

NARRATIVE

21 NORWALK AVE, WESTPORT, CT (D03/ / 150/000 /) VARIANCE APPLICATION

I. OVERVIEW

Warren Steven (hereinafter the “Owner”) owns the property known as 21 Norwalk Avenue, Westport, CT (hereinafter the “Property”). The Property is zoned Residence A and is ±5,000 sq. ft. (.11 Acres) in area and fronts on Norwalk Avenue along its northern boundary. The site is improved with a single-family dwelling that was constructed circa 1920 and was renovated and lifted to be FEMA compliant (el. 14’) in 2014. The Property, in the Compo Beach area, is surrounded with residential uses.

The entire Property lies within the AE-11 flood zone and is in the Coastal Area Management (CAM) zone and is exempt from CAM review per §31-10.6.3. The Property is level with the existing elevation along the northern boundary, adjacent to Norwalk Avenue, at 6.30’ and only slightly increasing to an elevation of 6.70’ at the southern boundary.

II. PROPOSAL

The Owner requests approval to lift the existing single-family dwelling (FFE 14.0’) and to construct a two-car garage underneath. The modified single-family dwelling will continue to comply with all applicable FEMA flood regulations (FFE 16.167’) and provide additional safety for any future increases to the flood elevation. An addition is also proposed to the rear of the dwelling, with a footprint of 341 SF. The driveway and front stairs will be relocated to accommodate access to the garage. Associated site development is proposed that includes a new driveway, new entry stair with a landing to access electric meters and drainage structures in the rear yard.

III. ANALYSIS

The Property has a Lot Area of 5,000 SF where 21,789 SF is required; approximately twenty-three percent (23%) of what is required in the Residence A zone. Lots with non-conforming Lot Area are permitted to use the reduced setbacks set forth in §6-3.1 which results in a front setback of 20 feet, side setbacks of 7.5’ and a rear setback of 25’. Variances (#7279) for Coverage, Setbacks and Height were granted in 2014 to allow for lifting the existing dwelling to conform to FEMA requirements. Total Coverage credit to accommodate the longer stairways needed to access the lifted home was not in place in 2014 and it cannot be granted at this time since the dwelling is currently FEMA compliant.

In its current configuration, the existing cupola allows for access through it to the roof deck. The current definition of height disallows this cupola from being exempt from contributing to the height as it provides area for “*human habitation*” per §5-2 (building height, height). Although granted a variance for this height in 2014, the cupola will be relocated so that the roof deck can no longer be accessed through it, thereby complying with the definition of a cupola. This will result in the height becoming conforming with this proposal. The roof deck will be accessed via a hatch in the roof. Secondly, while the 341 SF footprint addition will result in a modest increase to the Building Coverage, the Total Coverage will be reduced by removing the driveway that extends to the rear of the Property; thereby reducing this non-conformity. Lastly, the front setback will be reduced by relocating the stairs, again reducing this non-conformity.

IV. STANDARD OF REVIEW- HARDSHIP

The Applicant request variances for Setbacks (side & front) and Coverage (Building & Total) in that the operation of the regulations on the Property represents an unusual hardship for the following reasons:

- The Lot Area is significantly reduced on the Property with 5,000 SF of area where 21,780 SF is required, 23% of what is required;
- The Lot Shape is unusually narrow with only 50’ in width where 100’ x 150’ is required;
- The existing location of the historic 1920 home predates zoning;
- The added safety of an increased finished floor height will help protect the home and its occupants from future flood elevation changes and
- As an additional basis to grant a variance, the Height will be made conforming, and the Total Coverage, front yard setbacks, and side yard setbacks will be made less non-conforming.