

1945 Edgewater Ave Variance Request
Written Statement
8/16/2023

Arden Hills Planning Commission, City Council, and city staff,

Thank you for considering this request for a variance at my home located at 1945 Edgewater Ave. My wife, two kids, and I live at this location. We recently moved from 1995 Jerrold Ave just one block over in order to better support my son and his special needs.

We are a community-oriented family that resides at the house where the proposed changes would occur. We are connected to our neighbors, involved in the city, I run a nonprofit serving children in Minnesota, and we regularly help neighbors with various home and yard projects. We have been residents of Arden Hills since 2015 and I also attended Bethel University for my undergraduate degree.

I share the above because I want to try to communicate that our family, like you, value the city of Arden Hills and its community and neighborhood feel. We recognize the importance of the purposes of the zoning districts (1320.04 Subd. 2) and why variances are sometimes needed. In the proposed work, we will maintain the intent of the Residential-2 District Zoning of single and two family housing with limited density and restriction of incompatible uses. We will also maintain the beautiful open space of Arden Hills including our yard, which is why the proposed work removes a very small amount of open space: 64 sft that is currently concrete and 64 sft that is currently landscape rock and three relatively small bushes.

My understanding from the helpful city staff is that a variance is needed due to the location of the existing garage, which is closer than 40 feet from the East property line. As you can see in the included documentation, the proposed addition to the garage will be approximately 4 feet *further* from the East property line than the existing garage structure. Therefore, we are not requesting an increase of the nonconformity of the structure in relation to distance from the property line. Additionally, the garage - which I expect was built over 50 years ago based on the structural design - is located in relation to the property line similar to those of the neighborhood (see attachment #1). So, while the garage does not conform to the zoning, it isn't an eyesore in the neighborhood by any means.

The *Variance Procedures and Application Requirements* document provided to me by city staff lists six criteria used for review of variance applications. I have addressed each of the six criteria below.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW:

1. *The property in question cannot be put to a reasonable use if used under conditions allowed by the official controls;*

The purpose of the proposed work is so that my wife and I can both park our vehicles inside the garage. The inside width of the garage is currently approximately 18'. While both vehicles can technically fit inside this width there is not room to open the door in order to get out of the vehicles. The proposed bump outs on each side of the garage will

allow for both vehicles to park inside the garage and doors be opened in order to enter and exit. Additional storage of tools and the kid's bikes and toys will also be possible.

- 2. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner;*

The current garage was built and located where it is long before we owned the property. Friends that are more knowledgeable than me in construction trends expect the garage was built in the 1950s.

- 3. The deviation from the Ordinance with any attached conditions will still be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Ordinance;*

We also value the safety of those in our neighborhood on foot, bike/scooter/etc., and in vehicles. I expect the 40' setback from the side property lines of buildings for corner lots is intended at least in part for the safety of street use – so the intersection is visible as all users approach. Since the bump outs are 4' shorter than the existing garage, and therefore 4' further from the property line, visibility will not decrease due to the bump outs.

- 4. The variance will not create a land use not permitted in the zone;*

Land use will continue to be for my family's residential purposes.

- 5. The variance will not alter the essential character of the City;*

We very highly value the neighborhood and it's look and feel. The bump outs fit with the neighborhood and will not stand out as a different type of visual design or feel. Density of the neighborhood will not be affected and the proposed work complies with all other requirements including structural and impervious area requirements.

- 6. The variance is not for economic reasons alone;*

The purpose of the variance is to increase the personal functionality of the building for our family, not to turn a profit of some kind.

I hope that I have provided the information you need to make an informed decision. Please ask any other questions you may have – I am happy to answer as best I can. I ask that you please approve this variance as I believe it conforms to the criteria for review and follows the intent of the zone rules.

Sincerely,



Rob Williams

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