

Dec. 24. 2021

Re: Variance Application for 588 Washington Ave

Area variance/side yard setback, for existing garage converted to habitable space

1. Will granting an area variance produce undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties?

No. The exterior of the existing house would remain unaltered other than the replacement of the overhead garage door with windows. The overall appearance of the house, its size/shape, and its location on the site relative to its property boundary is consistent with the neighboring properties on the west side of Washington Ave.

The off-street parking required is sufficiently provided in the existing driveway.

2. Whether the benefit sought is achievable by another feasible method, other than an area variance.

Converting the existing garage to living space provides approximately 400+- sf of additional living space to the existing 1000+- sf, modest sized house, which allows more comfortable living conditions for a family. Since the (garage) space is existing, this is the most feasible way to gain additional living space.

The existing house is nonconforming with respect to both side yard and front yard setbacks, so an addition to the house would most likely require an area variance anyhow; and by increasing the size would visually accentuate the nonconformity.

3. Whether the requested area variance is substantial.

Yes, the requested area variance is substantial; however, there is no negative impact on the community.

4. Whether the proposed variance will have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood or district.

The proposed work for which the variance is being sought is an interior alteration of existing space, without any land disturbance; so, there are no environmental impacts.

5. Whether the alleged difficulty was self-created, which consideration shall be relevant to the decision of the board of appeals, but shall not necessarily preclude the granting of the variance.

The conversion of a garage to living space is not a necessity in a strict sense. Irregardless, the lot is substandard with respect to minimum lot frontage and width which would make it very difficult to construct a house without a garage on this site. Furthermore the house is existing. Both of these factors were inherited by the owner, and not self created difficulties.