



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

PLANNING DIVISION

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEMBERS

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Case #: ZBA # 2011-02
Site: 140 Central Street
Date of Decision: March 16, 2011
Decision: *Petition Approved with Conditions*
Date Filed with City Clerk: March 24, 2011

ZBA DECISION

Applicant Name:	Anne Pierre
Applicant Address:	140 Central Street, Somerville, MA 02143
Property Owner Name:	Anne Pierre
Property Owner Address:	140 Central Street, Somerville, MA 02143
Agent Name:	Louidor Elvens, Elvens Electrical Inc.
Agent Address:	291 Canton Street, Stoughton, MA 02072

Legal Notice: Applicant and owner Anne Pierre, seeks a special permit under SZO §4.4.1 for relief under the provisions of SZO §8.5 to legalize a finished basement, lower the basement floor, and install an emergency egress.

<u>Zoning District/Ward:</u>	RB zone. Ward 5.
<u>Zoning Approval Sought:</u>	§4.4.1 & §8.5
<u>Date of Application:</u>	January 5, 2011
<u>Date(s) of Public Hearing:</u>	3/2 & 3/16/11
<u>Date of Decision:</u>	March 16, 2011
<u>Vote:</u>	5-0

Appeal #ZBA 2011-02 was opened before the Zoning Board of Appeals at Somerville City Hall on March 2, 2011. 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 two hearings of deliberation, the Zoning Board of Appeals took a vote.



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DESCRIPTION:

The Applicant would like to improve the basement level by lowering the basement floor to create more head room and install an emergency escape on the southern wall of the structure. The Applicant, when seeking building permits, was informed that the original renovation has no permit on record and would have required a special permit in order to go forward. Therefore, this Applicant is now seeking a special permit to legalize the existing basement so that building permits can be granted to upgrade the space and provide an emergency escape for the basement level.

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."

In considering a special permit under §4.4 of the SZO, the Board does not find that the alterations proposed would be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure.

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 promoting "the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; and to encourage housing for persons of all income levels."

The existing structure is a pre-existing nonconforming structure that is consistent with the purpose of the RB district. The district is designed to establish and preserve medium density neighborhoods of one-, two- and three-family homes, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts. While the structure does not meet the dimensional or the FAR requirements of the district, it is typical in size and setbacks to typical homes in the RB district. Furthermore, aside from the new emergency escape, any changes made to the interior of the basement level will not modify the exterior of the existing structure.

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."

No impacts are anticipated from the legalization of the existing basement, the lowering of the basement floor, nor the installation of the emergency escape.

5. Adverse environmental impacts: The proposed use, structure or activity will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from: 1) excessive noise, level of illumination, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration which are higher than levels now experienced from uses permitted in the surrounding area; 2) emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances; 3) pollution of water ways or ground water; or 4) transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception.



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No adverse impacts are anticipated from this project. The structure is already operating with two bathrooms, a bedroom, a family room, a recreation room, a den, and storage in the basement. The proposed project will only provide these spaces with a higher ceiling and an emergency escape in the bedroom.

DECISION:

Present and sitting were Members Herbert Foster, Orsola Susan Fontano, Richard Rossetti, Scott Darling and Josh Safdie with Danielle Evans and Elaine Severino absent. Upon making the above findings, Susan Fontano made a motion to approve the request for a special permit. Scott Darling 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 under SZO §4.4.1 for relief under the provisions of SZO §8.5 to legalize a finished basement, lower the basement floor, and install an emergency egress point. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	Plng.											
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>(January 5, 2011)</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>August 19, 2010 (March 10, 2011)</td><td>Plot Plan of Land</td></tr><tr><td>September 28, 2010 (February 17, 2011)</td><td>Construction Documents (A-2 – A-5 and A-7) submitted to OSPCD</td></tr><tr><td>September 28, 2010 (March 10, 2011)</td><td>Construction Documents (A-0, A-1, and A-6) submitted to OSPCD</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(January 5, 2011)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	August 19, 2010 (March 10, 2011)	Plot Plan of Land	September 28, 2010 (February 17, 2011)	Construction Documents (A-2 – A-5 and A-7) submitted to OSPCD	September 28, 2010 (March 10, 2011)	Construction Documents (A-0, A-1, and A-6) submitted to OSPCD
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Any changes to the approved site plan that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.														
2	The Applicant shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP											
3	The structure shall remain a two-family house, and no additional dwelling units shall be added.	Cont.	ISD											
4	To the maximum extent feasible the Applicant will utilize strategies during construction to mitigate dust and control air quality, to minimize noise and to implement a waste recycling program for the removed debris.	During Construction	OSE/IS D											
5	The Applicant shall construct the proposed masonry low wall and proposed front yard landscape area as illustrated on plans A-1 and A-6.	CO	Plng.											



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6	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.	
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Attest, by the Zoning Board of Appeals:

Herbert Foster, *Chairman*
Orsola Susan Fontano, *Clerk*
Richard Rossetti
T.F. Scott Darling, III, Esq.
Josh Safdie (Alt.)

Attest, by the Administrative Assistant:

Dawn M. Pereira

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 _____



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