

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
VARIANCE APPLICATION
1406 Mound Street

Zoning: TR-C4

Owner: Beth Israel Center

Technical Information:

Applicant Lot Size: Regular Corner

Minimum Lot Width: 40'

Applicant Lot Area: 24,596.25 sq. ft.

Minimum Lot Area: 4,800 sq. ft.

Madison General Ordinance Section Requiring Variance: 28.045(2)

Project Description: Existing synagogue and school. Demolish two adjacent homes to the north, construct additions to sanctuary and classrooms, construct new parking and loading facilities.

	Front Yard	Reverse-Corner Side Yard	Lot Coverage
Zoning Ordinance Requirement:	10' 0"	31' 4"*	65% maximum
Provided Setback:	7' 4"	5' 0"	81.76% provided
Requested Variance:	2' 8"	26' 4"	16.76% variance

* includes 136" side wall offset

Comments Relative to Standards:

1. Conditions unique to the property: The subject property is an irregular lot on an irregular block. The existing facility projects into the reverse-corner side yard setback and nearly matches the minimum front yard setback allowable per front yard setback averaging. Existing lot coverage maximums also appear to be exceeded. The property was developed prior to the current zoning regulations being in place. The proposed setbacks generally match the existing setbacks of other nonresidential uses found in the general area, originally constructed around a similar era as the subject property.
2. Zoning district's purpose and intent:

Front yard setback. Typically, the front yard setback requirement establishes building placement for a principal structure, resulting in a relatively uniform setback for structures from the street. This particular area reflects a number of properties with substandard front yard setbacks, both on this block and across Randall Street.

Reverse-corner side yard setback. The reverse-corner side yard expands upon the purpose of a typical setback, because by definition, the subject property backs up to the front yard of the property to the rear. The potential adverse impact of placing bulk closer to the street, in front of the property to the rear, is why a greater setback is established. In this case, the closest home to the rear (after two homes are demolished) is about 120' from the proposed addition, and at that point the addition provides a 15'-3" setback. The side elevation is significantly articulated, with recesses, windows, different steps to different levels in the building, a curved wall design along Randall Street.

Lot coverage. Lot coverage requirements are intended to create impervious areas on-site for stormwater infiltration and/or greenspace. Typical site improvements that count toward lot coverage include: wide sidewalks, patios, building footprints, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces. Lot coverage is a new concept in zoning for the City, only introduced under the new zoning code (in place 01/2013). The site is an existing development, and likely exceeds lot coverage maximums, however, it is not clear what areas have been included in the lot coverage calculation. There may be opportunities for modifications to the site, such as using pervious pavement, that do not appear to have been considered or are not shown in the submitted plans.

3. Aspects of the request making compliance with the zoning code burdensome: The site is fairly limited in regard to expansion opportunities, about the only area if expansion is as proposed. Also, per the agent, certain religious requirements mandate the sanctuary space be located "to the east" in the building.
4. Difficulty/hardship: The property appears to have been originally developed by the same congregation, but has not seen any expansion or alteration since the 1960's. See #1 and #3 above.
5. The proposed variance shall not create substantial detriment to adjacent property: The proposed additions and expansions will have some affect on the street-view of the building, but it does not appear as though there would be any significant adverse impact created by this project.
6. Characteristics of the neighborhood: The general area is characterized by mostly 1 and 2 family residential structures, with some large apartment buildings and other nonresidential uses. The property directly adjacent to the west on Mound Street has a front yard setback that is less than the proposal (about 5'). St. James Church and School, located a few blocks to the east, has similar setbacks and bulk characteristics to the proposal.

Other Comments: Lot coverage often gets confused with maximum building coverage. The proposed structure meets building coverage requirements.

The project will still be required to meet the City's stormwater ordinances in regard to runoff and detention, but these requirements do not necessarily align with the zoning lot coverage requirement.

The demolition of the homes and the proposed alterations to the facility will require Plan Commission approval. No application has been made to date for the Conditional Use and Demolition reviews.

Staff Recommendations:

Front Yard Setback: 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.

Reverse-corner side yard setback: 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.

Lot coverage: The burden of meeting the standards is placed upon the applicant, who needs to demonstrate satisfaction of all the standards for variance approval. It is not clear that this burden has been met. The submission lacks detail in regard to the existing and proposed lot coverage condition, and information has not been presented to explain the lot coverage provision that is part of this project. Staff recommends that the Zoning Board find that the variance standards are not met and **refer** the request for more study and information, or **deny** the requested variance as submitted, subject to further testimony and new information provided during the public hearing.