



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

**Case #:** ZBA 2015-50

**Date:** July 30, 2015

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 42 Princeton Street

**Applicant & Owner Name:** Kenneth and Alexandra Greene

**Applicant & Owner Address:** 42 Princeton Street Somerville, MA 02144

**Alderman:** Mark Niedergang

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owners, Kenneth and Alexandra Greene, seek a Special Permit per SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming structure by adding a dormer. RB Zone. Ward 5.

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals - August 5, 2015

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 2 ½ story, 2-family house, on a 3,404 square foot lot.
2. Proposal: The proposal is to add a dormer over the stairs to have more head height in the stairwell.
3. Green Building Practices: None listed on the application.
4. Comments:

*Fire Prevention:* Fire prevention has been contacted and has no comments at this time.

*Ward Alderman:* Alderman Niedergang has been contacted and has no comments at this time.



## 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 front yard setback. The required setback is 15' and the front setback is currently 3'. The dormer will be built approximately 8' from the front lot line. The side yard setback is conforming at 13'. This alteration to a nonconforming structure requires the Applicant to obtain special permits 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 find that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The new dormer is modest in length. A condition of this report is that the Applicant includes an additional window for a total of 3 windows on the dormer. The proposal has been designed with setbacks that minimally impact the neighbors and will not increase the front yard setback. The side yard setback will continue to be conforming to the requirements of the SZO.

### 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 conserve the value of land and buildings; and to encourage housing for persons of all income levels.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district, 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."

### 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 has a variety of residential uses including one-, two-, and three-family homes as well as apartment buildings like Maxwell's Green. The house backs up on the Lowell extension of the community path that gives access to Davis Square and will be extended with the construction of the green line.

As conditioned there are little to no impacts of the project.

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

There are no impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.

6. 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.*

The project does not have an impact on the metrics of SomerVision but does allow a homeowner to make minor modifications to their property.

### 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. 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>July 2, 2015</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>July 20, 2015</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A-100 Site Boundary, A-110 First and Second Existing FP, A-120 Third and Roof Existing FP, A-130 First and Second Proposed FP, A-140 Third and Roof Proposed FP, A-210 Existing Elev, A-220 Proposed Elev)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	July 2, 2015	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	July 20, 2015	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A-100 Site Boundary, A-110 First and Second Existing FP, A-120 Third and Roof Existing FP, A-130 First and Second Proposed FP, A-140 Third and Roof Proposed FP, A-210 Existing Elev, A-220 Proposed Elev)
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Any changes to the approved plan or 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							
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							
Design										
4	Applicant shall provide the final material sample for siding, to Planning Staff for review and approval prior to installation. Dormer finish shall match or be complementary to the home.	BP	Plng.							
5	The Applicant shall submit an elevation with 3 windows on the elevation to Planning Staff for review and approval.	BP	Plng.							
Miscellaneous										
6	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							
Public Safety										

7	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
<b>Final Sign-Off</b>				
8	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.	

