



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2014-40

Date: May 29, 2014

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 62 Putnam Street

Applicant Name: Jack and Carol Mullane

Applicant Address: 62 Putnam Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Property Owner Name: Putnam Realty Trust

Property Owner Address: 62 Putnam Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Alderman: Alderman McWatters

Legal Notice: Applicants, Jack and Carol Mullane, and Owner, Putnam Realty Trust, seek a Special Permit under §SZO 4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming single-family dwelling by enlarging an existing rear addition. Ward 3. RA zone.

Dates of Public Hearing: **Wednesday, June 4, 2014**

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject parcel is a 5,650 square foot lot in the Central Hill neighborhood, near City Hall. The structure is a 2½ story, single-family dwelling with a gable end. There are two parking spaces on-site and the rear yard is landscaped. The surrounding Residential A zoning district is composed of single and two-family dwellings along Putnam Street while Highland Avenue is composed of a mix of uses, including municipal, commercial, and residential.

There has been no prior zoning relief.

2. Proposal: The Applicant proposes to enlarge an existing single-story rear addition, which includes alterations to windows and the rear deck to provide a better interior plan and a moderately enlarged deck area. The main massing and rear addition are both 2½ stories while the second rear addition is a single

story, approximately 45 square feet. The proposal would add approximately 70 square feet to the existing second rear addition for a dining area. The deck would be enlarged by approximately 16 square feet to extend the additional 3 foot length of the addition. The right and left side elevations would have two additional windows on each façade while the rear façade would be composed of two pairs of windows.



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3. Green Building Practices: The application form indicates that the addition will be insulated beyond code requirements and air sealed.

4. Comments:

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

Wiring Inspection: Has been contacted but has not yet submitted comments.

Engineering: The design engineer will need to provide a letter to this office indicating no increased run-off to adjacent properties or public ROW and any increase seen after project completion will need to be remedied at no expense to the City of Somerville. The letter shall include existing and proposed site conditions including but not limited to: impervious area, pervious area, stormwater run-off, etc.

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted but has not yet submitted 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."*

Under SZO §4.4.1, an existing single or two-family dwelling may alter a nonconformity through the granting of a Special Permit. Therefore, due to the existing nonconforming right (north) side yard setback, the proposed change, to enlarge the existing rear addition to create a dining area, requires a 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 changes proposed will minimally increase the habitable space and not affect the streetscape, or negatively impact the adjacent property. The proposed enlarged addition will look into the side yard and would remain as one story. Other than nonconforming right (north) side yard setback, the proposal would comply with ground coverage (21%), landscape (52%) pervious area (52%), and floor area ratio (0.37).

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 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; and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RA 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."

The proposal to add habitable space through a moderately enlarged single-story rear addition will enable the occupants to expand their kitchen to include a dining area. The addition is contextual to the existing structure and does not exceed the width of the first rear addition. This proposal would not negatively impact the streetscape, nor be detrimental to adjacent properties.

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 parcel is located in a Residence A zoning district near City Hall, Somerville High and the Central Library, in the Central Hill neighborhood. The surrounding Residential A zoning district is composed of single and two-family dwellings along Putnam Street while Highland Avenue is composed of a mix of uses, including municipal, commercial, and residential. The surrounding dwellings along Putnam Street are predominantly similar in that they are gable-end, 2½ story structures.

The additional living space will have minimal to no impact on abutters, will not affect the streetscape, and minimally enlarges the existing footprint. The enlarged addition will overlook the side yard and will remain as one story. Proposed alterations to the building will enhance the interior plan through the addition of a dining area and is contextual with the existing structure.

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 alter a nonconforming single-family dwelling by enlarging an existing rear addition. 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>(May 1, 2014)</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>March 11, 1992 (May 29, 2014)</td><td>Plot plan submitted to OSPCD</td></tr><tr><td>April 30, 2014 (May 29, 2014)</td><td>Proposed plans submitted to OSPCD (C1.1, A1.1, A3.1, A3.2, & A3.3)</td></tr><tr><td>March 17, 2014 (May 29, 2014)</td><td>Existing elevations submitted to OSPCD (X3.1, X3.2, & X3.3)</td></tr><tr><td>February 23, 2014 (May 29, 2014)</td><td>Existing Plan – First Floor (X1.1)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(May 1, 2014)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	March 11, 1992 (May 29, 2014)	Plot plan submitted to OSPCD	April 30, 2014 (May 29, 2014)	Proposed plans submitted to OSPCD (C1.1, A1.1, A3.1, A3.2, & A3.3)	March 17, 2014 (May 29, 2014)	Existing elevations submitted to OSPCD (X3.1, X3.2, & X3.3)	February 23, 2014 (May 29, 2014)	Existing Plan – First Floor (X1.1)
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Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.																
Pre-Construction																
2	The Applicant shall submit a proposed grading and drainage plan, stamped by a registered PE in Massachusetts that demonstrates compliance with the City’s stormwater policy.	BP	Eng.													
Construction Impacts																
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	The new siding, trim, roofing material, and other exterior wall details shall match or be complimentary to the existing in size, color and detail.	CO	Plng.	
5	An exterior light and electrical receptacle is required for the first (or all) level of the porch and an electrical receptacle is required for the second level (if there is no access to the ground).	Final sign off	Wiring Inspector	
Public Safety				
6	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
Final Sign-Off				
7	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.	

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