



City of Somerville

# **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

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

**TO:** Zoning Board of Appeals  
**FROM:** Planning Division Staff  
**SUBJECT:** 17 Monmouth Street, ZP26-000043  
**POSTED:** July 31, 2026

**RECOMMENDATION:** Denial

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

This memo summarizes the Special Permit application submitted for 17 Monmouth St, 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 June 26, 2026, and is scheduled for a public hearing on August 5, 2026. 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**

The Law Office of Richard G. DiGirolamo seeks a Special Permit for a lot split on a property listed on the National Registers of Historic Places in the Neighborhood Residential (NR) District as required by SZO 10.1.1.d.

## **SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL**

The Law Office of Richard G. DiGirolamo is proposing a lot split at 17 Monmouth Street, which is on the National Registry of Historic Places, and requires both a recommendation from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and a Special Permit prior to Minor Site Plan Approval (ZP26-000014).

## **BACKGROUND**

17 Monmouth Street is located in the Neighborhood Residential (NR) zoning district in the Spring Hill neighborhood represented by Ward 3 Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen. The Zoning Board of Appeals is the decision-making authority for all discretionary or administrative permits required for the NR zoning district.

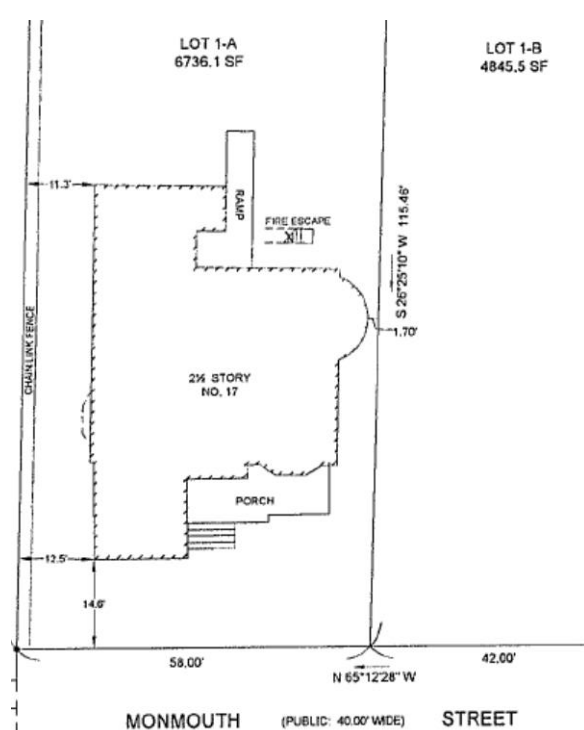
The Historic Preservation Commission met virtually on June 2, 2026, to discuss recommendations for a lot split for 17 Monmouth Street. The recommendation was approved by the HPC at their July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The Commission's recommendation is

attached to the materials provided to the ZBA for this Special Permit. Analysis of the HPC's recommendation is provided below.

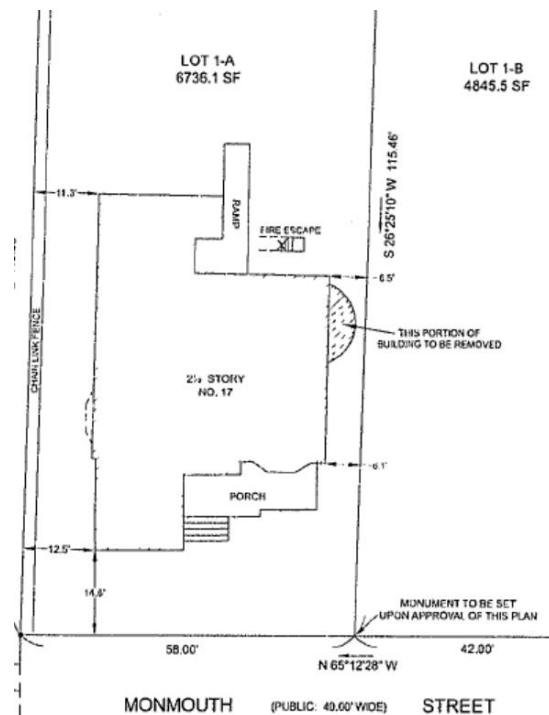
## ANALYSIS

The applicant applied for Minor Site Plan Approval for a lot split and was advised by staff that a Special Permit from the ZBA and recommendation from the HPC would be required prior to approval of the lot split (SZO 10.1.1.d.) due to the property being on the National Register of Historic Places.

The HPC made recommendations against the removal of a historic bay window that is shown as being removed in the current lot split proposal. The HPC recommended keeping the window in accordance with the Secretary of Interior Standards and to seek a Hardship Variance for the side setback shown in the proposed plats shown in the 'Application Materials' document and the zoomed in images of the plat below.



Above: Proposed plat with existing bay window



Above: Proposed plat with bay window removed

## CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS

The Zoning Board of Appeals 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.

### Special Permit 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. The intent of the SZO overall (Article 1.1.4)

Information relative to the required considerations is provided below:

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

Staff believes that this project **does not** support the goals laid out in SomerVision 2040, the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, including the following:

"Celebrate the unique character of our neighborhoods and the strength of our COMMUNITY as expressed in our history, cultures and vibrant civic engagement."

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

Staff believes that this project does not meet the intent of the NR zoning district. The intent of the NR zoning district is, in part: "To conserve already established areas of detached and semi-detached residential buildings."

3. *The intent of the SZO overall (Article 1.1.4).*

Staff believes this project **does not** meet the intent of the SZO overall (Article 1.1.4), including the following, "To preserve and enhance the existing character of Somerville's traditional housing and respect existing built form and development patterns."

### PERMIT CONDITIONS

Should the Board approve the required Special Permit to allow a lot split of a property on the National Register of Historic Places, Planning 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 Division for the public record.