



**Division of Development Administration and Review**

City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

412 Boulevard of the Allies, Second Floor

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

**ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

**Date of Hearing:** October 2, 2025  
**Date of Decision:** November 13, 2025

**Zone Case:** 118 of 2025  
**Address:** 16 Emerald Street  
**Lot and Block:** 3-P-249, 250  
**Zoning Districts:** R1D-H  
**Ward:** 18  
**Neighborhood:** Allentown

**Request:** Three Car Garage

**Application:** BDA-2024-06946

Variance	Section 912.04.L.3	Detached garage in exterior side yard is prohibited
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**Appearances:**

Applicant: Leonard Lucas

**Findings of Fact:**

1. The Subject Property is located at 16 Emerald Street, at the intersection with Eureka Street, in an R1D-H (Residential One Unit Detached High Density) District in Allentown.
2. The Subject Property is comprised of two separate, adjacent parcels, Parcel No. 3-P-249 and 3-P-250.
3. The dimensions of Parcel No. 3-P-249 are 25' by 78' (1,950 sf) and the parcel is used for a three-story, single-family house with a street address of 16 Eureka Street.
4. The dimensions of Parcel No. 3-P-250 are 44' by 50' (2,200 sf). The parcel is at the corner of Emerald Street and Eureka Street and is vacant.
5. The width of the Emerald Street right-of-way is 20' and thus, it is a "way" under the Code's definition. The width of Eureka Street is more than 25' and it is thus a "street" under the Code's definition.
6. The grade of the site slopes upward from Eureka Street and a retaining wall on the Eureka Street frontage supports the grade of the site.

7. The Applicant proposes to construct a 40' by 26' (1,040) three-car detached garage on Parcel No. 3-P-250, with access from a curb cut on Emerald Street.
8. As proposed, the garage would be set back 10' from Eureka Street and 10' from Emerald Street, in compliance with the setback requirements for R1D-H Districts.
9. The Applicant asserted that the intent of the detached garage on Parcel No. 3-P-250 is to provide off-street parking only for the single-family house on Parcel No. No. 3-P-249/16 Emerald Street and not for other uses or properties.
10. The Applicant explained that the topography of the site and the location of the house preclude the provision of off-street parking on the site in strict compliance with the Code.
11. The Applicant provided photographs of detached garages on nearby parcels and generally asserted that the proposed garage would not have a significant impact on the surrounding neighborhood.
12. No one appeared at the hearing to oppose the request.

**Conclusions of Law:**

1. Section 912.01.D provides that accessory uses are to be located on the same "zoning lot" as the primary use. Pursuant to Section 926.134.c, a combination of separately recorded lots can be considered a single "zoning lot" if the owner of the lots intends to develop the site as a unit under single ownership.
2. Section 912.04.L.3 prohibits the location of detached garages in exterior side yards.
3. The Applicant here owns both of the two separate parcels and intends to use them as a single "zoning lot," with the vacant Parcel No. 3-P-250 as the exterior side yard.
4. The Applicant provided sufficient evidence that the topography of the site and the location of the house on one of the parcels are unique characteristics that preclude strict compliance with the Code's prohibition on use of exterior side yards for detached accessory structures. The location of the garage would not have a significant impact on the surrounding area.
5. The Applicant indicated that the accessory garage on Parcel No. 3-P-50 would be used only for off-street parking for the primary use of the single-family house on Parcel No. 3-P-249/16 Emerald Street and not for other uses or properties. Consistent with the definition of "zoning lot," the lots used for the primary use and the accessory use should continue under single ownership so that the accessory garage remains "accessory" to the house and does not become a separate primary use on the separate parcel. Formal consolidation of the parcels would confirm that intention.
6. Consistent with the evidence and testimony presented, and the applicable legal standards governing dimensional variances, the Board concludes that approval of the request is appropriate, subject to conditions that are intended to ensure that the accessory garage on

Parcel No. 3-P-250 remains accessory to the residential use on Parcel No. 3-P-249/16 Emerald Street.

**Decision: The Applicant’s request for a variance from Section 912.04.L.3 to allow the construction of a three-car detached garage within an exterior side yard is hereby APPROVED; subject to the conditions that Parcel Nos. 3-P-249 and 250 shall continue to be considered a single “zoning lot;” the garage on Parcel No. 3-P-250 shall be used only for parking and storage that is accessory to the primary residential use on Parcel No. 3-P-249/16 Emerald Street; that no other use of the accessory garage will be permitted; and that the two parcels should be consolidated.**

s/Alice B. Mitinger  
**Alice B. Mitinger, Chair**

s/Lashawn Burton-Faulk  
**LaShawn Burton-Faulk**

s/ John J Richardson  
**John J. Richardson**

Note: Decision issued with electronic signatures, with the Board members’ review and approval.