



City of Somerville

PLANNING BOARD

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

TO: Planning Board
FROM: OSPCD Staff
SUBJECT: 1 Myrtle Street (ZP25-000086)
POSTED: October 2, 2025

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with Conditions

Staff memos are used to communicate background information, analysis, responses to public comments, review of statutory requirements and other information from Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Staff to the Review Board members.

This memo summarizes the Site Plan Approval application submitted for 1 Myrtle Street, identifies any additional discretionary or administrative development review that is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and provides related analysis or feedback as necessary. The application was deemed complete on September 19, 2025, and is scheduled for a public hearing on October 16, 2025. Any Staff recommended findings, conditions, and decisions in this memo are based on the information available to date prior to any public comment at the scheduled public hearing.

LEGAL NOTICE

Clearview Sunroom & Window seeks to modify an Apartment Building in the Mid-Rise 3 (MR3) zoning district, which requires Site Plan Approval.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Applicant is proposing to construct an enclosed sunroom to be attached to the rear of a three-unit Apartment Building. The sunroom is proposed to be approximately 7 FT wide and extend 6.5 FT from the rear envelope of the building and will replace an existing wooden deck.

The Applicant received a waiver from the following application requirements:

- Building Elevations
- Building Sections
- Zoning Dimensional Standards Table

BACKGROUND

1 Myrtle Street is located in the ¼ mile Transit Area in the MR3 zoning district in the East Somerville neighborhood, represented by Ward 1 City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin. Modifying an Apartment Building in the MR3 district requires Site Plan Approval. Site Plan Approval is the administrative review and approval of conforming

development to address any potential impacts as necessary. The Planning Board is the decision-making authority for all non-variance discretionary or administrative permits required for the MR3 zoning district.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

The first neighborhood meeting was hosted by Ward 1 Councilor Matthew McLaughlin and the applicant on March 5, 2025, via the Zoom meeting platform. One neighbor from a unit within the building attended and informed the Applicant that the proposed modification required permission from the condo owner's association, which had not been sought at that point.

The first neighborhood meeting was hosted by the applicant (scheduling was done in consultation with the Ward Councilor) on March 19, 2025, via the Zoom meeting platform. The Applicant had received permission from the condo association for the modification. No neighbors were in attendance.

DESIGN REVIEW

The proposal was reviewed by Somerville Urban Design Commission via the Zoom meeting platform on July 22, 2025. The Commission provided its official recommendation on August 12, 2025. No design options were recommended nor was any design guidance provided, considering the small scope of the project and the fact that the modification will not be visible from any public right-of-way (ROW).

ANALYSIS

The proposed modification is much smaller in scope than a typical Site Plan Approval (SPA). The need for SPA was triggered by the categorization of the building, although it resembles a rowhouse not typically found in the MR3 zoning district, as an Apartment Building. The SZO requires that development of an Apartment Buildings in the MR3, which are typically of much larger massing (a maximum floor plate of 15,000 SF), receive Site Plan Approval. In the SZO, the definition of **development** includes "...the construction or modification of any principal building type...", and therefore this modification is subject to SPA.

Staff has no concerns about the proposed sunroom, and notes that it will not be visible from the Washington Street ROW as there is an existing fence on the property line that obscures any view into the rear yard.

CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS

The Planning Board is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to deliberate each of the following considerations at the public hearing. The Board must discuss and draw conclusions for each consideration but may make additional findings beyond this minimum statutory requirement.

Site Plan Approval Considerations

1. The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.
2. The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.
3. Mitigation proposed to alleviate any impacts attributable to the proposed development.

Information relative to the required considerations is provided below:

Site Plan Approval

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

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

Ensure diversity of the housing stock. For Somerville to be a lifelong community, it needs housing for all stages of life. From infancy through old age, people's individual and family needs change. This relates to the size of units, but also their location, type of building, and accessibility to name a few.

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

The intent of the MR3 zoning district is, in part: "To create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for smaller scale, multi-use and mixed-use buildings and neighborhood serving commercial uses."

Staff believes this project is in line with the intent of the zoning district.

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

Staff does not believe there are any impacts in need of mitigation.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Should the Board approve the required Site Plan Approval for a modification of an Apartment Building in the MR3 zoning district, Planning, Preservation & Zoning Staff recommends the following conditions:

Permit Validity

1. This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.

Public Record

2. 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.

Construction Documents

3. Construction documents must be substantially equivalent to the approved plans and other materials submitted for development review.