

CITY OF CALISTOGA

STAFF REPORT

**TO: CHAIRMAN MANFREDI AND MEMBERS OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION**

FROM: ERIK V. LUNDQUIST, SENIOR PLANNER

MEETING DATE: JUNE 26, 2013

**SUBJECT: LOT COVERAGE VARIANCE VA 2013-03
1505 CEDAR STREET**

ITEM

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3 Consideration of a variance to allow 32% lot coverage when 30% is required, to
4 accommodate a 207 square foot addition to the existing single-family residence
5 at 1505 Cedar Street (APN 011-194-005).
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SITE AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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9 The property is in a residential neighborhood across from the Calistoga
10 Elementary School. Lots within the neighborhood were originally established in
11 1871 and have been built-out over time. Lots within the vicinity are flat, typically
12 60' x 120' and 7,200 square feet.
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14 The subject parcel has an area of approximately 5,400 square feet (60' x 90').
15 Existing improvements on the parcel include a 1,565 square-foot residence and
16 an attached 180 square-foot covered deck. The residence was originally
17 constructed in 1955. Driveway access to uncovered parking at the rear of the
18 property is along the eastern side of the residence directly from Cedar Street.
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20 The property owners seek approval of a variance in order to accommodate a
21 207-square foot addition (23' x 9') enlarging the master bedroom and dining room
22 at the rear of the house. Calistoga Municipal Code (CMC) Section 17.16.040(G)
23 limits the lot coverage of the principal dwelling unit to 30 percent. The current lot
24 coverage of the principal dwelling unit is approximately 29%. The proposed 207
25 square foot addition would result in 32% lot coverage for the principal dwelling
26 unit. [CMC Section 17.38.050(G) allows an increase in lot coverage for attached
27 or detached accessory structures so the existing 180 square foot covered deck
28 has been excluded from the lot coverage calculation for the purpose of this
29 review].
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31 If the proposed addition were reduced by 152 square feet (to 55 square feet) a
32 variance would not be needed. The property owners do not feel a smaller
33 addition would provide the interior space they need for a functioning dining room
34 and master bedroom. Therefore, in order to construct the addition, a lot coverage
35 variance would need to be granted.

36 **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

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38 The subject property is governed by the R-1 (Medium Density Residential)
39 District development standards.
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42 The lot is substandard in regard to lot depth and lot area, with a lot depth of 90
43 feet where a minimum of 100 feet is required, and a lot area of 5,400 square feet
44 where a minimum of 6,000 square feet is required. These property characteristics
45 are unique constraints that restrict the amount of coverage allowed.

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47 The property owners would like to maintain the character of the existing
48 residence and make minimal changes to the existing floor plan by adding a single
49 story addition. The addition would be designed to stay in character with the other
50 residences in the neighborhood. The property owners have also suggested that if
51 their property were considered a standard-sized lot, they would be allowed up to
52 1,800 square feet of building coverage for the principal dwelling, 180 square feet
53 more than what is allowed on their substandard parcel.

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55 The 207 square foot proposed addition is modest, located in the rear of the
56 property, and within all required setbacks. Based on the size constraints on the
57 subject property, staff believes the variance request is reasonable.

58 **FINDINGS**

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60 The analysis of this application requires that all mandatory findings be made
61 pursuant to CMC Section 17.42.020. On the basis of evidence presented, Staff
62 recommends that the Variance be approved since all of the findings can be
63 made, as described below:
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- 65
66 1. Conditions apply to the property that do not apply generally to other
67 properties in the same zone or vicinity, which conditions are a result of lot
68 size or shape, topography, or other circumstances over which the
69 applicant has no control.

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71 Finding: The minimum lot area and lot width for an interior lot in the R-1
72 District is 6,000 square feet with a 100 foot depth. The subject property is
73 5,400 square feet with a 90 foot depth. The average of all lots in the block
74 is just over 6,700 square feet with the majority having around 120 feet of
75 depth. These facts do limit the potential size of an addition after taking into
76 account the size of the existing home.

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78 2. The variance is necessary for the preservation of a property right of the
79 applicant substantially the same as is possessed by owners of other
80 property in the same zone or vicinity.

81
82 Finding: Lot coverage limitations in the ordinance are determined by
83 percentages. This means that similar property rights are granted to each
84 property based on the size of the lot. Smaller lots have fewer development
85 rights than larger ones. Allowing a modest increase in residential square
86 footage would preserve the property right.

- 87
88 3. The authorization of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the
89 purposes of this Title, be injurious to property in the zone or vicinity in
90 which the property is located, or otherwise conflict with the objectives of
91 City development plans or policies.

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93 Finding: The addition will have a minimal impact on the scale of the
94 existing structure, and the structure will continue to be compatible with
95 surrounding homes. Since the design of the proposed addition is in the
96 rear of the home, no impacts to the appearance of the home from the
97 street will occur. As proposed, the granting of this variance will not affect
98 the public welfare and is compatible with property and other improvements
99 in the vicinity.

- 100
101 4. The variance requested is the minimum variance which will alleviate the
102 hardship.

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104 Finding: The variance requested is the minimum necessary to reasonably
105 expand the development potential of the lot.

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107 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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109 As of June 21, 2013, no public comments had been received regarding this
110 project.

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112 **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

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114 Staff has determined that the proposed project is Categorically Exempt from the
115 requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to
116 Section 15305 of the CEQA Guidelines (minor Alterations in Land Use
117 Limitations).

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119 **RECOMMENDATION**

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121 Approve lot coverage variance with conditions.
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ATTACHMENTS

1. Aerial Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Existing Site Plan
4. Proposed Addition Site Plan received May 1, 2013

NOTE: The applicant or any interested person is reminded that the Calistoga Municipal Code provides for a ten (10)-calendar day appeal period. If there is a disagreement with the Planning Commission, an appeal to the City Council may be filed. The appropriate forms and applicable fee must be submitted prior to 5:00 p.m. on or before the tenth calendar day following the Commission's final determination.