Legislation Details (With Text)

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
1/21/2021	1	Zoning Board of Appeals	approve	Pass

Meeting Date: January 21, 2021

To: Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner

Consider Resolution for a Variance Request for the Property 1700 Wall Street Road.

Action Requested:
The Zoning Board of Appeals is requested to consider and make a motion for the property, 1700 Wall Street Road, to exceed the maximum square footage of 864 sq. ft. for garages up to 1,006 sq. ft.

Summary Report:
The applicant, Streeter Custom Building (on behalf of the Sonja Holden Revocable Trust) have applied for a variance request to exceed the maximum 864 sq. ft. footprint for garages at 1700 Wall Street Road. The property owner proposes to build a third stall to its existing garage. The existing 2-stall garage is 671 square feet and the third stall would add on 335 square feet. This would create a garage larger than the allowed 864 square feet by 142 sq. ft.

The home was originally built in 2003 as a one story with 2119 livable sq. ft. The property owner purchased the home in 2020 and have plans to renovate the home and add on additional space for their family, to include a partial second story on the existing footprint. The parcel is zoned N1: Neighborhood General 1 and is part of the Remes 2nd Addition. The lot size is 0.90 acres, 39,308 sq. ft. and is irregular shaped and backed up to the Northfield Golf Course on the northeastern edge of town (southwest of Wall Street Road and Rosewood Road). The Remes plat was initially created as one large lot with six townhomes. Then the Remes Addition was subdivided into three lots, with another subdivision occurring to create the present two parcels of Remes 2nd Addition.

*Note: The design for the exterior elements of the pool, hardcover, spa and deck are still in the design process

and will be updated prior to submitting plans for permit, to be reviewed by city staff at that time.

The criteria for approving a variance, according to Section 5.5.16(C), are as follows:
(1) Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §462.357, Subd 6, as it may be amended from time to time, the zoning board of appeals may only grant applications for variances where practical difficulties in complying with this LDC (Land Development Code) exist and each of the following criteria are satisfied:

(a) The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of this LDC; and,
(b) The variance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; and
(c) The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by this LDC; and
(d) The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner; and
(e) The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

Findings of Fact:
Northfield Land Development Code (LDC) Table 3.2-3: Garage Regulations for One-, Two- and Three-Unit Buildings as part of Attached Garages for N1 sets the Floor Area Maximum (sq. ft.) at 864 square feet. Analysis of the variance requested is addressed below.

Criterion (a) The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the LDC.

The purpose of the Neighborhood General 1 (N1) district is applied to existing residential neighborhoods of the city that are found outside the R1 district. The N1 district is characterized by primarily single family homes, or attached housing, on parcels that are generally larger than those found in R1. N1 districts are located on streets more curvilinear and less connected that traditional urban development patterns. The essential, existing character of the N1 district should be reinforced with any infill or redevelopment of properties. When feasible, infill or redevelopment in the N1 district should also create a more pedestrian-friendly, walkable development pattern with a mixture of housing types. The development or redevelopment of neighborhoods that incorporate a variety of housing types serve the needs of a diverse population. The renovation of this home supports that LDC purpose statement. In addition, the LDC allows for three car garages with no width restrictions. Adding on a single stall to an existing 2-stall garage is allowed in that aspect.

Finding - Criterion (a):
The project is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the LDC. The existing single-family home is consistent with the general goals for the N1 zone district. The property location and character of the area is not as typical as most properties in the N1 District. The parcel is larger than those found in the R1 district, it is located on a road with little connection to the existing neighborhoods by means of sidewalks or trails, and is in character with other homes in the area (being on a larger lot with a larger home in comparison to R1).

The Land Development Code was adopted to protect and promote the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the city. More specifically, the purpose of these regulations is to:

1.1.1 Maintain and enhance the community's distinct small town character.
1.1.2 Preserve and protect the area's natural, historic, and cultural resources while providing for improved methods of integrating these resources in the community.
1.1.3 Encourage growth in infill locations as the desired location of development with expansion on the edge of the city a secondary priority.
1.1.4 Create residential community areas with strong neighborhood qualities including pedestrian-

friendly streets, community gathering spaces, and basic commercial needs within walking distance.
1.1.5 Encourage the development of neighborhoods that incorporate a variety of housing types to serve the needs of a diverse population.
1.1.6 Allow for places with a mixture of uses that are distinctive and contribute to the city's overall vitality.
1.1.7 Provide standards and guidelines for continuing strategic growth and sustainable development.
1.1.8 Provide for the expansion and diversification of the economic base to assure a strong economy.
1.1.9 Promote an ethic of sustainability in all activities to ensure that proposed development and redevelopment will, at a minimum, conserve energy and natural resources.
1.1.10 Improve and promote connectivity to better serve residents and to improve the function of the overall street network.
1.1.11 Ensure that proposed development is of human scale, primarily pedestrian-oriented to the extent appropriate, and designed to create exceptional streetscapes and pedestrian spaces.
1.1.12 Minimize vehicle traffic by providing for a mixture of land uses, pedestrian-oriented development, compact community form, safe and effective multi-modal traffic circulation (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular), and adequate on- and off-street parking facilities.
1.1.13 Protect the rural character of certain areas of the community as identified in the comprehensive plan.
1.1.14 Encourage vibrancy in the downtown core and fringe areas.
1.1.15 Ensure compatibility between different types of development and land uses.
1.1.16 Create a comprehensive and stable pattern of land uses upon which to plan transportation, water supply, sewerage, energy, and other public facilities and utilities.

The proposal is not in conflict with the LDC goals. It meets the following purposes:

1.1.1 Maintain and enhance the community's distinct small town character.
1.1.3 Encourage growth in infill locations as the desired location of development with expansion on the edge of the city a secondary priority.
1.1.5 Encourage the development of neighborhoods that incorporate a variety of housing types to serve the needs of a diverse population.
1.1.11 Ensure that proposed development is of human scale, primarily pedestrian-oriented to the extent appropriate, and designed to create exceptional streetscapes and pedestrian spaces.

Criterion (b) The variance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
The Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan will be consulted for any development proposal based on the following steps. If a proposal is not consistent with recommendations of any one of these steps, the proponent should re-evaluate and make adjustments (or provide justification for deviation) if the proposal is not aligned with the following three aspects:

1. Intent: Development proposals will reflect the spirit and values expressed in the 12 principles (statements of intent) (pages 4.9 to 4.13).
2. Location: Development proposals will be consistent with the Conservation and Development Map (page 4.18) and location descriptions (pages 4.14 to 4.15).
3. Character: Development proposals will be consistent with the Framework Map (page 4.19) and recommendations and context descriptions (pages 4.15 to 4.17).

Finding - Criterion (b):
The variance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Intent:

1. The small town character will be enhanced.

The proposal is to enhance an existing home with prairie style architecture. The home is larger than homes in comparison to "Old Northfield" housing, but has elements that support the "feel" of small town character. Northfield is known, not only for historic homes with architecture similar to those located close to Carleton College and St. Olaf College, but also for homes with more modern architecture, similar to 1700 Wall St. Rd. The footprint of this home is complimentary to the existing homes in the area.

2. The natural environment will be protected, enhanced and better integrated in the community.

The natural environment will not be impeded and provides accessibility to the golf course which provides a recreational opportunity supporting an active and healthy lifestyle. The home will help protect, enhance and better integrate the community because the existing home will be kept and renovated, rather than demolished and rebuilt. In addition, the property owner shows removal of parts of the existing asphalt driveway which will negate the majority of the impervious surface created by the addition, garage addition and pool deck.

3. The preference for accommodating future growth is in infill locations, then redevelopment/ land intensification opportunities, and then on the edge of existing developed areas.

This project is an infill location, which supports this goal of the comprehensive plan.

4. New and redeveloped residential communities (areas) will have strong neighborhood qualities.

The proposed home will have strong neighborhood qualities such as being in line with the neighboring home to the east and prairie style architecture, which will incorporate low-slung hip roof designs with large overhangs. The overall coloring of the home will be in more earth tones, with bronze colored exterior windows and natural organic materials, which is true to that architectural style.

5. Environmentally-sensitive and sustainable practices will be integrated into new developments and redeveloped areas.

In effect, the renovation and additions to the existing home, rather than demolition is a sustainable practice. As stated previously, the property owner shows removal of parts of the existing asphalt driveway, which will negate the majority of the impervious surface created by the addition, garage addition and pool deck.

6. Places with a mix of uses that are distinctive and contribute to increasing the city's overall vitality are preferred.

N/A

7. Neighborhood-serving commercial will be small scale and integrated with the residential context.

N/A

8. A wider range of housing choices will be encouraged - in the community as well as in neighborhoods.

This existing home allows for a larger home on a larger lot, which fills a need for this type of housing in the market coinciding well with most homes adjacent to golf courses and near the edges of city limits.

9. Rural character of certain areas of the community will be protected.

The renovation of this home helps preserve the rural character surrounding city limits.

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10. Streets will create an attractive public realm and be exceptional places for people.
The parcel is situated directly off County Road 79 and does not fall applicable to the intent of this finding.

11. Places will be better connected, in part to improve the function of the street network and also to better serve neighborhoods.
The street network exists and does not serve to connect the parcel better to County Road 79, but does connect the parcel to the golf course and the neighborhood to the east by means of connected backyards.

12. Opportunities will be created to walk and bike throughout the community.
The lot connects to the golf course and allows for some accessibility to the neighborhood to the east, which has walking and biking connections.

Location:
The lot is denoted as developed land within the city on the Conservation & Development map, which is appropriate since the parcel is developed.

Character:
The parcel is located in the Neighborhood General 1 area of the Framework Map, typified by single-family homes.

Criterion (c) Property Owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the LDC.

Finding - Criterion (c):
The requested variance will result in a reasonable use of the property otherwise not permitted by the LDC. The addition of the third stall will incorporate windows facing the road (to add architectural appeal to the front of the home) and the new stall will be stepped back from the face of the existing double garage, which reduces the size and scale of the third stall. This follows regulations for garages in the N2 zoning district, going above the requirements for the N1 garage standards in Table 3.2-3 in Chapter 34 of the LDC.

In addition, the garage size restriction does not allow for modification based on the size of the lot as it does for the home itself. The building area ratio calculates the floor area of the principal building, covered porches and detached garages as a percentage based on the lot size. A larger lot allows a larger home to be built as long as it is under 30% lot coverage. The size of the garage, however, must remain at 864 square feet or less. It should be noted, per Ch. 34, Section 2.10.3(M), that workshop area can be integrated as part of a garage up to 25% or the principal building footprint. There are no internal restrictions for separation of the garage versus the workshop space.

Criterion (d) The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.

Finding - Criterion (d):
The plight of the landowner is not created by the landowner. The existing size of the current 2-stall garage is 28 ft. wide and includes a platform and a set of stairs into the existing home, and a front facing service door, and therefore can only store two vehicles. In order to provide an additional parking stall, 14 ft. in width is needed accommodate a 9 ft. 6 in. overhead garage door with space around the vehicle

for door swing and access. The design of the new single garage stall has kept the depth of the new stall, stepped back from the face of the existing double to reduce the size and scale of the new stall. In addition, the new single stall at 23 ft. deep is keeping it a minimum size footprint. The current irregular size and configuration of the existing 2-car garage is unique and not created by the landowner.

The request for having a 3-stall garage is not due to economic considerations. It is to provide space for vehicles, land equipment, garbage/recycling cans and children's bikes and toys, so they are stored inside and not in the driveway or outside the garage. The single garage stall addition, as designed, expands north towards Wall Street Road, which will not affect neighbor's sunlight or solar energy since there are no homes to the north, west or south.

Criterion (e) The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

Finding - Criterion (e):
Granting the variance will not alter the essential character of the locality. Many of the homes surrounding the golf course, specifically on Rosewood Road, and the adjacent neighbor to the east have 3-stall garages. The addition of the third stall will be compatible with the character of the surrounding properties.

Staff Recommendation:
Staff supports approval of the variance request to exceed the maximum 864 sq. ft. footprint for the attached garage at 1700 Wall Street up to 1,006 square feet.

Alternative Options:
1. The Zoning Board of Appeals could deny the request to increase the garage square footage.
2. The Zoning Board of Appeals could deny the request of the garage square footage.
3. The Zoning Board of Appeals could approve a modified motion for the request.

Financial Impacts:
There are no direct financial impacts to the City due to approving these variances.

Tentative Timelines:
The applicant plans to submit their building permit for the renovation and additions after the decision of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

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