



City of Somerville

## PLANNING BOARD

City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

### DECISION

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**PROPERTY ADDRESS:** 483 Broadway  
**CASE NUMBER:** ZP25-000002  
**OWNER:** John Wood  
**OWNER ADDRESS:** 7 Meadow Lane, Topsfield, MA 01983  
**APPLICANT:** Babbitt Design c/o Tavis Babbitt  
**APPLICANT ADDRESS:** 85 McGuerty Road, Eastham, MA 02642  
**DECISION:** Approved with Conditions (Site Plan Approval)  
**DATE OF VOTE:** July 17, 2025  
**DECISION ISSUED:** July 28, 2025

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE  
SOMERVILLE, MA

This decision summarizes the findings made by the Planning Board (the "Board") regarding the Site Plan Approval application submitted for 483 Broadway.

### LEGAL NOTICE

Babbitt Design proposes to develop a Commercial Building in the MR4 zoning district, which requires Site Plan Approval.

### RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

On June 5, 2025, the Planning Board held a public hearing advertised in accordance with M.G.L. 40A and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. Present and sitting at the public hearing were board members Chair Michael Capuano, Vice-Chair Amelia Aboff, Clerk Jahan Habib, Michael McNeley, Lynn Richards, and Alternate Luc Schuster. The applicant team described the project. Chair Capuano opened the floor for public testimony, and several members of the public about items including the current state of the property and greening the roof. Chair Capuano closed the public testimony portion of the hearing. The Board and applicant team discussed questions relative to loading, bike parking, and building additional stories. The Board continued the public hearing until July 17, 2025, but left the opportunity available for the public to submit written comments.

On July 17, 2025, the Board resumed the public hearing. Present and sitting at the public hearing were board members Chair Michael Capuano, Vice-Chair Amelia Aboff, Clerk Jahan Habib, Michael McNeley, Lynn Richards, and Alternate Luc Schuster. Applicant Tavis Babbitt of Babbitt Designs presented and discussed three alternate loading and bike parking/travel concepts that had not been submitted to PPZ Staff or Mobility for review prior to the hearing. The Board, applicant team, and Staff discussed the loading and bike parking alternatives with Staff noting that Mobility had provided a comprehensive review of these items prior to the opening of the hearing on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Staff stated they were not comfortable with the Planning Board adding a condition that Mobility review these new alternatives as part of any Site Plan Approval.

After brief discussion, the Board took a vote to approve the Site Plan Approval with the conditions noted in the Staff Memo.

## PLANS & DOCUMENTS

Application plans, documents, and supporting materials submitted and incorporated are identified below.

Document	Pages	Prepared By	Date	Revision Date
Certificate of Received Materials – Office of Sustainability & Environment	1	Office of Sustainability and Environment	10/16/2024	n/a
Site Plan	2	Ashkar Engineering & Surveying 70 Washington St, Suite 306 Haverhill, MA	7/26/2022	n/a
Shadow Study	15	No preparer indicated	1/13/2025 (submitted)	n/a
Project Narrative	1	Babbitt Designs 85 McGuerty Rd. Eastham, MA	1/13/2025 (submitted)	n/a
Mobility (TAP) documents	3, 3, & 8	Rise Architecture 71B Clinton St Malden MA  and  Babbitt Designs 85 McGuerty Rd. Eastham, MA	5/24/2024	2/7/2025  3/3/2025  3/20/2025
Architectural plans	19	Rise Architecture 71B Clinton St Malden MA	5/24/2024	4/8/2025
Landscape plans	2	Rise Architecture 71B Clinton St Malden MA	5/24/2024	4/8/2025

## SITE PLAN APPROVAL FINDINGS

In accordance with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, the Board may approve or deny a Site Plan Approval upon making findings considering, at least, each of the following:

1. *The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.*

The Board finds that this project supports the goals laid out in SomerVision 2040, the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, including the following:

- Continue to support small businesses and fight displacement by coordinating with an existing local business to remain in Somerville.
- Prioritize walking, biking, and transit options and minimize space dedicated to personal vehicles

2. *The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.*

The Board finds that this project meets the intent of the MR4 zoning district which is, in part: "To create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for smaller scale, multi-use and mixed-use buildings and neighborhood serving commercial uses."

The Board also finds that this project meets the broader intent of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, including the following:

- To develop and maintain complete, mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented, and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods that foster a strong sense of community throughout the city.
- To provide opportunities for businesses to remain in Somerville as they develop and grow.
- To protect and promote a diverse mix of businesses.
- To encourage contemporary architectural design for new construction that compliments the established character of existing buildings.
- To encourage the use of public transportation, bicycling, and walking in lieu of motor vehicle use when a choice of travel mode exists.

3. *Mitigation proposed to alleviate any impacts attributable to the proposed development.*

The Board finds that, as conditioned, the proposal does not produce any impacts that require additional mitigation.

## DECISION

Following public testimony, review of the submitted plans, and discussion of the statutorily required considerations, Chair Michael Capuano moved to approve the Site Plan Approval to develop a 2-story Commercial Building in the MR4 zoning district with the conditions included in the staff memo. Vice-Chair Amelia Aboff seconded. The Board voted unanimously **(5-0)** to **approve the Site Plan Approval** permit, subject to the following conditions:

### Permit Validity

1. This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.
2. A written narrative or descriptive checklist identifying the completion or compliance with permit conditions must be to the Inspectional Services Department at least ten (10) working days in advance of a request for a final inspection.

### Public Record

3. If the Board requires any changes to the submitted plans, digital copies of all applicable application materials reflecting those changes must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division for the public record. Materials must be submitted in accordance with the document format standards of relevant Submittal Requirements.
4. A digital copy of the recorded Decision stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division for

the public record.

#### Site and Building Design

5. Utility and mechanical equipment is not permitted on any façade or within the frontage area of the lot.
6. Electrical transformers and other mechanical equipment are not permitted above ground within the frontage area of any lot.
7. A Digital Massing Model of only the building's massing, in SketchUp format (.skp), that is to scale and properly geo-located and oriented for use in placing and viewing the project within the City's digital model of existing buildings in the city must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division prior to the issuance of a Building Permit. The model should be the main mass only and should not include any detailed architectural features of the proposed building, including building components or materiality.
8. Any Commercial Signage will need to meet requirements of SZO 10.8 or SZO 14.1.8, as applicable.

#### Construction Documents

9. Construction documents must be substantially equivalent to the approved plans and other materials submitted for development review.
10. Material specifications from suppliers must be submitted to confirm fenestration glazing is compliant with the VLT and VLR ratings required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.
11. An outdoor lighting plan and supplier cut sheet specifications of chosen lighting fixtures must be submitted to confirm compliance with Section 10.6 Outdoor Lighting of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The site photometric plan must include a keyed site plan identifying the location of all luminaires; total site lumen limit table (calculations from the SZO); lighting fixture schedule indicating the fixture type, description, lamp type, lumens, color temperature, color rendering index, BUG rating, mounting height, and wattage of all luminaires; and notation of any timing devices used to control the hours set for illumination.

#### Mobility

12. The Applicant or their successor in interest shall coordinate with the City's Engineering Division on requirements for curb ramp reconstruction to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.
13. All changes to curbside regulations are subject to approval by the Somerville Traffic Commission. Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the Applicant or their successor in interest shall coordinate with relevant City Departments to submit the proposed loading zone on Broadway for Traffic Commission review.

#### Engineering

14. The Applicant or their successor in interest shall submit a Construction Management Plan (CMP) for Engineering and Mobility Division review and comment twenty-one (21) days prior to submission of the Building Permit.
15. Streetscape design will be reviewed and approved as part of Applicant's forthcoming Streetscape Construction Permit (sub-type of ESC Permit). Apply via Citizenserve concurrently with main Building Permit Application.
16. Addition of Commercial Unit will require an Address Modification Permit to

establish unique, permanent address. Apply via Citizenserve concurrently with main Building Permit Application.

**Maintenance**

17. The property owner is responsible for all of the regular and long-term maintenance, replacement, insurance, and other applicable costs associated with all on-site sidewalk improvements.

Attest, by the Planning Board:

Michael Capuano, *Chair*  
Amelia Aboff, *Vice-Chair*  
Jahan Habib, *Clerk*  
Michael McNeley  
Lynn Richards  
Luc Schuster (*Alternate*)

### **CLERK'S CERTIFICATE**

Any appeal of this decision must be filed within twenty days after the date this notice is filed in the Office of the City Clerk, and must be filed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40A, sec. 17 and SZO sec. 15.5.3.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 A, sec. 11, no variance shall take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the City Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the Office of the City Clerk and no appeal has been filed, or that if such appeal has been filed, that it has been dismissed or denied, is recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title.

Also in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 A, sec. 11, a special permit shall not take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the City Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the Office of the City Clerk and either that no appeal has been filed or the appeal has been filed within such time, is recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title. The person exercising rights under a duly appealed Special Permit does so at risk that a court will reverse the permit and that any construction performed under the permit may be ordered undone.

The owner or applicant shall pay the fee for recording or registering. Furthermore, a permit from the Division of Inspectional Services shall be required in order to proceed with any project favorably decided upon by this decision, and upon request, the Applicant shall present evidence to the Building Official that this decision is properly recorded.

This is a true and correct copy of the decision filed on \_\_\_\_\_ in the Office of the City Clerk, and twenty days have elapsed, and

**FOR VARIANCE(S) WITHIN**

\_\_\_\_\_ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or  
\_\_\_\_\_ any appeals that were filed have been finally dismissed or denied.

**FOR SPECIAL PERMIT(S) WITHIN**

\_\_\_\_\_ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or  
\_\_\_\_\_ there has been an appeal filed.

**FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL(S) WITHIN**

\_\_\_\_\_ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or  
\_\_\_\_\_ there has been an appeal filed.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ City Clerk Date \_\_\_\_\_