrusive should be used.*

C. Details

1. Door and window height-to width ratios should be similar to those in neighboring structures. The pattern established by the relationship of window or door openings and the surrounding wall area should respect the neighboring structures. The percentage of glass to wall should approximate that of neighboring structures.
2. Door and window height-to width ratios should be similar to those in neighboring structures. The pattern established by the relationship of window or door openings and the surrounding wall area should respect the neighboring structures. The percentage of glass to wall should approximate that of neighboring structures.
3. *Facade elements which can help give a new structure a historically appearance include:*

Window hoods and lintels;
Entrances with porches and balustrades;
Cornice lines with architectural detailing;
Brick work with quoins, corbels, and other details;

Friezes;
Gables;
Columns and pilasters; and
Chimneys

Sampling of carriage houses through out the City





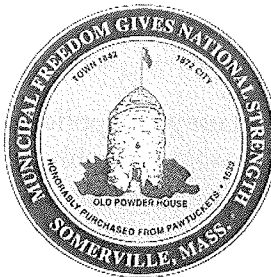












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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

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

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

March 8, 2012

Lenore Hill
Keith Glover
15 Linden Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144

RE: HPC 11.115 – 11 Linden Avenue, Somerville, MA

Dear Ms. Hill and Mr. Glover,

At their regular meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2012, the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to:

1. Add 1 additional window on rear ell that matches all properties of the existing adjacent window, including style, material, casing, muntin profile, and reflectivity of the glass;
2. Rebuild porch without a roof on 2nd floor south side, based on the undated plans presented and marked approved on 2/21/12 and as located on the circa 1985 photograph on the Form B; and
3. Construct a free standing 2-unit building on the lot near to the existing 1-family dwelling with:
 - a. the general location and footprint as shown on the site plan dated 2/10/12;
 - b. a design that resembles a barn/stable, constructed as shown in the conceptual elevations dated 2/10/12 that include:
 - i. massing, scale, and height of the building;
 - ii. placement, and scale of the roof forms, including the cupola;
 - iii. placement, scale and arrangement of the windows;
 - iv. placement and detailing of the trim, and both siding and door design; and
4. All other site plan details, yet to be refined, including landscaping, parking, and walls are subject to review and final approval by the Commission.



CITY HALL • 93 HIGHLAND AVENUE • SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS 02143
(617) 625-6600 EXT. 2500 • TTY: (617) 666-0001 • FAX: (617) 625-0722

www.somervillema.gov



The Commission based its decision on your application, and presentation at the hearing, Staff recommendations, comments from the public, photographs of the building, discussion and recommendations of the Commission members, as well as the Commission's adopted Design Guidelines for Historic Districts.

This letter is your formal notification of the issuance of the requested certificates. Please note that it is valid for one year from the date of this letter and must be re-validated by the Commission if substantial work has not been completed by the end of this period. Please take this letter to the Inspectional Services Department when you apply for a building permit. If you have any questions about this certificate, please feel free to contact us at (617) 625-6600 x 2500.

Good luck with your work!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kristi Chase".

Kristi Chase
Preservation Planner

Cc: Paul Nonni, Sr. Bldg. Inspector, Inspectional Services Division
John Long, City Clerk
George Proakis, Director of Planning, OSPCD
J. Brandon Wilson, Executive Director, HPC
Dick Bauer, Chairman, HPC



2012 JUL 19 P 6:39

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

Historic Preservation Commission

July 19, 2012

Keith Glover & Lenore Hill
Linden Tree Realty Trust
15 Linden Ave
Somerville, MA 02143

RE: **HPC 12.075 – 11 Linden Avenue, Somerville, MA**

Dear Mr. Glover and Ms. Hill,

At their regular meeting on Tuesday, July, 2012, the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a **Certificate of Hardship** to

1. Enlarge driveway entry up to 18' for compliance with access required by Fire Department; and
2. Redesign the landscaping and paving to minimize the visual impact of the wide driveway opening.

The Commission based its decision on your application, and presentation at the hearing, Staff recommendations, planting plans by Blair Hines Design Associates dated March 15, 2012 and revised on June 8, 2012, photographs of the house, discussion and recommendations of the Commission members. This proposed enlargement of the driveway opening is required by the Fire Department to alleviate safety concerns specific to your property and meets the Commission's adopted Guidelines for determining 'hardship'.

This letter is your formal notification of the issuance of the requested certificate. Please note that it is valid for one year from the date of this letter and must be re-validated by the Commission if substantial work has not been completed by the end of this period. Please take this letter to the Inspectional Services Department when you apply for a building permit. If you have any questions about this certificate, please feel free to contact us at (617) 625-6600 x 2500.

Good luck with your work!

Sincerely,

Kristi Chase
Preservation Planner

Cc: Paul Nonni, Sr. Bldg. Inspector, Inspectional Services Division
John Long, City Clerk
George Proakis, Director of Planning
J. Brandon Wilson, Executive Director
Dick Bauer, Chairman



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