City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number: 3017365

Applicant Name: John Cashman of Axiom Design Build

Address of Proposal: 2847 NW 65th Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow 92 sq. ft. front porch addition to an existing single family residence.

The following approval is required:

Variance - To allow a portion of principal structure to extend into the required front yard. (Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.44.014A.1).

SEPA DETERMINATION: [X] Exempt [ ] DNS [ ] MDNS [ ] EIS
[ ] DNS with conditions
[ ] DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Proposal Description

The applicant proposes to construct a 92 square foot front porch addition to an existing single family residence. The proposed porch and its steps would extend into the front yard setback. The existing front yard setback of 14’2 3/8” is based on an average with the neighbors. This variance proposal would allow the principal structure to project into the front yard by 6’7”, setting back from the right of way by 8’5”.

Subject Site and Vicinity

The subject site lies on an undersized property of 4,648 sq. ft. on NW 65th St. in Ballard. The right of way forms the lot's northern perimeter with adjacent residential parcels to the east, south and west. Twenty-eighth and 30th Avenues NW are the closest cross streets. Most of the parcels on the south block face of NW 65th have similar lot dimensions. The subject site lies within a Single Family 5000 zone (SF 5000) which extends west to the commercial node at the corner of 32nd Ave NW and 65th and east to 28th Ave NW where the zone changes to multifamily Lowrise One (LR1).

Many of the houses on the two blocks between 32nd Ave and 28th have small entry porches typical of the construction of the early 20th century. Three of the single family houses on the block segment between 39th and 28th Avenue have porches in the front yard setback. Five more houses have porches extending into the front yard in the block segment to the west.

Public Comment

The comment period ended July 2nd, 2014. DPD received several comment letters. The majority of the letters supported the porch addition.

ANALYSIS - VARIANCE

Variances from the provisions or requirements of the Land Use Code shall be authorized only when all of the following facts and conditions are found to exist:

1. *Because of unusual conditions applicable to the subject property including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, which were not created by the owner or applicant, the strict application of this Land Use Code would deprive the property of rights and privileges enjoyed by other properties in the same zone or vicinity; and*

The lot's size is slightly smaller (approximately 93 percent) than the minimum required for city of Seattle single family parcel (5,000 square feet). The house sits toward the front of the lot precluding a small covered front porch without the need for a variance. All but one parcel on the south block face are smaller than 5,000 sq. ft. Most of the houses do not meet the 20 foot front yard required in the Land Use Code. The style of homes built in the early portion of the 20th century often had small entry porches creating a modest covering before one directly entered into the house. Typical of houses this size, there are rarely enclosed entry foyers before one steps into the main living space. The outside porch often fulfills this function as well as provides a human scale to the streetscape.

The small size of the lot and nearby houses (including the adjacent house to the east) with front porches in the front yard suggests that the strict application of the Land Use Code would restrict the property owner from building a useful entry porch for the home.

2. *The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief and does not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the subject property is located; and*

Multiple houses between 28th and 32nd Avenues NW sit within the 20 foot front yard established by the City of Seattle Land Use Code. Nearly all of the older houses have entry porches with gabled or flat roofs. It appears that approximately eight homes have front porches that extend

into their front yard setbacks. To allow a small entry porch to extend into the average front yard setback does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief or constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitation upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the property is located. The front porch would not project closer to the right of way than its eastern neighbor.

3. The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zone or vicinity in which the subject property is located; and

The project is consistent with other similar houses in the vicinity (as noted above). There is no evidence that the proposal would be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zone or vicinity.

4. The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this Land Use Code would cause undue hardship or practical difficulties; and

The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this Land Use Code would not allow the construction of a modest covered porch without extensive remodeling to the interior.

5. The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of the Land Use Code regulations for the area.

The purpose of the Land Use Code is to protect and promote public health, safety and the general welfare through a set of regulations and procedures for the use of land. Procedures are established to increase citizen awareness of land use activities and their impacts and to coordinate necessary review processes. These provisions are designed to provide adequate light, air, access, and open space.

The variance request is consistent with the spirit and purpose of the Land Use Code.

DECISION – VARIANCE

Variance to allow a portion of principal structure to extend into the required front yard is **GRANTED**.

Variance to allow expansion of a non-conforming structure is **GRANTED**.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: September 18, 2014
Bruce P. Rips, Sr. Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

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