

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2018

The special meeting of the Steamboat Springs Board of Adjustment was called to order at approximately 5:02 p.m. on Thursday, January 18, 2018, in Room 113-114, Centennial Hall, 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Board of Adjustment members in attendance were:
Jim Moylan, David Levine, Tom Effinger Jr. and Theo Dexter.
Staff member present was Staff Planner Bob Keenan.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

#1: VAR-17-09, Crawford Add. To Steamboat Springs, Block 6, Lots 21-22

STAFF PRESENTATION

Bob Keenan:

Before you tonight is a request for a variance; the applicant is proposing to construct an addition to a historically eligible structure on 120 Missouri Street. They're also proposing to add a detached garage with a secondary unit. The applicant is requesting variances to the east side setback, the west side setback, lot coverage and floor area ratio.

The east side setback variance for the addition is primarily to continue the same wall plain that exists in the historic home. That's where they're proposing to have the addition extend towards the north and maintain that original setback. The two-foot roof overhang would bring it to 3.1 feet.

The west side setback is not proposed to change. That is just to recognize that they go through this process to make this go from a legal nonconforming encroachment into that setback to legal conforming.

The lot coverage is proposed to increase by 5.8%. It seems largely due to the historic nature of the home and the fact that the applicant is proposing to keep that home. If they were to demolish the structure, they could reconfigure the square footage in such a way that it wouldn't contribute as much to the lot coverage just due to the efficiencies they can gain and planning the rooms and hallways better. I understand that the foundation for the home doesn't lend itself to vertical construction, so that's another contributing factor to lot coverage.

The floor-area ratio request is a 12.5% variance to that standard. That is again due to the request to keep the historic structure intact, add an addition, and for the secondary unit the applicant is proposing to do a two-car garage with a secondary unit above.

The applicant is requesting review to the alternate approval criteria, which I think we've seen only on rare occasions. Staff understands that this criteria exists to incentivize

January 18, 2018

DRAFT

keeping historically eligible homes rather than a complete demolition to the conforming home. That criteria deals with modifications/expansions to historic structures. Historic structures is defined in the CDC as being 50 years or older, and this qualifies.

There is a historic inventory of this property that's been done, which notes that it is eligible to the local register. Because of this alternative criteria, the Historic Preservation Commission heard the review of this variance and the additions to the historic structure. The HPC moved to approve the addition. They found that it was in conformance with the guidelines for additions to historic structures.

That segues into Criteria #2: The modification/expansion of a historic structure has been designed to preserve historic character and the defining elements of the building. The HPC has agreed that this is the case. The other criteria is that the variance is the minimum necessary to fulfill the purpose and need of the applicant. Staff believes that's consistent and that the granting of the variance will not be detrimental to or injurious to the public or adjacent properties. #3: Staff did not find that there are any necessary conditions to safeguard in this particular case.

Staff is recommending approval of the variance request.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Rob Mitchel, Applicant::

I'm the property owner at 120 Missouri Avenue. I think Bob went over the key criteria of the alternate approval process. Hopefully you've had a chance to look at the packet. The reason we're in front of you today is because when we started this project of realizing we needed to add some more space to our house for our family as we continue to live here, we had two choices:

We could scrape the house and build new, or we could look to preserve it and add on and see if we could get something that would work for our family from a functionality standpoint. Philosophically, we want to preserve and appreciate the heritage of the house, the character, its place in the neighborhood and the history of Steamboat – particularly in Old Town. So my wife and I made a commitment to kind of go the distance in trying to find a really good solution. We worked with Katie Kiefer from West Elevation Architecture who did a great job.

We had some criteria of our own: We wanted to preserve the existing house and then add on to the back so that stays intact; not change the roof style to maintain the integrity of the existing aesthetic and architectural design of the current house. Bob mentioned that structurally, it's not in a condition to really go up. That was okay with us because we also wanted to move things towards the back the best that we could so we're not having too much massing approaching Missouri Avenue. So everything that goes up goes back into the yard. That was one of the main criteria we had when designing the property.

We spent a lot of time talking to neighbors explaining our plans and sharing with them the variances we would need in order to go forward. The long and the short of it is we were able to come up with the design which you see right now. Though there are some compromises to it, it gives our family what we feel is a really nice floor plan, a sufficient amount of square footage for us going forward, and also gets us a garage and a larger accessory dwelling unit more suitable for a long-term tenant to be comfortable in there.

BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS

January 18, 2018

DRAFT

Levine confirmed that the trellis is not part of the lot coverage equation.

Kiefer: The existing grade finished floor in the house is only about eight inches above finished grade around the house. So it's like one step down. Doing a deck doesn't make much sense, so we would do an on-grade patio. Planning sees those differently I believe based on lot coverage because patios don't count and decks sometimes do. It comes into play in regard to setbacks.

Keenan: We don't count the decks towards lot coverage or FAR.

Effinger: When I first looked at this, my opinion was that it was a lot of stuff on the lot. I was hoping you would go over one more time why it has to be so big. There's a logic to it, I know, something about the existing building not being able to go up. The lot coverage isn't that much, but the FAR is a pretty good variance at 12%.

Kiefer: What we found working with three different structural engineers was that there's no way to go in and even build a partial second story above the existing structure without a crazy amount of gymnastics to really make it work. We already know that we're spending more to preserve the house. To take on something like building a superstructure over the top of the existing house, which would destroy the existing character of the house, becomes really challenging. I think what we're finding in Old Town in general is for people who have 50x127-foot lots, just over 6,000 square foot lot areas, that if they wanted a two-car garage and a secondary unit – we scaled back the city standard 650 square foot secondary unit to 510 square feet for the actual apartment – you bump your head. Right now it's a very compact, 1,000 square foot, three-bedroom, one bath house. I don't think they can get a king-size bed in any of the bedrooms that exist right now. If you're going to raise a family and when you look at what people have invested in their real estate, you start to look at things like a second bathroom. We cut a bunch of stuff out of the project to scale it back, and there's a point where you go if we take it back into total compliance, we either have to remove the secondary unit or remove program from the house itself. The owners felt very strongly about being able to provide a secondary unit downtown and not lose a secondary dwelling unit for someone in the workforce.

Mitchel: Trying to work with the existing footprint, you're kind of compartmentalized a little bit. It's not like we're rearranging all the rooms in the 1,060 square feet that exists today. So when we started working on this, we said let's not get too caught up in the square footage and try to come up with a floor plan that works traffic flow-wise, living-wise, maintaining functionality of each element of the house. When we break it down, there are seven distinct elements or rooms of the house. We tried our best over numerous revisions to bring those down to a bare minimum where we feel going anymore loses the functionality of what that room is all about. And it's all connected, so that affects other things. Believe me, we went through a lot of iterations to try to get it to this point. We knew that was going to be one of the biggest challenges, where if we scrape and build new, we get all the square footage we want; we can have the exact floor plan we want and all of that. We felt like we couldn't bring it down any further. It is 12+% over the FAR; we totally understand that. But the house itself is still not that big because of the garage and the accessory dwelling unit. I think for a family of our size it still works. We'd like more square feet, but we understand that if we're going to preserve we're going to have to make some compromises. This is one of them.

Moylan commended the applicant for deciding to maintain the historic character of the home rather than scraping it.

January 18, 2018

DRAFT

Dexter: Where will the accessory unit folks park?

Mitchel: From the east property line into the stairs is a gravel parking pad, which will be about 11 feet in width. So they'd have their own space there.

Kiefer: To Tom's prior comment: There's a power line that runs through the alley. We originally had the garage pushed back to the five-foot setback along the alley as zoning allows. But when we met with Yampa Valley Electric and looked at their criteria for clearances from these existing power lines, it came out that sliding that garage and accessory unit in and compressing the size of the back yard was a \$50,000 decision. If we left the garage along that five-foot setback, we were going to have to relocate the power pole and restring. It becomes a very expensive endeavor. Scott Flowers from YVEA said well, if you slide it in 2.5 feet, you don't have to do anything. You're really trying to maximize the back yard and the separation between those two, but all of a sudden you start looking at really big hits on the budget. That was one of the things that we did make a judgment call on. So the back yard feels like an enclave courtyard now given the relationship and that domino effect of talking to all the utilities and how you're going to do stuff.

BOARD MEMBER DELIBERATION/MOTION

Board Member Dexter moved to approve VAR-17-09; Board Member Effinger seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

Levine: When I first looked at this project, I thought it was too much, but after looking at the plan, everything made sense.

VOTE

The motion carried unanimously.

Moylan: We will adopt the staff's findings with respect to CDC Section 26-70 Criteria for Review and Approval.

Approval of Minutes: December 21, 2017

Board Member Effinger moved to approve the December 21, 2017 meeting minutes; Board Member Dexter seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Levine moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:26 p.m.
Board Member Effinger seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.