

Memorandum

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Allison Eddins , Senior planner
DATE: May 27, 2025
SUBJECT: 3384 Centre Street - Variance - Cathleen Sykes and William Parsons
ITEM NUMBER: 7.A
SECTION: NEW BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

To adopt a Resolution No. 25-39, approving a variance to reduce the rear yard setback requirement from 30 feet to 10 feet for the construction of a 300 square foot addition at 3384 Centre Street, subject to the following conditions:

1. The new addition can be no closer than 10 feet from the rear lot line.
2. The project must be completed in accordance with the submitted plans as part of the variance application. Any significant changes to these plans, as determined by the community development department, will require review and approval by the Planning Commission.
3. This approval will expire after one year if a building permit has not been issued and work has not begun on the project.
4. This approval is subject to a 5-day appeal period. Once the appeal period expires, a building permit may be issued for the proposed project. A building permit must be obtained before any construction activity begins.

This action is based on the following findings of fact:

1. The applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that is allowed in the R1, Detached Residential District.
2. A unique circumstance resulting in a practical difficulty is present. The unique circumstance is a result of the side lot line designation changing to a rear lot line as a result of a City initiated right-of-way vacation.
3. The character of the neighborhood will not be altered by the proposed addition since this portion of the lot has been used as a side yard since the home was constructed in 1922.

INTRODUCTION

The applicants, Cathleen Sykes and William Parsons, would like to add approximately 300 square feet of living space to their home. The addition would be on the north side of the lot. Until 2014, when the city vacated an undeveloped alley, the north side of the lot was considered the side yard. With a city initiated right-of-way vacation, the lot line designation changed making the north side of the lot the rear yard. This change in designation is based on the city code's definition of "front lot line" and "rear lot line". The applicants are requesting a variance to reduce the rear yard setback requirement from 30 feet to ten feet. The proposed 10-

foot setback is consistent with the side yard setback requirement in R1.

DISCUSSION

Site Characteristics

The lot was created in 1890 with the Owasso Plat. At the time, the lot fronted on three rights-of-way - Centre Street to the west, Grand Avenue to the south and a 20 foot alley-way to the east. When the dwelling was built in 1922, the driveway was constructed off of Centre Street and the home was oriented with Centre Street being the front lot line and the alley way was the rear lot line. For over 100 years, the southern and northern lot lines were treated as side lot lines.

In 2014, the city initiated a vacation of the alley-way making the subject property a corner lot with frontage on Centre Street and Grand Avenue.

Development Code Requirements

Section 101-2 of the Shoreview Municipal Code defines front and rear lot lines as follows:

Lot line, front, means the boundary of a lot which abuts an existing or dedicated public or private street. In the case of a corner lot, it shall be the shortest dimension on a public street.

Lot line, rear, mean that boundary of a lot line which is most distant from and/or is approximately parallel to the front lot line.

The subject property has approximately 123 feet of frontage on Grand Avenue and 144 feet of frontage on Centre Street. Grand Avenue, which is the southern lot line, is considered the front and the northern lot line is considered the rear.

Variance Criteria (Section 103-163)

When considering a variance request, the commission must determine whether the ordinance causes the property owner practical difficulty and find that granting the variances is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance. Practical difficulty is defined as:

1. *Reasonable Manner.* The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the Shoreview Development Regulations.
2. *Unique Circumstances.* The plight of the property owner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the property owner.
3. *Character of Neighborhood.* The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Applicant Statement

The applicants state that the proposed addition and variance would be in keeping with the neighborhood character. The home is oriented with the driveway and what they consider the front of their house facing Centre Street. This is consistent with the other homes along Centre Street. The addition will be in what they consider the side yard.

Staff Review

The request was reviewed by staff in accordance with the variance criteria. Upon review, staff believes that a practical difficulty is present.

1. *Reasonable Manner.* Single-family detached homes are permitted in the R1, Detached Residential District provided certain dimensional standards are met. The new addition will meet the maximum height requirement and the lot will continue to be below the maximum impervious surface coverage.
2. *Unique Circumstances.* A unique circumstance is present and is created by a lot line designation change that was a result of a city initiated right-of-way vacation. If the city had not vacated the alley-way, the proposed addition would be subject to a 10-foot side yard setback and not the 30-foot rear yard setback that the applicants are seeking relief from.
3. *Neighborhood Character.* Staff has determined that granting the variance would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood. Allowing the applicants to continue to use the northern portion of their property as a side yard will help maintain the character of the neighborhood.

Public Comment

Property owners within 150' were notified of the request. At the time of this report, staff has received one comment from a neighbor who is directly north of the subject property. The neighbor is in favor of the addition and the requested variance.

Agency Comment

Staff reached out to the relevant departments within Shoreview for comments or concerns regarding the proposed project and variance. Staff received one comment from public works stating that the applicants should determine the extent of the grading work that will be required and include a grading plan with a building permit application.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the planning commission approve the variance request to reduce the rear yard setback requirement from 30 feet to 10 feet. Staff has found that practical difficulty is present and staff believes the three criteria required for practical difficulty are met. The variance can be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. To adopt a Resolution No. 25-39, approving a variance to reduce the rear yard setback requirement from 30 feet to 10 feet for the construction of a 300 square foot addition at 3384 Centre Street, subject to the following conditions:
 1. The new addition can be no closer than 10 feet from the rear lot line.
 2. The project must be completed in accordance with the submitted plans as part of the variance application. Any significant changes to these plans, as determined by the community development department, will require review and approval by the Planning Commission.
 3. This approval will expire after one year if a building permit has not been issued and work has not begun on the project.
 4. This approval is subject to a 5-day appeal period. Once the appeal period expires, a building permit may be issued for the proposed project. A building permit must be obtained before any construction activity begins.

This action is based on the following findings of fact:

1. The applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that is allowed in the

R1, Detached Residential District.

2. A unique circumstance resulting in a practical difficulty is present. The unique circumstance is a result of the side lot line designation changing to a rear lot line as a result of a City initiated right-of-way vacation.
3. The character of the neighborhood will not be altered by the proposed addition since this portion of the lot has been used as a side yard since the home was constructed in 1922.

ATTACHMENTS

[Location Map](#)

[Proposed Survey](#)

[Building Elevations](#)

[Applicant Narrative](#)

[Public Comment](#)

[Resolution 25-39](#)