



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2018-42
Site: 5-7 Curtis St
Date of Decision: May 2, 2018
Decision: *Petition Approved with Conditions*
Date Filed with City Clerk: May 3, 2018

ZBA DECISION

Site: 5-7 Curtis Street

Applicant / Owner Name: Arun Ravindran
Applicant / Owner Address: 31 B St. James Avenue, Somerville, MA 02141
Alderman: Katjana Ballantyne

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner, Arun Ravindran, seeks a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a nonconforming structure by finishing a portion of the basement. RA Zone. Ward 7.

<u>Zoning District/Ward:</u>	RA Zone. Ward 7.
<u>Zoning Approval Sought:</u>	SZO §4.4.1
<u>Date of Application:</u>	March 27, 2018
<u>Date(s) of Public Hearing:</u>	May 2, 2018
<u>Date of Decision:</u>	May 2, 2018
<u>Vote:</u>	5-0

Appeal #ZBA 2018-42 was opened before the Zoning Board of Appeals in the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), 3rd floor Community Room, 259 Lowell Street, Somerville, MA. Notice of the Public Hearing was given to persons affected and was published and posted, all as required by M.G.L. c. 40A, sec. 11 and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. After one hearing of deliberation, the Zoning Board of Appeals took a vote.



I. DESCRIPTION:

The Applicant/Owner is seeking approval to finish the basement to add living space to the first floor unit.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §4.4.1):

In order to grant a special permit, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.1.4 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.1.4 in detail.

1. Information Supplied:

The Board finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.1.2 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the required Special Permits.

2. Compliance with Standards: *The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit."*

The structure is currently nonconforming with respect to the following dimensional requirements: lot area, lot area per dwelling unit, pervious area, floor area ratio (FAR), front yard setback, left and right side yard setbacks, and street frontage.

The proposal will impact the nonconforming dimension of FAR. The current dimension is .76 and the proposal to finish the basement by adding 561 square feet of net floor area will increase the FAR to .92. The requirement in the district is .75. This alteration to a nonconforming structure requires the Applicant to obtain special permits under §4.4.1 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO).

Section 4.4.1 states that “[l]awfully existing one-and two-family dwellings which are only used as residences, which are nonconforming with respect to dimensional requirements, may be enlarged, extended, renovated or altered by special permit granted by the SPGA in accordance with the procedures of Article 5.”

3. Consistency with Purposes: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the general purposes of this Ordinance as set forth in Article 1, and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those purposes at the beginning of the various Articles."*

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to provide for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; to lessen congestion in the streets; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RA district, which is, “to establish and preserve quiet neighborhoods of one- and two-family homes, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts.”



4. Site and Area Compatibility: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area, including land uses."*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The locus is located in Teele Square near the southern end of Curtis Street where it intersects with Broadway. This particular section of Curtis Street is comprised of single-, two-, and three-family dwellings with gable roofs.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): The prior approval was designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built environment of the surrounding area and is a significant improvement from the current conditions. The proposal to finish the basement will not have an impact on the design and compatibility of the structure.

5. Housing Impact: Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.

6. SomerVision Plan: Complies with the applicable goals, policies and actions of the SomerVision plan, including the following, as appropriate: Preserve and enhance the character of Somerville’s neighborhoods.

DECISION:

Special Permit under §4.4.1

Present and sitting were Members Orsola Susan Fontano, Richard Rossetti, Danielle Evans, Josh Safdie, Anne Brockelman and Pooja Phaltankar. Upon making the above findings, Richard Rossetti made a motion to approve the request for a Variance. Danielle Evans seconded the motion. Wherefore the Zoning Board of Appeals voted **5-0** to **APPROVE** the request. In addition the following conditions were attached:

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes						
1	Approval is to finish the basement. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Pln g.							
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date (Stamp Date)</th> <th>Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>March 27, 2018</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March 22, 2018</td> <td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (0.1, plot plan, 0.2, 0.2)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	March 27, 2018	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	March 22, 2018	Plans submitted to OSPCD (0.1, plot plan, 0.2, 0.2)
	Date (Stamp Date)				Submission					
	March 27, 2018				Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office					
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Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
Pre-Construction										



2	If required by the Engineering Department, the proposed basement finished floor elevation shall not be less than is 1 foot above the Seasonal High Ground Water elevation. If necessary, the seasonal high ground water elevation shall be determined by a Massachusetts certified soil evaluator and stated on a signed soil test pit log.	BP	Eng.	
Construction Impacts				
3	The applicant shall post the name and phone number of the general contractor at the site entrance where it is visible to people passing by.	During Construction	Plng.	
4	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P	
Site				
5	Landscaping shall be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards;	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
Miscellaneous				
6	Granting of the applied for use or alteration does not include the provision for short term rental uses, such as AirBnB, VRBO, or the like. Separate approvals are needed for the aforementioned uses.	Ongoing	ISD / Plng.	
Public Safety				
7	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP	
8	To the extent possible, all exterior lighting must be confined to the subject property, cast light downward and must not intrude, interfere or spill onto neighboring properties.	CO	Plng.	
Final Sign-Off				
9	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.	



Attest, by the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Orsola Susan Fontano, *Chairman*
Richard Rossetti, *Clerk*
Daniel Evans
Josh Safdie
Anne Brockelman (*Alt.*)

Attest, by City Planner: _____

Alexander Mello

Copies of this decision are filed in the Somerville City Clerk's office.
Copies of all plans referred to in this decision and a detailed record of the
SPGA proceedings are filed in the Somerville Planning Dept.

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. 3.2.10.

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.

Signed _____ City Clerk Date _____

