

**Zoning Board of Appeals
January 22, 2025, Regular Meeting
STAFF REPORT**

Subject: ZBA 24-0040; 1921 Cambridge Avenue

Summary:

Scott Crandall, representing property owner, is requesting a variance of four feet four inches from section 5.18.5 Establishing a Front Building Line. The variance will allow construction of a new two car garage to encroach into the 40-foot average front setback. The property is zoned R1C Single Family residential.

Background:

The subject property is located on the west side of Cambridge Road between Hill Street and Day Street in the Angell neighborhood. The existing residence was constructed in 1912 and is 2,572 square feet in size.

Description:

The applicant is proposing the demolition of an existing single-car garage with a new two-car garage that encroaches four feet four inches into the 40-foot average front setback. The garage is approximately 29' by 25' (752 square feet). The applicant is proposing to have an outdoor patio and living space on the roof of the proposed garage.

Standards for Approval- Variance

The Zoning Board of Appeals has all the power granted by State law and by Section 5.29.12, Application of the Variance Power from the Unified Development Code (UDC).

The following criteria shall apply:

- (a). ***That the practical difficulties are exceptional and peculiar to the property of the person requesting the variance and result from conditions which do not exist generally throughout the City.***

Applicant response: *"The property is subject to comply with the average front setbacks established by the adjacent properties, thus requiring a maximum 40' front setback. The existing garage is failing structurally and will require replacement, regardless of the size. Constructing a 2-car garage complying with the prescriptive buildable area established by the setbacks would produce an ineffective garage space for 2 cars. If the garage were rearranged to comply within the setbacks, it would necessitate reorienting the driveway approach to the garage, requiring substantial earthwork and disruption to the existing landscape, vegetation and characteristics of the property."*

- (b). ***That the practical difficulties will result from a failure to grant the variance, include substantially more than mere inconvenience, inability to attain a higher financial return, or both.***

Applicant response: *"Failure to grant the variance would disable the homeowner's ability to replace their structurally deficient 1-car garage with a modestly sized 2-car garage without substantial modifications to the existing site and characteristics of the front of the home and property, which would negatively*

impact the existing characteristic of its relationship to the surrounding community.”

- (c). ***That allowing the variance will result in substantial justice being done, considering the public benefits intended to be secured by this Chapter, the individual hardships that will be suffered by a failure of the Board to grant a variance, and the rights of others whose property would be affected by the allowance of the variance.***

Applicant response: “Allowing the variance would be a justice as it ensures that the failing garage will be replaced with a new structurally compliant garage that can be designed to accommodate today’s larger vehicles, and the existing characteristics of the home and the public view of the property from the road will be maintained. It would also be a justice for the occupants to ensure both are able to maintain their vehicles in the safety of a garage and enable the opportunity for the better integration with other infrastructural improvements (e.g. electric vehicle services), beyond the structural improvements.”

“To deny the variance would be an injustice to the community and the occupants’ neighbors, as it would require a design that could drastically alter the appearance of this property and its relationship to the neighboring properties.”

- (d). ***That the conditions and circumstances on which the variance request is based shall not be a self- imposed hardship or practical difficulty.***

Applicant response: “The variance request enables a design that aligns with the existing characteristics of the site and would not alter how the occupants or community interact with the property. It is not anticipated that the designs and opportunities granted by the variance would result in any self-imposed practical difficulties.”

- (e). ***A variance approved shall be the minimum variance that will make possible a reasonable use of the land or structure.***

Applicant response: “The variance requested is determined to be the minimum variance necessary to accommodate the recommended standards for a 2-car garage.”

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Barrett".

**Jon Barrett- Zoning Coordinator
City of Ann Arbor**