

## Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 01/24/2024)

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

Logistics	Stakeholders
<b>Project Name/Address:</b> 824 Peralta St	<b>Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident):</b>
<b>Parcel Number(s):</b> 24-J-432	CASGED [Community Alliance of Spring Garden - East
<b>ZDR Application Number:</b> BDA-2024-06837	Deutschtown] Board
<b>Meeting Location:</b> Virtual on Zoom	East Allegheny [East Deutschtown] Residents
<b>Date:</b> December 30, 2024	Applicants [the owner, and the architect]
<b>Meeting Start Time:</b> 6:00 pm	DCP
<b>Boards and/or Commissions Request(s):</b>	<b>Approx. Number of Attendees:</b> 9
<b>ZBA [Zoning Board of Adjustment];</b> To be reviewed and approved a variance for a non-conforming use.	

### 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.*

During this virtual meeting, the applicants gave us an overview of the history, the function(s) of the building, and the proposed renovation plan and thoughts, and the timeline for it.

The owner mentioned that he bought the property a couple months ago. He is very familiar with the neighborhood and owns another property on E Ohio. The architect helped the owner with the renovation of that, and is helping with this one as well. They walked through the property in question after the purchase. The building is a fairly large structure. They looked at how the building is split up, including the utilities. There is a front door that leads to the upper floor apartments. There is a door to the right of the front door that leads to the side alley, that takes you to the back door which is the main door to the first-floor apartment.

The owner explains that the house has had two gas meters for a long time. The records are there with People's Gas from 21 years ago. There are two separate electric meters as well. These meters are made by a company who ran out of business in the 60's. So, it's the electrical gear that helps them the most in determining the minimum amount of time that the building has had two apartments. The architect explains how that indicates at least 60-70 years of two-family house use in the building.

The owner shows photos of the utility meters including gas, electrical, and also the water meter and a submeter for water. He also shares images showing the two kitchens that are pretty old, and of the two furnaces. This all indicates that the building has been used as a duplex for quite a while.

And if we look at the Allegheny County's website, it's listed as a multi-unit house. If not anything else, they hope to establish that the county has those records for tax purposes.

In response to a question, the owner shares some photos of the other property he owns in the neighborhood: before and after renovation. He explains that he intends to continue investing in the neighborhood and presents the photos of the other property as evidence to his intent and the quality of work that the community can expect to see in this property as well.

The CASGED board asked a few questions during and after the presentation and later opened up the floor for questions/comments. [All of them are as follows.]

### Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>. Do you expect that this was a side-by-side multi-unit many years ago? Or, has this been a top-down multi-unit all along?</p>	<p>. [Architect] My guess is that it was originally built as a single-family house but didn't have the addition in the back. I suspect that it was converted to a 2-family residence when the addition was built.</p> <p>. [A resident] Yeah, I think you are right. I live close to it, and I think that was the case with my house as well.</p>
<p>. I assume that back then you could probably use older equipment. So, you could be off by a decade, but even still, it's pretty old. Do you feel the same for plumbing?</p>	<p>. It's all copper pipe. There is currently 1 Water meter and 1 submeter. It was really the electrical that was the key for us to date back to the time of conversion.</p>
<p>. Do you have a sense of the total square footage and individual square footage of the units now?</p> <p>. The first floor one- is it around 850 sft?</p>	<p>. First floor is definitely smaller- two bedroom one. The upper floor one is comprised of 3 bedrooms and the attic.</p> <p>. Possible, may be even a bit more with the back addition.</p>
<p>. So, your ultimate goal is to renovate them and rent out both units whenever you are done with the updates, correct?</p>	<p>. Right.</p>
<p>. What kind of timeline do you have in your mind? I appreciate you going through the process of getting the zoning variance. But, do you have any plans as to when you might start the renovation?</p>	<p>. The process involves getting the occupancy certificate first. Then the architect will prepare the documents and drawings for the City. It might take 2-3 months. And, with renovation, it may take another 2-3 months.</p>
<p>. The building isn't in a great shape right now. So, if you update it to a proper two-unit with the right occupancy certificate, I think that's good for our neighborhood.</p>	<p>. Of course, that's the whole idea.</p>
<p>. Is there a plan to do an AirBnB?</p>	<p>. No. Just regular renters.</p>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>. There is an empty lot to the left of it. Have you looked into who owns it and/or have you considered buying it?</p> <p>. For the right price, would you potentially acquire it and turn it into parking and/or greenery?</p>	<p>. Yes, it was not in the market before. But it is for sale now. I was thinking about it before ...</p> <p>. I want to concentrate on this project first.</p>
<p>. Are you planning to manage the property as well, or is it a third party?</p>	<p>. No, I work with a professional management company- the manage my other residential property.</p>
<p>. Are you based in Pittsburgh or out-of-state?</p>	<p>. Right now, I am in Miami for the winter. But I spend time in Pittsburgh during the summer.</p>
<p>. [On behalf of a resident who couldn't make it] There is a different RCO just on the other side of the 279 called EACC. We are kind of pro-duplex to some extent especially if a house has been used as multi-unit for about 50 years [individual perspective], while the other group focused for about 25-30 years on drawing a line in the sand on considering a single family as a single family only. It probably makes it a little easier to keep the density on the lower side to make it easy to park as there are very few driveways and people have to park on-street mostly. They looked at it as more of a quality-of-life issue. I, personally, am more pro-density as I think it makes housing more affordable for more people. But I just want it to be on the record as we need to be cautious around precedent-setting. The number of R1 zoning we have in the city compared to R2 is ridiculous but that's a whole different conversation, that we may have at some point. I just want you [the owner] to be aware of this discussion that we are having as a group.</p>	<p>. I would say that the other side [of 279] already has a much higher density of housing. Here, you have a good number of lots that are not built out yet.</p>
<p>. Before we became an RCO- so, there was no DAM- there was a project in our neighborhood where they combined two former town houses and turned into a top-down duplex. The exterior has vinyl siding- a look that's very different than the fabric of our neighborhood. I would have much more concern about that being non-conforming than this- where it's already two unit for a long time.</p>	
<p>. [Amongst the Board] Do you have a concern about precedent setting? Or, do you think we can go case by case?</p>	<p>. [Amongst the Board] Case by case, yes. I hear you, and it's okay to register that concern. It's not to say that we want every single-family house to turn into a duplex. In this case, this has been a duplex. They are just improving it as a duplex. On that basis, I think we can get rid of the concern that this project will set a negative example.</p>
<p>. [Owner] The residents in the neighborhood can attest that this property has been a duplex for many years. With the utility meters and records, we have pretty good amount of evidence.</p>	<p>. [Board] We can definitely check in with the long-term residents.</p>

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>But, having somebody who has lived here for a long time attest to the fact would be very helpful as well as we appear before the ZBA. Is there anyone you know who can do that?</p>	
<p>. [Board] Can DCP remind us what the next steps are and how this works?</p>	<p>. [DCP] The RCO usually takes their time to discuss the project and may invite questions or concerns from the residents. After the deliberations, they let the applicants know their decisions: if they are supporting or opposing the project, and if they are willing to provide them with a letter of support. If you do offer them a letter of support, that will be attached to their application materials. During the hearing, not only the board but also any and every resident can attend it to voice their comments, concerns, support or opposition on the project. Aside from this, the report we prepare will also be included with the materials for the ZBA to look at.</p>
<p>. [Board] That's very helpful. Do you think we might need another DAM for this project for any reasons?</p>	<p>. [DCP] At this point, I don't foresee one for this project. Also, the City requires only one DAM for a project. It will probably depend on the project and the community. Often, some RCOs prefer that the applicants present the project to the board first. This is not a DAM. With the board's feedback, some applicants may update their presentations as well. Then the board decides when the project goes to the community for a DAM. But there is no second DAM required by the City herself.</p>
<p>. We have our board meeting coming up and we can pass along the questions that come out of that, to the applicants.</p>	
<p>. I don't have further questions for you [owner] but wanted to mention that I appreciate your interest in investing in our neighborhood.</p>	
<p>. One last question: there is no change in the exterior walls or the footprint, correct?</p>	<p>. Yes, correct.</p>

**Other Notes**

During and after the presentation, Q/A and other discussions around the Development Activity, CASGED board members showed their general support for this project, contingent upon a discussion during the board meeting. They invited the participants to send their questions between the DAM and the Board Meeting, if any.

**Planner completing report: NT**