

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
VARIANCE APPLICATION
644 N. Frances Street

Zoning: DR-2

Owner: Delta Upsilon of WI, Inc.

Technical Information:

Applicant Lot Size: Irregular Corner

Minimum Lot Width: 40'

Applicant Lot Area: 13,776 sq. ft.

Minimum Lot Area: 3,000 sq. ft.

Madison General Ordinance Section Requiring Variance: 28.042(2)

Project Description: Three-story fraternity house. Basement-level dwelling addition beneath a portion of the lake-side (rear) porch area. Project incorporates dining room and bathroom expansion in the basement level, included as part of complete remodel of the building.

Zoning Ordinance Requirement: 55.9'
Provided Setback: 28.0'±
Requested Variance: **27.9'±**

Comments Relative to Standards:

1. Conditions unique to the property: The existing location of the building is fixed, and cannot be reasonably modified to accommodate the required setback. The slope of the lot toward the lake results in a basement exposure, which affords the two-level porch exposure. The lot has a parking area in the non-lake side, which rules out this area for the addition (parking area would be lost). Because of the existing building placement, relative to neighboring structures that establish the required lakefront yard setback for the development, the existing building currently projects into the required lakefront yard setback. All buildings in proximity that established the required setback appear to have been constructed before the City had lakefront yard setback requirements. The lot is relatively shallow from north-to-south when compared to the other waterfront properties in the general area.
2. Zoning district's purpose and intent: The regulation being requested to be varied is the *lakefront yard setback*. In consideration of this request, the purpose of this setback is establish a build-to line for property, with the intent being to generally align buildings, so no individual building may place new bulk in a location that adversely impacts the view corridor of other buildings in close proximity. Because this addition is incorporated within part of the existing building and at the basement level it has no bulk increase outside of the footprint of the existing building. Because new exterior walls are being installed, a variance is required to enclose part of the space.

3. Aspects of the request making compliance with the zoning code burdensome: For this development, the lakefront setback requirement is generated by the development on adjacent lots.
4. Difficulty/hardship: The building and porch were originally constructed in 1909. See comments #1 and #3 above.
5. The proposed variance shall not create substantial detriment to adjacent property: The proposed addition is partly below-grade and is stepped behind the existing columns supporting the porch, under existing bulk occupied by the existing porch. The new space would not be visible from the west and since it is about 90 feet from the neighboring property to the east, it would have little impact on the properties to the east.
6. Characteristics of the neighborhood: The project involves the restoration of a historic building in the neighborhood, maintaining the character of the area. With similar historic properties on the lake, it is common for lake side porches to have some enclosure mechanisms. This expansion would be considered orderly development.

Other Comments: The project involves a complete remodel of the building, including the installation of the mandatory sprinkler system required by the building code effective 1/1/2014. This project deducts one sleeping room in the 2nd and 3rd floors, but adds four sleeping rooms in the attic, for a grand total of 22 sleeping rooms.

This project will require a certificate of appropriateness from the Landmarks Commission for alterations to a Landmark building, and a Conditional Use approval from the Plan Commission for renovations and expansion of a fraternity house in the DR2 zoning district.

Staff Recommendation: It appears standards have been met, therefore staff recommends **approval** of the variance request, subject to further testimony and new information provided during the public hearing.