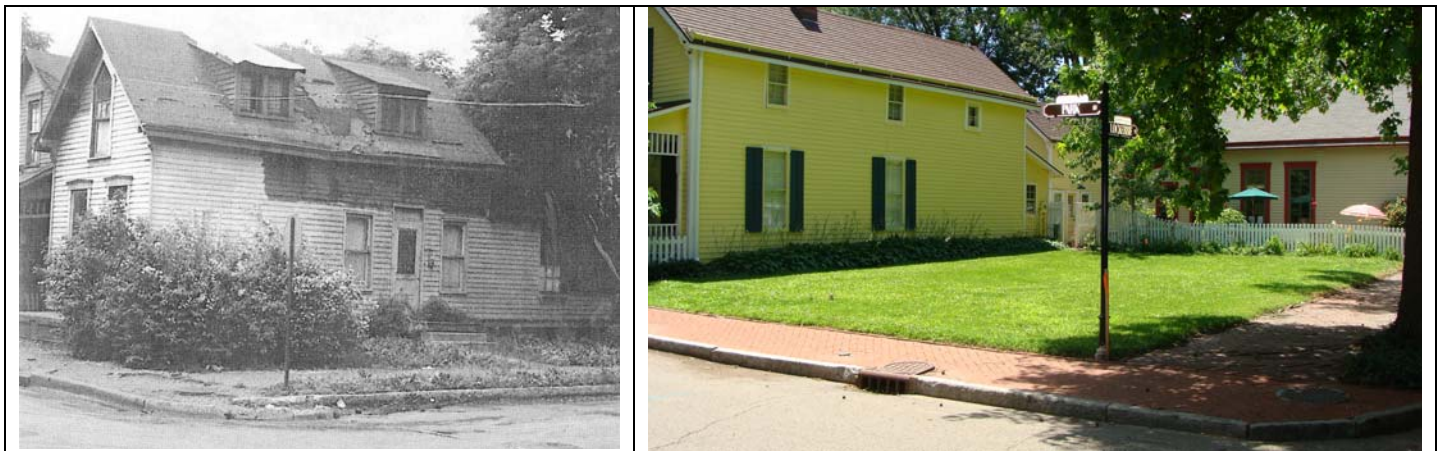


COA # 2010-COA-243 (LS) 2010-VHP-009	INDIANAPOLIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT	Hearing Date JULY 7, 2010
543 Lockerbie St LOCKERBIE SQUARE		New Case
Applicant: The ReDevelopment Group, Inc. mailing address: 1017 E. Michigan Street Indianapolis, IN 46202 Sean Chance and Sarah Hertz		Center Twp. Council District 15 Doris Minton-McNeill
Owner: 711 N. Park Ave Indianapolis, IN 46202		
COMBINED CASE		
IHPC COA: 2010-COA-243 (LS)	Construct new single-family house with 2 -car attached garage. Variances of Development Standards.	
VARIANCES: 2010-VHP-009	Variance of Development Standards to allow the front setbacks from Lockerbie Street and Park Avenue to be less than 10 feet, the minimum permitted in an HP-1 Zoning District.	
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of a Certificate of Authorization with stipulations		

STAFF COMMENTS

Background of the Property

The site was originally the location of a two-story frame house that was demolished in 1965 (see photo). The house did not have a garage or any other type of accessory structure. The house was demolished two years before Lockerbie Square became designated by the IHPC. Since then, the site has remained vacant, but was periodically used for neighborhood events with the consent of the previous owner. After the death of the previous owner, the estate sold the property to the present owners.



1965 photo of house previously on this site (demolished 1965).

Same view today.

The Site

This site presents three significant development constraints.

1. The lot is small, 40 ft. x 62 ft. with a small “leg” extension of land on the west. In comparison, the lot to the south is 95 ft. deep.
2. There is no alley access.
3. The corner lot creates two front facades for the proposed structure.

New House and Site Plan

The house is to be sided with cement-board clapboards. Windows will be aluminum clad with exterior, permanent muntins. It was designed with the previous historic house for inspiration, but without designing an exact copy. The front porch was added to help anchor the design while creating a similar feature found on other houses in the area. The front gable design is also consistent with other houses in the area as well as the multi-paned windows. The design is a stylistic bridge between the Federal style house at the south end of Park Ave and the Victorian cottage next door at 324 N. Park Ave.

Because the site is landlocked and not deep, the garage must be integrated into the house. The garage will face Park Ave. and will require a curb cut. Staff has worked with the builder and architect to reduce the visual impact of an attached garage. This has been done by setting the garage back so it is not flush with the front of the house, by integrating a trellis system into the front of the garage to decrease the visual impact, and by using carriage-house style doors rather than standard, paneled overhead doors. The applicant is also planning on using a brick driveway to blend into the streetscape and sidewalk.

This request has been widely discussed within the neighborhood and feelings are mixed. People on both sides of this issue have sought out staff to discuss support and opposition. Therefore, in this report staff will address the design guidelines in more detail that is typically done.

Setbacks.

The Lockerbie Square Plan.

- *A new building's setback should relate to the setback pattern established by the existing block context rather than the setbacks of building footprints that no longer exist.*
- *If the development standards... do not allow appropriate setbacks, a variance may be needed.*
- *If setbacks are uniform, new construction must conform.*
- *On corner sites, the setbacks from both streets must reflect the context.*

The alignment of this house conforms almost word for word with the Lockerbie Square Plan's design guidelines for new construction setbacks. The house will line up with the uniform setbacks of the three houses to its south, along Park Ave. It will line up visually with the house to the west, along Lockerbie St., although it will actually be a foot behind the property line (the house next door is slightly over the property line.) In order to line up with its neighbors, a variance of the HP-1 development standards is needed.

Spacing

The Lockerbie Square Plan.

New construction should reflect and reinforce the character of spacing found in the block. [It] should maintain the perceived regularity or lack of regularity of spacing on the block. The guideline then cautions against spacing that is too wide, but does not specifically address narrow spacing.

The garage will be 2 ft. from the south lot line and will be 2'-5" to 2'-10" from the house next door (the adjacent house is slightly angled on the site.) While a somewhat wider spacing would be preferable, staff believes the proposed spacing is not inconsistent with the guidelines. One of the visual characteristics of Lockerbie Square is the generally close spacing of houses. In this case, there will be only about 2 ½ ft. between this new house and its neighbor to the south on Park Ave., the owner of which has raised concerns. There is no doubt that this is close. A quick survey of Lockerbie Square reveals that spacing of about 3 ½ ft. is most common amongst the closest properties (a quick survey revealed 5 such instances), which is wider than proposed, but not by much.

Staff has not rushed to embrace this spacing, but does not find it to vary from the guidelines in a way that suggests denial of the entire project. In coming to that conclusion, staff considered the following:

1. The house to the south is only about five inches from the property line and its eave may actually cross the line. This creates a serious development constraint on the subject lot.
2. Given the above fact, it is likely that any new house on this lot would result in cramped spacing. It may be just a matter of how cramped.
3. It is not at all unusual for the side windows of houses in Lockerbie Square to look directly at the close-by neighboring sidewall.
4. The close situation will only exist along half the length of the neighbor's house.

OPTION: If the Commission determines that a wider space between houses is more appropriate, there is a 1-foot setback along Lockerbie Street that could be reduced to zero, allowing the entire house to move one foot further away from the adjacent house. The houses would then be approximately 3 ½ feet apart, like those houses surveyed by staff in the area.

Building Heights

The Lockerbie Square Plan.

- *“Generally, the height of a new building should fall within the range set by the highest and lowest contiguous buildings if the block has uniform heights.*
- *Uncharacteristically high or low buildings should not be considered when determining the appropriate range.*
- *If the pattern of the block is characterized by a variety of heights, then the height of the new construction can vary from lowest to highest on the block.”*

Again, the height of this house conforms closely to the Plan, which states that Lockerbie Square is characterized by a mix of large, tall houses right next to small cottages. This can be seen along Park Ave. and in the immediate surrounding area. At 27 feet high, this house will be a few feet higher than its two immediate neighbors. However, the architect designed it to have a similar roof height to 314 N. Park Ave. (28 ft. high), which is the third house south on Park Ave. The two houses between 314 Park Ave. and the proposed house are both 24 feet tall, which is only 3 ft shorter than the proposed house. From this site, there are clearly visible houses taller and more massive than this one.

Mass

The Lockerbie Square Plan.

- *The total mass... should be compatible with surrounding buildings.*
- *The massing of various parts of a new building should characteristic of surrounding buildings.*
- *Avoid near total coverage of a site unless doing so is compatible with the surrounding context.*

Opinions about the mass of a building tend to be more subjective than other characteristics. Some Lockerbie Square residents have expressed to staff the opinion that the mass and scale of this house is similar to others and appropriate, while other Lockerbie residents have stated to us that they find the house completely out of scale and its mass overpowering.

Staff finds nothing radically different in the mass, scale and outline of this proposed house, when compared with others in the area.

Other Design Characteristics

Staff finds nothing out of sync with other characteristics such as fenestration, foundation, sense of entry, and orientation.

Use of the lot for Residential

There are some who have argued that no house should be allowed on this lot and it should be retained as a park/open space. However, the lot historically had a house on it even though it is very small and may require some exceptions to develop. In addition, the recommended land use map in the Lockerbie Square Plan depicts the future use of the lot for residential. Staff finds no basis for denying the use of the lot for residential.

Parking

The Lockerbie Square Plan. When the Plan was revised in 1987, one of the residents’ highest priorities was to require adequate off-street parking for all new development. The IHPC was urged to strengthen the language for the historic core. The Plan states: “*All housing development in the Historic Core should provide two (2) parking spaces per dwelling unit.*” This proposed development complies with this recommendation.

Justification for Certificate of Authorization

In many ways, this is a house the design guidelines built. So many of its physical characteristics, like scale, mass, style, height, setbacks, etc. are textbook examples of designing to the guidelines. Its only failings – the attached garage and spacing with one neighbor – are the result of trying to meet a parking standard that since 1987 has been considered by IHPC and the neighborhood as almost “sacred,” and one that cannot be met on this small, landlocked site without making exceptions somewhere. For these reasons, staff believes this request justifies a certificate of authorization based on the unique hardship placed on this site by all of the following circumstances combined:

1. The lot’s unusually small size,
2. Its corner location, and on two main streets (neither is considered a ‘side street.’)
3. The unusually close proximity of the neighboring house on Park Ave.
4. The requirement in the Plan that off-street parking be provided for two cars and the long-time practice of upholding that requirement.
5. The impracticality of developing a new, high quality, architect-designed house without a garage or on-site parking.

Variance of Development Standards

The applicant is requesting a Variance of Development Standards to allow the front setbacks of the proposed house at Lockerbie Street and Park Avenue to align with the existing houses on the immediately adjacent properties when a minimum of 10 feet is required. Staff does not believe this variance will create a negative effect for the following reasons:

1. The variance allows the proposed front porch to line up with its neighbors.
2. The variance allows the setback from the north property line to be in keeping with the setback of the house to the west.

STAFF RECOMMENDED MOTION

COA #2010-COA-243 (LS):

To approve a Certificate of Authorization to construct a new single-family residence with an attached 2-car garage and for variances all per submitted documentation and subject to the following stipulations:

- 1) **Construction must not commence prior to approval by IHPC staff of final construction drawings. *Approved:* _____ *Date:* _____**

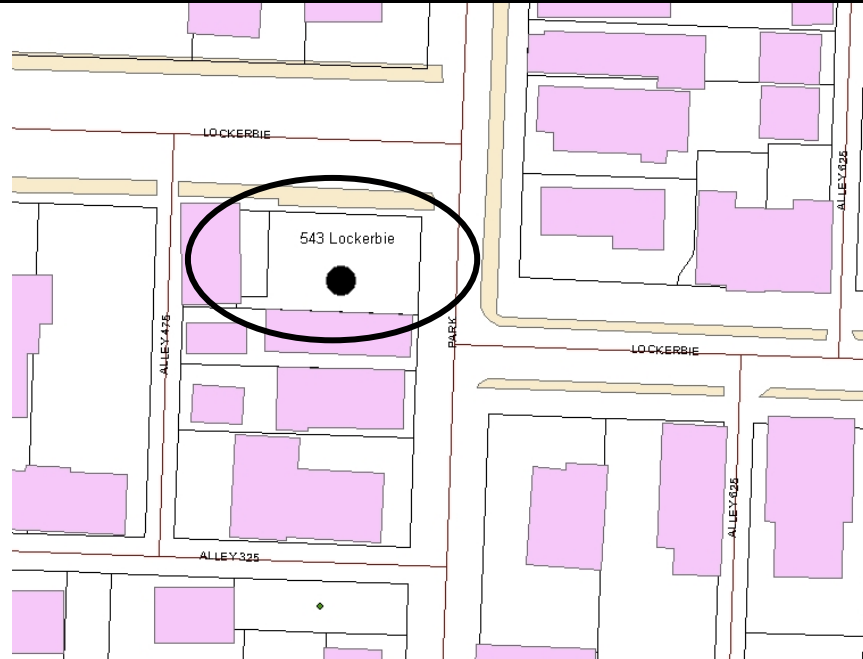
- 2) A pre-construction meeting between IHPC staff, the designer, the owner, and the contractor/construction manager must be held prior to commencement of construction.
Approved: _____ Date: _____
- 3) The construction site must be field-staked with no offsets and reviewed by IHPC staff prior to commencement of construction. *Approved: _____ Date: _____*
- 4) Siding and trim materials must be comprised of wood or cement fiber and must have a smooth texture free of major imperfections. No rough-sawn or embossed wood grain finishes are permitted. Siding reveal shall be an average of the siding reveals of the adjacent house to the south and the adjacent house to the west. Field Verified _____ Date _____
- 5) A durable marker indicating the date of construction must be incorporated into the front foundation of the building and approved by IHPC staff prior to installation.
- 6) All utility wires and cables must be relocated underground. No installation of utilities or meter and mechanical placement shall commence prior to IHPC staff approval.
- 7) Work on exterior details must not commence prior to the approval by IHPC staff of each element. These may include, but are not limited to all finish material: doors, windows, foundations, exterior light fixtures, paint colors, roof shingles, landscape materials, etc.
- 8) Any changes to the approved design must be approved by IHPC staff prior to starting work.

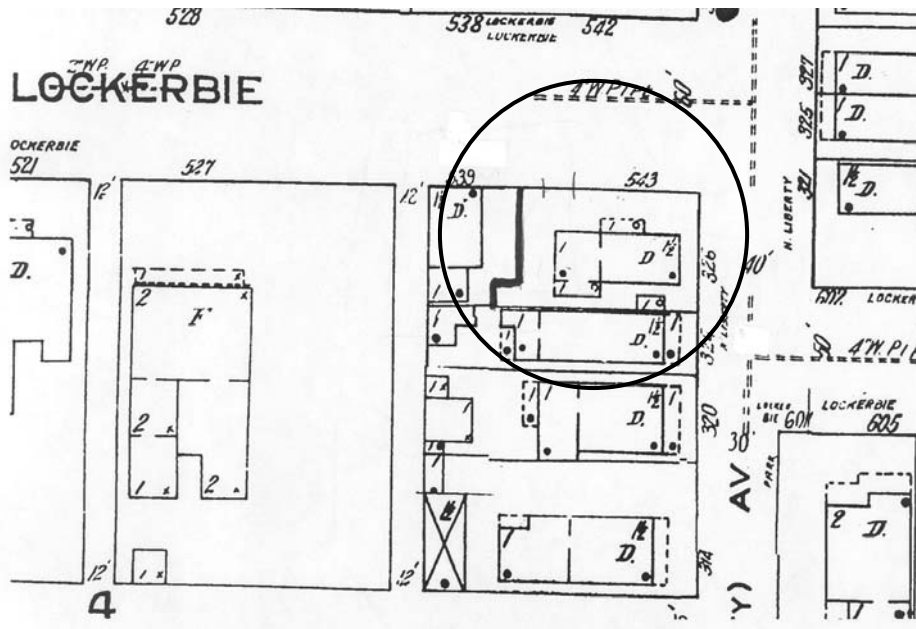
Note: Stipulations 1, 2, and 3 must be completed prior to the issuance of any building permits.

VARIANCE #2010-VHP-009:

For Variances of Development Standards to allow the front setback along Lockerbie Street to be zero (0) feet and along Park Ave. to align with the house at 324 Park Ave., when a minimum of 10 ft. setbacks are required in the HP-1 Zoning District.

Staff Reviewer: Meg Purnsley





1915 Sanborn Map

Petition Number 2010-COA-009(LS)

METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HEARING EXAMINER
METROPOLITAN BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS, Division 1/HPC
OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

PETITION FOR VARIANCE OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The grant will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community because:

The reduced setback closely aligns with the surrounding and adjacent properties. Further, the reduced setbacks do not encroach into the "clear site triangle".

2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner because:

The proposed (reduced) setbacks are in keeping with the adjacent properties and are similar to the housing stock in the surrounding 2-3 block area.

3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property because:

The required setbacks would result in the new structure being located in a fashion that would be incongruous with the adjacent properties and character of the neighborhood. Further, the Lockerbie Neighborhood Plan specifically notes that new structures should be placed with setbacks similar to adjacent properties. Strict enforcement of the zoning would ensure a result directly against the guidance provided by that document.

DECISION

IT IS THEREFORE the decision of this body that this VARIANCE petition is APPROVED.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 20 ____

Adjacent house to south of site



Federal-style house at south end of Park Avenue



House three doors south of subject site (28 feet tall)



Adjacent house to the west





Above: Original House on the lot
Below: Same view of site showing a rendering of the proposed house having similar proportions

