



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Master

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Status: Approved

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Reference:

Controlling Body: ZONING BOARD
OF APPEALS

File Created Date : 04/28/2011

File Name:

Final Action: 05/12/2011

Title: Stephen and Catherine Cairns, owners of property located at 729 E. Gorham Street, request a side yard variance and a lot area variance to convert the rooming house portion of the building into dwelling units.
Ald. District # 2 Maniaci

Notes:

CC Agenda Date:

Sponsors:

Effective Date:

Attachments: 729 E. Gorham St..pdf

Enactment Number:

Author:

Hearing Date:

Entered by: cnelson@cityofmadison.com

Published Date:

Approval History

Version	Date	Approver	Action
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History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS	05/12/2011	Approve				

Action Text: Mr. Tucker stated that this property is a lodging house on the first and second floor with six bedrooms and an efficiency apartment on the third floor. At the rear they have a partially enclosed entrance feature and a fire escape stairwell that is wood and also some wood decks. The project involves conversion of the first and second floor into individual dwelling units. There will be three bedrooms on the first floor, three bedrooms on the second floor, a new code required enclosed stairwell to the rear, and decks to the rear. This property has depth penalties on both sides. In the R5 zoning, where this falls, it has an individual side yard setback and a combined total side yard setback. The required side yard setback is 11'-6", with this as close as 3', which is an 8'-6" variance. The total side yard is 26'-9", with 8' being provided, which is an 18'-9" variance. The project also has a lot area condition where small lots need to provide a larger amount of lot area per dwelling unit. The conversion of the first and second floors from lodging house to dwelling units has a little bit of a higher lot area demand requirement in the code. The total lot area that is required for the building is 6,630 sq. ft. The lot itself provides 4,752 sq. ft., and they are requesting a 1,878 sq. ft. lot area variance.

Steve and Catherine Cairns appeared before the board. Mr. Cairns stated that they started the project about a year ago trying to deal with the rear deck structure, which is in bad shape. They knew it was an issue, which was affirmed by a city building inspector. Mr. Cairns stated that the main reason is for the safety of the tenants. Also, two, three-bedroom units will be better for the neighborhood rather than a six-room rooming house. Mr. Cairns stated that another thing that they are trying to accomplish with the project is to increase the green space, because they are making the decks significantly smaller. They are putting 10' x 10' decks in. They have received support from the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association, and the neighbor on the east side of the property is also in support of the project. The only negative is that the neighbor on the other side of the property did not want them to go from three parking spaces to four. Mr. Cairns stated that he is fine with that and they will stay with three parking spaces. Mr. Cairns also stated that they received a letter from Amy Scanlon, City Preservation Planner, noting that she approves the project on the historical aspect. Mr. Cairns further stated that they are trying to make the property look more compatible with other houses of the same age, and are trying to appease the aesthetic with the functional in making it look like it was original.

In response to a question as to why they couldn't move it over more towards the middle, Mr. Cairns responded that initially they had it drawn that way and wanted to do it, but with that plan, the problem is that the stair tower would cover up a lot of the windows and they would lose a lot of the natural light. By shifting it back closer to where the stairwell currently sits, they are actually bringing it in a foot from the east side lot line. Before it was flush with the rest of the house, and they thought aesthetically and functionally it would be good to jog it 1' from the east side corner of the house.

James Roper, 746 E. Gorham Street, appeared in support of the project. Mr. Roper stated that it will be a major improvement over what is there. Mr. Roper stated that he is the area representative for the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood, and that the petitioner presented their plans to the neighborhood meeting, which was approved.

Mr. Basford stated that Alderperson Bridget Maniaci dropped off a note to the meeting registering in support stating that she has no issues with the proposal.

Ms. Corigliano moved to approve, seconded by Ms. Milligan.

Mr. Basford stated that the topographical hardship is obvious with the width of the lot. The effect of the addition will be quite minimal, and he doesn't see any problems with it.

Ms. Milligan stated that it is a net reduction in bulk. They have minimized the amount of space that they are taking up to safely get up and down. Ms. Milligan also stated that to the extent that the lot area request is being driven by converting the rooming house to the 3-bedroom units, it is the same number of bedrooms and probably will be fewer people, so just the impact on things zoning addresses seems positive.

Mr. Basford stated that it is a conversion from a less common use of a boarding house, to a more common use for this neighborhood.

Ms. Corigliano stated that the total side yard required distance is 26'9" and the lot is only 36' wide. There is no way that they would ever be able to be compliant.

5-0 (approved)

Notes: