



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: September 18, 2025
Date of Decision: October 25, 2025

Zone Case: 117 of 2025
Address: 424 Borland Street
Lot and Block: 83-K-288
Zoning Districts: R2-M
Ward: 11
Neighborhood: East Liberty

Request: Construction of House

Application: BDA-2024-04101

Variance	903.03.C.2	3' interior side setback required; 0' requested
----------	------------	---

Appearances:

Applicant: John Porter

Findings of Fact:

1. The Subject Property is located at 424 Borland Street in an R2-M (Residential Two Unit Moderate Density) District in East Liberty.
2. The dimensions of the parcel are 17'.6 by 100' (1,760 sf) and it is currently vacant.
3. The two-story houses on the parcels on both sides of the Subject Property extend to the shared interior side property lines, with 0' setbacks.
4. The Applicant proposes to construct a three-story, single-unit attached house on the Subject Property.
5. As proposed, the house would be attached to the houses on the adjacent parcels, along both interior side property lines, with 0' side setbacks. Portions of the proposed structure, on both sides, would be detached but would extend the same 0' setback along the shared side property lines.
6. The three-story height proposed would exceed the two-story height of the structures on both adjacent parcels.

7. The Applicant asserted that the width of the lot is a unique characteristic that precludes strict compliance with the Code's current setback standards.

8. The Applicant identified other buildings in the proximate area of the Subject Property that do not comply with the Code's current setback standards.

9. A 1923 Sanborn Fire Insurance map depicts an attached structure, with limited setbacks, on the Subject Property.

10. No one appeared at the hearing to oppose the request.

Conclusions of Law:

1. Pursuant to Sections 903.03.C.2 and 925.06.C., the 5' interior sideyard setback requirement can be reduced to 3' where the width of the lot is less than 37'.

2. Section 925.06.C.2 provides that side setbacks may be reduced to 0' where the structure on an abutting property has a 0' setback and the building walls would abut each other. This section does not apply where a proposed structure exceeds the length and/or height of the existing structures.

3. The Applicant presented evidence and testimony that the width of the Subject Property precludes strict compliance with the Code and that some relief from the interior side setback requirement is necessary to allow for reasonable development of the parcel.

4. The Applicant submitted evidence that the parcel was once used for a structure with interior side setbacks that predated the current Code requirements. The Applicant did not provide any evidence of when the structure with reduced setbacks was demolished and whether that structure had been in place when the current setback requirements were adopted. With the demolition of the structure, any protection for nonconforming features, including setbacks, was technically abandoned. The Applicant did not provide any evidence of the height of the structure that was demolished.

5. The Applicant did not present sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed structure reflected the minimum relief necessary. The three-structure proposed would not be consistent with the two-story structures on the adjacent parcels and the plan presented appears to reflect the maximum relief preferred and not the minimum that would afford relief from the asserted hardship.

6. The Applicant also did not present any evidence of any support for the proposed variances from the owners of the adjacent parcels.

7. Consistent with the evidence and testimony presented, and the applicable legal standards governing variances, the Board concludes that the request, as presented, must be denied.

8. Because the Board recognizes that some relief from the site development standards might be necessary to allow for reasonable development of the site, it denies without prejudice and will consider a revised plan.

Decision: The Applicant's request for variances from Section 903.03.C.2 to allow construction of a three-story house with 0' interior side setbacks on both side is hereby DENIED without prejudice.

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.