



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: June 12, 2025
Date of Decision: July 22, 2025

Zone Case: 69 of 2025
Address: 1421 Wightman Street
Lot and Block: 86-B-328
Zoning Districts: R2-L
Ward: 14
Neighborhood: Squirrel Hill North

Request: Second story addition to existing detached garage

Application: BDA-2025-03069

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| Variance | Section 912.04.E | 15'/1-story maximum accessory structure height; 21'-4"/ 2-story height proposed |
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Appearances:

Applicant: Katie LaForest, Emily Rice, Linda Metropolis

Findings of Fact:

1. The Subject Property is located at 1421 Wightman Street in an R2-L (Residential Two Unit Low Density) District in Squirrel Hill North.
2. The grade of the parcel has significant downward slopes from Wightman Street towards the rear property line on Colma Way and from interior side to interior side.
3. The three-story house at the front of the parcel is set back approximately 35' from Wightman Street.
4. A one-story detached garage, with access from Colma Way, is located at the rear of the parcel, with a 0' rear setback. Because of the grade changes, the garage is partially below grade.
5. The three-story brick structure on the opposite side of Colma Way extends to the Colma Way property line, with a 0' setback.

6. The Applicant proposes to construct a second story addition on top of the detached garage.
7. As proposed, the height of the garage would be 21'-4 1/2-stories.
8. The Applicant explained that the intended use of the additional story would be for an art studio that would be accessory to the house, and that the additional story is not intended for an additional dwelling unit.
9. The second story would have electricity, but would not include plumbing or other utilities.
10. The Applicant asserted that the topography of the parcel is a unique condition, and that, because of the grade change, the additional height would allow for easier access from the garage to the house.
11. The Applicant identified other garages in the proximate area of the Subject Property with second stories.
12. No one appeared at the hearing to oppose the request.

Conclusions of Law:

1. Section 912.04.E provides that that the maximum height permitted for accessory structures is 15'/one-story.
2. The Applicant presented credible evidence that the topography of the Subject Property is a unique condition that precludes strict compliance with the Code's height limitation for accessory structures, and that the height proposed for the garage will allow for reasonable access to the primary structure and will not have a significant impact on the surrounding neighborhood.
3. 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.

Decision: The Applicant's request for a variance from Section 912.04.E to allow for the construction of a garage to a height that is not to exceed 21'-4 1/2-stories is hereby APPROVED; subject to the condition that the garage may not be used for a second dwelling unit.

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.