



KHALSA DESIGN INCORPORATED
Architecture & Urban Planning

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TO: City Clerk's Office
City of Somerville

DATE: 05/09/2025

FROM: Evan Stellman
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Somerville, MA 02143
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RE: 142 Cross Street Hardship Variance (MBL 93/D/1)

Applicant: JAC Investments

Zone: MR-3 / 4 Mile transit Walkshed / Not on a Pedestrian Street

Relief Requested: Minimum Façade Build out on a Secondary Street

JAC investments respectfully requests a hardship for the Secondary Front Façade build out required by SZO 4.1.7.c.a..

Description of Work:

The subject property is located within an MR-3 zone. It has frontage on Cross Street (Primary) and Alston Street (Secondary). The property to the left side (northeast) is occupied by the MBTA and is used for the Green Line. The properties to the right side (southeast) are in an NR zone. Generally, the neighborhood consists of 2.5 and 3 story residential structures, with a handful of structures that are 4 stories tall. The proposed development consists of a 3 story residential structure. The proposed floor area is +/- 5,735 s.f.. Unit 1, which occupies the basement and 1st floor is proposed to be +/- 2,612 sf; Unit 2, which occupies the 2nd floor, is proposed to be +/- 1,244 sf; Unit 3, which occupies the 3rd floor with roof access, is proposed to be +/- 1,575 sf. There is no vehicular parking proposed for this development; however, 3 long term bicycle parking spaces per unit are proposed.

Review Criteria:

a).Special circumstances exist relating to the soil conditions, shape, or topography of a parcel of land or the unusual character of an existing structure but not affecting generally the zoning district in which the land or structure is located;

Due to the irregular shape of the site, combined with the minimum side yard and curb setback requirements, it is not possible to develop a structure that complies with current Zoning regulations. Specifically, the minimum Façade Build Out requirement for Alston street, which is designated as the "Secondary Front". The subject property is a corner, irregularly shaped lot, with a majority of its

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frontage on Cross Street. The narrowest portion of the site, at 23 feet, faces Alston Street. The minimum façade build out is 65%, or 14.95'. The abutting property to the right side is zoned "NR". The SZO requires that a structure in an MR3 zone maintain a 10' setback for side yards abutting an NR zone. The minimum 12' curb setback at Cross Street reduces the buildable area by an additional +/-4 feet. Given these reductions to the allowed building area, relief would need to be granted to reduce the 12' curb setback and 10' side yard setback, or reduce the 65% secondary façade build out. On a typical lot (rectilinear, fronting on 1 street), the minimum façade build out could be easily met. This lot has an increased required setback at the front and sides, and a narrow dimension at the secondary front. The proposed façade build out, measured at the maximum front yard setback is , 58.6% or 13'6".

b).Literal enforcement of the provision of this Ordinance for the district where the subject land or structure is located would involve substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the petitioner or appellant due to said special circumstances:

The existing structure is in poor condition and has been approved for demolition. The applicant would like to develop the site to provide some much needed housing in the City. Considering that the zoning does not allow for a structure that is compliant with the dimensional regulations, literal enforcement of the provision of this Ordinance would not allow new development on this parcel and therefore impose a significant hardship on the applicant.

c).Desirable relief could be granted without causing substantial detriment to the public good and without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent and purpose of a specific district in this Ordinance or the Ordinance in general.

Granting relief for the façade build out would not cause detriment to the public good. The required curb setback will provide a more expansive sidewalk space for pedestrians and the 3 proposed dwelling units will bring new residents to the neighborhood. The existing structure is an outdated single story commercial building, which is not in good condition. The proposed development is intended to comply with all other regulations of the Zoning Code, so it is in line with the intent of the zoning code.

Thank you,

Evan Stellman
Khalsa Design Inc.