



City of Somerville

PLANNING BOARD

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

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Planning, Preservation, and Zoning Staff
SUBJECT: 379 Somerville Ave, ZP25-000078
POSTED: October 17, 2025

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with Conditions

This memo is supplemental to the staff memo dated July 21, 2025.

LEGAL NOTICE

No change.

BACKGROUND

The Site Plan Approval case was heard by the Planning Board on August 7th, 2025 and continued until the November 20th, 2025 meeting.

On September 9, 2025, the applicant provided an updated screening design for the transformer alcove and identified a potential artist to install an art piece within the alcove and on the transformer. The applicant met with staff on October 8, 2025 to discuss steps for moving forward.

ANALYSIS

The updated design includes the removal of existing screening, installation of new decorative screening, and an installation of a cohesive art piece both within the alcove and on the transformer.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Should the Board approve the Major Amendment to the previously approved plans for a 5-story general building, Planning, Preservation & Zoning Staff recommends the following additional conditions:

- The current fencing and gate installed in front of the transformer alcove must be removed.
- Faux storefront fencing must be installed in front of the transformer alcove that replicates the design of the buildings existing storefront in both material and color.
- The Applicant shall commission a local artist to install a mural or other artwork within the transformer alcove to visually minimize the presence of the transformer at the frontage.

- Final design of the art installation must be presented to the Somerville Planning Board prior to installation.
- The Applicant shall submit a bond for one hundred and twenty-five percent (125%) of the cost estimate from the local artist for material and installation of the artwork and the cost of material and construction of the new faux storefront.