

Request for Variance 1507 Fairfield Drive

The Board of Adjustment

May 11, 2020

C15-2019-0063

Item P-2

Overview

- Request: To reduce rear setback from 10' to 0'
- Homeowner: Stephen Rison
- Purchased home in 1984
- Zoning: SF-3-NP
- Existing structure was rebuilt in 2002 in approximately same footprint as previous structure and built in good-faith based on location and existence of previous structure.
- Greatly reduced in size recently to comply with AE requirements.



Purpose of Variance

- To preserve long-standing former workshop that has provided a unique, “Weird Austin” social interaction space for friends and neighbors for many years.
- To preserve role as being part of reunions, wakes, birthdays, and gatherings for nearly 20 years.
- To prevent waste of existing structure.





Reasonable Use

- Best location for structure given lot constraints.
- Approval would allow for continued use as special space for reflection and neighborhood fellowship.

Hardship

- Hardship is unique to the property
 - Existing structure in approximately same footprint as previous structure of many years, creating long-standing misunderstanding of what could be built.
 - Trees that existed at time of construction, plus lot size, limited options for placement of structure.
 - Deck and pool in way of moving structure and so cannot simply lift and move structure.
 - Type of construction makes relocation prohibitive.
- Hardship not general to the area
 - This type of structure is unique and not common to area.

Area Character

- Will not alter character of area.
- Will help preserve character of neighborhood.
- Contributes to the “Keep Austin Weird” culture
- Structure part of neighborhood since 2002.
- Community support.
 - Neighbor: “We appreciate [Steve’s] artistic spirit and sense of community. We are in favor of the variance.”



Neighborhood Support

- “Steve’s property, like himself, is unique, a bit weird, and part of what makes living in Austin wonderful.”
- “The building is quite quaint and it would be sad if it had to be removed. It is the inspiration for many conversations and enjoyable evenings. I cannot imagine the benefit if it were removed—it is a part of our neighborhood and our history.”
- “I do not consider his property an eyesore or an issue, and in fact know that many people hold it in high regard, and with fond memories. Please do whatever is in your power to allow this wonderful man to continue doing what he does for all of the people in his life, and allow the structure to stand as-is.”



Work to Comply with AE Requirements

- Owner has done substantial demolition and remodeling to move structure out of the PUE and AE clearance area.

