



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2016-138
Date: December 21, 2016
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 225 Powder House Boulevard

Applicant Name: Karen A. Errico
Applicant Address: 225 Powder House Boulevard, Somerville, MA 02144
Owner Name: Karen A. Errico
Owner Address: 225 Powder House Boulevard, Somerville, MA 02144
Agent Name: Rocco J. Antonelli, Jr.
Agent Address: 278 Elm Street, Suite 226, Somerville, MA 02144
Alderman: Katjana Ballantyne

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner, Karen A. Errico, seeks a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to construct a dormer within the required left side yard of a nonconforming structure. RA zone. Ward 7.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals –
January 4, 2017

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The locus is located on the northern side of Powder House Boulevard on a 3,380 square foot parcel. The parcel contains a two-family dwelling in a two and one-half story gable roof structure with 2,034 square feet of net floor area.
2. **Proposal:** The proposal is to construct a shed dormer within the required left side yard setback of the



nonconforming structure. The Applicant/Owner has received a building permit, as a matter of right, to construct two dormers, one on each side of the ridge, which are outside of the required setbacks and to add living area in the attic. The proposed dormer within the setback allows for headroom in the stairwell to access the attic area.

3. Green Building Practices: There are no green building practices listed on the application.

4. Comments:

Ward Alderman: Alderman Ballantyne supports the Staff recommendation of conditional approval.

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."*

The structure is currently nonconforming with respect to the following dimensional requirements: lot area, lot area per dwelling unit, left side yard, frontage, and pervious area. The proposed alteration to construct a dormer will occur within the nonconforming left side yard setback. The current dimension of the left side yard is 4.8 feet where 8 feet is required. This alteration to a nonconforming structure requires the Applicant to obtain a special permit under §4.4.1 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO).

Section 4.4.1 states that "[l]awfully existing one-and two-family dwellings which are only used as residences, which are nonconforming with respect to dimensional requirements, may be enlarged, extended, renovated or altered by special permit granted by the SPGA in accordance with the procedures of Article 5."

In considering a special permit under §4.4 of the SZO, Staff finds that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The proposal will allow for the homeowners to have adequate headroom in their stairway leading to the finished attic. The proposal has been designed with setbacks and at a height that minimally impacts the neighbors and no other nonconforming dimensional requirements will be altered. The structure currently conforms to the maximum requirements for height and FAR and will remain conforming as a result of the proposal.

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 prevent the overcrowding of land; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RA district, which is, "to establish and preserve quiet neighborhoods of one- and two-family homes, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts." The proposal will preserve the structure as a two-family home, is compatible with the neighborhood, and will not be inconvenient to the residents of the district.

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."*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of two- and three-family dwellings. The roof type in the neighborhood is an eclectic mix of gable, hipped, and flat roofs. There are instances in the neighborhood where shed dormers have been constructed on gable roofs.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): The height of the proposed dormer is approximately 2 feet above the attic floor and has been designed to minimize its visibility from the public way. Staff finds that the proposed dormer is designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area and land uses.

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

There will be no adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.

7. SomerVision Plan: *Complies with the applicable goals, policies and actions of the SomerVision plan, including: Preserve and enhance the character of Somerville's neighborhoods.*

The proposed dormer has been designed to respect neighborhood forms and patterns.

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 the construction of a dormer on the left side of the roof. 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>November 4, 2016</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>November 2, 2016</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (CS1.1, CS1.2, A101, A102, A103, A201, A202, A203, A301, A906, and A902)</td></tr><tr><td>May 26, 2016</td><td>Plot plan submitted to OSPCD (PL-1)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	November 4, 2016	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	November 2, 2016	Plans submitted to OSPCD (CS1.1, CS1.2, A101, A102, A103, A201, A202, A203, A301, A906, and A902)	May 26, 2016	Plot plan submitted to OSPCD (PL-1)
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Any changes to the approved elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
Construction												
2	The applicant shall post the name and phone number of the general contractor at the site entrance where it is visible to people passing by.	During Construction	Plng.									
3	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P									
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.									

