



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2013-24

Date: April 24, 2013

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 141-143 North Street

Applicant Name: Alexandra Hatzopoulos & George Michael

Applicant Address: 143 North Street, Somerville, MA 02144

Property Owner Name: Alexandra Hatzopoulos & George Michael

Property Owner Address: 143 North Street, Somerville, MA 02144

Alderman: Robert Trane

Legal Notice: Applicants and Owners, Alexandra Hatzopoulos and George Michael, seek a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to construct a new dormer on the left side façade of an existing nonconforming two-family dwelling. RA zone. Ward 7.

Zoning District/Ward: RA zone / Ward 7

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1

Date of Application: March 29, 2013

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – Wednesday, May 1, 2013

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 3,856 square foot parcel with a 2½ story, two-family dwelling. The structure has 2,302 gross square feet and 1,922 net square feet with a .5 floor area ratio (FAR). The building is located in a Residence A district near the City of Medford and predominantly abuts two-family residential dwellings.

There has been no prior zoning relief.

2. Proposal: Applicants and Owners, Alexandra Hatzopoulos and George Michael, propose to construct a new shed dormer on the left side façade of an existing nonconforming two-family dwelling.

The proposed shed dormer would be centrally located on the left side roof plane and extend 23'-8" in length. The dormer is slightly less than 50% of the roof plane and retains approximately 12 feet on either end. The face of the dormer will have two windows located approximately eight feet apart. The newly finished space would incorporate a new bedroom, bathroom and laundry room as well as an open sitting area.

Currently, there are two bedrooms on the second floor of this two-family home. As part of larger renovations, the Applicant will combine the two bedrooms on the second floor and create one new bedroom in the attic. Additionally, the Applicant plans to construct a second, as of right dormer on the right side roof plane. The by right dormer would identically match the proposed dormer on the left side.



*141-143 North Street,
front and left side
façades*

3. Nature of Application: The structure is currently nonconforming with regard to dimensional requirements such as the left side yard setback and minimum lot size. The existing left side yard setback is 3.2 feet. In accordance with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) §4.4.1, nonconforming two-family dwellings may increase a nonconforming dimension through Special Permit approval. The dimensional requirement for the left side yard setback is no less than eight feet. Since the current left side yard setback is 3.2 feet, constructing a dormer on the left side façade requires Special Permit approval.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The structure is located in a Residence A district, near the City of Medford, and predominantly abuts two-family residential dwellings. The neighborhood is within walking distance to Tufts University, Dilboy Field, and Alewife Brook Parkway.

5. Impacts of Proposal: The proposal to construct a shed dormer on the left side roof plane of a two-family dwelling will not be detrimental to the structure.

The current owners are doing a variety of interior and exterior renovations to update the property and to enhance the structure. While only the left side dormer is subject to Special Permit approval, constructing an identical dormer on the by right side of the building will retain consistency in the roof plan. As dormers are often constructed individually and over time, more often than not, dormers vary in size and

location on the roof plane. However, as these dormers would be constructed simultaneously, the finished attic space will likely present a more uniform exterior upon completion.

6. Green Building Practices: The application notes that high efficiency windows and high value insulation will be installed as part of this proposal.

7. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

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. The proposal to construct a shed dormer on the left side roof plane will minimally impact abutters as the two proposed windows that would be added to the face of the dormer have a similar view as the windows located on the second floor below.

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; 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 A district, §6.1.1, 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."

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 current owners are doing a variety of interior and exterior renovations to update the property and to enhance the structure along the streetscape. While the left side dormer is subject to Special Permit approval, the construction of an identical dormer on the by right side of the building will retain consistency in the roof plan and maintain the overall character of the streetscape.

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 construct a new dormer on the left side façade of an existing nonconforming two-family dwelling. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Pln g.											
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>(March 29, 2013)</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>March 18, 2013 (April 19, 2013)</td><td>Plot plan submitted to OSPCD (sheet 1 & 2)</td></tr><tr><td>(April 19, 2013)</td><td>Elevation and Floor Plans submitted to OSPCD (Sheet A1, A2, A3, & A5)</td></tr><tr><td>(April 24, 2013)</td><td>Net Square Feet Calculations (1st & 2nd floors, and Attic)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(March 29, 2013)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	March 18, 2013 (April 19, 2013)	Plot plan submitted to OSPCD (sheet 1 & 2)	(April 19, 2013)	Elevation and Floor Plans submitted to OSPCD (Sheet A1, A2, A3, & A5)	(April 24, 2013)	Net Square Feet Calculations (1 st & 2 nd floors, and Attic)
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Any changes to the approved 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											
Design														

3	New siding type and color, roofing, trim and materials of the new dormers shall match or be complimentary to the rest of the existing structure.	BP	Plng.	
Public Safety				
4	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
Final Sign-Off				
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.	

141-143 North Street

