Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 06/24/2020)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: 3274 Ward St	**Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident):** Oakland Planning & Development Corporation (OPDC) Applicant City Planning Staff
Parcel Number(s): 27-L-100	
Application Number: BDA-2026-05908	
Meeting Location: Zoom (Virtual)	
Date: October 10, 2026	
Meeting Start Time: 5:30 PM	
Applicant: Jason Roth	**Approx. Number of Attendees:** 3
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): Use variance – Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA)	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

The applicant is proposing a 2-unit residential use for the existing building. Since this use is not permitted in an R1A zoning district, a use variance is required. The applicant described the project as follows:

The house was originally built as a single-family home and is quite large for South Oakland, with six bedrooms as constructed. The proposal does not add any bedrooms; in fact, one of the existing bedrooms would be converted as part of creating two separate units. In the proposed configuration, the first unit would be on the first floor, and the second unit would occupy the second and third floors. The first-floor unit would have two bedrooms, and the upper unit would have three—possibly four—depending on the internal layout.

There is essentially no market in South Oakland for a six-bedroom single-family house without parking, and it is impossible to add parking on this site. The property sits at the corner of Edith and Ward. Edith Place, adjacent to the building, is not a public right-of-way but a parcel owned by the City of Pittsburgh, which creates an unusual site condition but does not allow for parking. Additionally, zoning does not permit six unrelated individuals to share a single-family dwelling, making the current configuration impractical for rental.

Each of the two proposed units would have its own entrance. The first-floor unit would be accessed from Ward Street, while the second and third floors would have a rear entrance into a gated backyard, accessed from Edith Place. In terms of neighborhood impact, the property would shift from one large unit to two smaller ones, with a similar or even smaller number of occupied bedrooms compared to what could exist under single-family use. The surrounding area already includes student housing, and the immediate block is not exclusively single-family. The attached house next door remains single-family, but directly across Edith Place is a two-unit student residence. For these reasons, the owner believes the proposed two-unit configuration is neither unprecedented nor out of character with the neighborhood.

Input and Responses (see next page)

Input and Responses

Topic / Issue	Recap
Occupancy, configuration of rooms, parking, etc.	Comment/Concern Raised: • Confirmation that total occupancy will remain roughly the same despite converting the house into two units. • Question about whether the reconfiguration adds density, bedrooms, or increases impact on the neighborhood. • Questions about the number of floors, layout, and whether additional egress is required. • Curiosity about the building's past use • Breaking the house into two units increases the number of tenants eligible for on-street parking permits. Who raised it: OPDC Applicant Response: The proposal does not add any bedrooms; it simply formalizes existing space into two legal units. Occupancy remains effectively the same—approximately five individuals—just split between two smaller units. The first-floor unit contains two bedrooms; the upper unit has three existing bedrooms (with two small "half-floor" rooms on the third level that have no bathroom). The third floor is small, with limited space, and cannot support additional occupancy. No new entrances are being added. From a building-code perspective, a second means of egress is not required because each unit meets residential code standards. The layout (with a back stair and unusual front door placement) suggests there may have been informal upstairs occupancy at some point, but there is no evidence of a legally established second unit. The house has not been true single-family occupancy for many years, but the new proposal follows proper legal channels to establish two units. They recognize this is a neighborhood concern, but the project does not add residents beyond existing capacity.

Recording: See OPDC website

Planner completing report: Christian Umbach, Senior Planner