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Mr. Matt Sarcione,
Zoning Review Planner
Somerville, MA.

January 31, 2025

RE: 103 GILMAN ST., SOMERVILLE

E-MAIL: REVIEW COMMENTS

Good day, Mr. Sarcione,

I am writing in response to your email of January 31, 2025 wherein you mention zoning concerns relative to the replacement of the existing stair and porches on this building. In your email you are requesting a certified plot plan, area calculations, etc. I most certainly recognize your concerns and your diligent attention regarding this permit application which are totally valid, and which by the way we were conscious of in preparing the permit drawings.

However, there are undying factors that must be considered that all should be aware of:

1. The Owner legitimately wanted to replace the original stairs as they were falling apart and were unsafe.
2. The building department reviewed the stair replacement the Owner did and rejected the installation as not meeting the code standards for stairs.
3. The Owner engaged us to prepare the permit drawings for new stairs that would comply with the building code.
4. Upon visiting the site and obtaining site condition information, it was determined the stairs in place had insufficient space, length and width; to meet the minimum code standards, the porches themselves were in poor condition.
5. Also, in reviewing what would be necessary to comply with the code, the increase in width of the stairs would REDUCE the egress route from one stair landing to another.
6. We discussed all this with the Owner wherein he agreed to replace both porches and stairs to meet the building code.
7. The drawings you reviewed were developed using the minimum dimensions necessary to provide provide for a code compliant stairs and egress routes with the minimum widths and

- lengths of stairs. In order to achieve this, it required **14" of additional width** of the porches which was the minimum we could do and comply with the building code.
8. Providing a certified plot plan will deliver the same information and will not change the situation. So, I cannot see the benefit of doing so as the results of what can be done will remain the same.
 9. So, we have a real situation of public safety vs. zoning. This is not a new building, its not an addition to a building; it's egress from and existing building that must be maintained and provided for.
 10. An analogy would be the front set back requirements of any building, the building has to meet the set back requirement, however stairs to the entry are in most instances are exempt from that requirement; you have to get from the ground to the main floor. This should be reviewed in the same manner.
 11. This would be an entirely different matter if these were not egress to the building and/or there were other alternatives to consider; there are not.

Please understand I respect what your responsibilities are and that you are performing responsibly. But this matter is a public safety issue and conflict. I might suggest you review and present this letter with and to the Superintendent of Inspectional Services, I will CC him with this communication.

I wish I could come up with another remedy so everyone could be accommodated.

Respectfully yours,



Robert Therrien.

P.S. I have encountered this problem in other communities, never has there been a question of public safety over zoning or that egress stairs (and routes) were subject to zoning. Needless to say, we all want to provide safe egress for the occupants of this building.