

Amelia Brackett Hogstad

From: Wayne Plakmeyer <plak@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 8:58 AM
To: Amelia Brackett Hogstad
Subject: Judy Herlihy variance application

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Dear Louisville City Council,

We are writing today to urge you to allow a construction variance for Judy Herlihy's property in old town.

We feel that allowing this variance would have zero negative effects on the neighborhood. Judy has been trying to add this addition to her garage for many years. She hopes to have more room to house her family so she can continue to live here as she ages.

This is a beautiful property and we can see no reason to refuse this request.

Thank you.

Jeannie Schuman
Wayne Plakmeyer
473 Front St.
Louisville

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Amelia Brackett Hogstad

From: Alissa Parker <alissaparkr@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 10:50 AM
To: Amelia Brackett Hogstad
Subject: 836 Rex St

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Hi,

My name is Alissa and I live at 832 Rex. I am just reaching out to say I fully support the expansion of Judy's home to turn the garage into an apartment. I believe it will be a great addition to the unique and beautiful homes already here in the heart of Louisville. It will also add convenience for my neighbor and ensure she is able to spend more time with family and share the love she has of this beautiful city comfortably with them.

Thank you,
Alissa

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Amelia Brackett Hogstad

From: Michael McClure <michael.mcclure.inc@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 9:39 PM
To: Amelia Brackett Hogstad
Subject: 826 Rex St proposed additio

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I have reviewed the proposed addition of a 2nd story unit to the garage at 826 Rex St.

First, I like the extra space, separate from the main dwelling.

Given the large and modern house across the alley, the addition does not stick out as unusual for the feel of the neighborhood - especially since it is on a dead-end street and alley. Given the position of the garage and the alley behind it, the standard 15' setback would just destroy the back yard (not in the spirit of the neighborhood) for no material difference. There is already a nice backyard, and a garage - just build on top of the garage, like so many of the new builds are doing / have done in the last several years.

I support granting a variance to the 15 foot setback rule for this addition.

Thank you,
Michael McClure
1082 Griffith St, Louisville.

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Amelia Brackett Hogstad

From: Laura Page <lpage53@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 9:13 PM
To: Amelia Brackett Hogstad
Subject: 836 Rex - Application for a Side Setback Variance
Attachments: 945 Rex.jpg; 1001 Rex.jpg; 508 LaFarge.jpg; 501 Jefferson.jpg; 841 Lincoln.jpg

Dear Members of the Board,

We would like to speak in support of Judy Herlihy's request for a side yard setback variance for a second-story apartment to be built on top of her existing garage at 836 Rex Street.

Judy's application states that she is requesting a 1.5' side setback instead of the required 15'. Her existing garage is approximately 14' from the Main Street sidewalk. The sidewalk edge would typically mark the property edge so we assume there is a deep - perhaps 12' or so - street ROW in front of her garage. A variance requires that the property be unique to the neighborhood. Contending with this deep ROW is the qualifying uniqueness, in this case.

We also assume that the main reason the Code requires a 15' setback is to reduce the visual impact on the street. There are no house fronts on the block of Main Street on which Judy's garage is situated so there is no street-front appearance to detract from. Also, if you don't count the invisible ROW, Judy's garage is already set back very close to the code-specified 15'. We are confident that the City will never need to increase the width of Main Street on that block, since it dead-ends at Community Park, just beyond Judy's garage. The sidewalk was already widened many years ago. Thus, Judy's garage will always be set back some 14' from the sidewalk.

Just one block away, there were two remodels completed in the last couple decades that added living space over their garages that face Front Street - 945 Rex (first photo, attached) and 1001 Rex (second photo). Both have setbacks from the sidewalk (and assumed property line) that are less than 15' - about 8.5' and 11', respectively. In our opinion, these fit in quite well with the neighborhood and set a precedent for allowance of a setback variance.

There is another two-story garage/apartment just two blocks away at 945 LaFarge that faces Roosevelt Ave (3rd photo) that is just a few feet from the sidewalk. Though that structure has existed for over 30 years, and the shallow setback is at the rear, the garage does front a street.

The garage at nearby 501 Jefferson (4th photo) - facing Hutchinson - had a second-story addition approved just a few years ago to allow for a commercial-grade kitchen to support their business endeavor. The garage is only about 9' from the sidewalk/assumed property line, though the second-floor is set back about 4' feet from the front of the garage. That owner was also allowed to build a lower-pitch roof than Old Town regulations allow, despite there being no apparent "unique physical circumstances or conditions" that would have required such a variance, so the City has shown flexibility before, though in this case, we don't feel the end result befits Old Town.

There are other examples throughout Old Town of garages - and even residences - adjacent to, or within a couple of feet, of the sidewalk. Just two blocks away at 945 LaFarge, the garage faces Roosevelt Ave (3rd photo) and is only a few feet from the sidewalk. Though that structure has existed for over 30 years, and the shallow setback is at the rear, not the side of the property, the garage does front a street.

Old Town is eclectic. No formulas can fit the variety of structures that pre-existed current code. We would hope that the City would allow Judy's request for a variance since the City has done so for other properties in Old Town, even relatively recently.

We would much prefer that Judy be allowed to build over her existing garage, rather than being forced to build much deeper into her back yard. Too many rebuilds in Old Town have taken away from what makes Old Town unique - smaller homes with bigger yards and mature trees. As gardeners ourselves, we appreciate Judy's desire to maintain as much of her backyard as possible.

Though we don't believe you are able to specify the design, we do want to offer our opinion that the design that Judy shared with her neighbors does not fit in well with the neighborhood. The design she pictured looks too much like a house built on top of a garage, rather than a garage with added living space above. We doubt the design as shown with full-height windows all around is even achievable, given Old Town height and roof pitch requirements. If those restrictions are adhered to, which would be a requirement for our support, the final design is likely to have multiple roof projections as is typical for most of the two-story garages in Old Town. The last photo is of the garage at 841 Lincoln. In our opinion, a similar design would be well-suited to our immediate neighborhood and could fulfill Judy's objective of creating a livable space. The Lincoln Street garage's second-floor setback from the front garage wall diminishes its bulk, which would be especially nice in Judy's case because her primary residence is only one story. The second floor then extends past the rear wall of the original garage for extra square footage, as it appears Judy desires. There is also a deck off the back which, in our opinion, would be a more suitable location from an appearance perspective than at the front of the garage.

While we appreciate that it is also not in your power to change the zoning rules, we do empathize with Judy's desire to accommodate a future care provider, if the need should arise, so that she could remain in her home. Seniors throughout our community are hoping to find ways of remaining on their properties, or at least within Louisville. The State also wants more housing options to accommodate our growing population. We think there's a strong desire for more relaxed regulations that would allow for more ADUs in Louisville.

Thank you for permitting us to share our support for this application.

Laura Page and Celeste Niehaus
920 Rex Street

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