

September 9, 2025

City of Cincinnati
Department of Buildings & Inspections – Zoning Division
805 Central Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Re: Request for Dimensional Variance for New Construction of Single-Family Residence at 3730 Drake Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45209

Dear Zoning Administrator:

This correspondence is in response to the Appeals by Matthew & Rachel Curran & by Kyle Seger to the decision by the Zoning Hearing Examiner dated July 10, 2025.

We would like to offer the following clarifications:

The existing deteriorating house, which we plan to demolish, is 0.9' from the property line. The closest the new house is proposed to be is 3'-1" to the property line.

We are complying with the zoning ordinance in every respect except for the side yard setbacks. The house, as designed, complies with the front yard setback, the rear yard setback, and the height regulations.

The proposed house will be further from the property line than the current house, so this will let more light onto the neighboring property. Several of the new houses in the area have 3'-0" side yards.

There is no zoning ordinance limiting the presence of the front facing garage door. We are aware that garage doors can sometimes be less pedestrian friendly, but there are many garage doors available now that have lots of detail & character and are not detrimental to the aesthetic of the front of the house. Most of the new houses in the area have front-facing garage doors.

The width of the driveway is within the allowable driveway width as permitted by the zoning code. There will be space in the front of the house for a planting bed.

We intend on owning (2) vehicles & both vehicles will be parked in the new garage. We will not be increasing demand for on-street parking spaces.

We looked into designing this house with a detached garage in the rear but, because of the narrow lot, it did not leave enough space for the driveway on the side & provide a wide enough interior space.

We, as the architects and the future homeowners, are concerned with how the house is perceived from the street. We, as the architects, want the house to be compatible with the existing neighborhood. The future homeowners, Nicole & Danny Gudorf, want to be nice neighbors and want their house to enhance and compliment the neighborhood.

The front of the house will have brick, as well as a dormer projection and a recessed front porch. These elements will give detail, interest, & bring the front elevation down to a pedestrian scale. The front of the house is based loosely on traditional Tudor-style houses that are common in the Oakley neighborhood and Cincinnati area as a whole.

The “builder” is Danny Gudorf, who has also been a resident & homeowner of another house on Drake Avenue for 8 years. We were the architects for the dormer & modifications to that house about 6 years ago. The Gudorfs have received compliments on the improvements they made to that house & they intend to build the new house with the same attention to detail & design.

The variance for the side yard setbacks, as requested & granted on July 10th, 2025 allows for the wall of the new house to be farther from the property line (3'-1") than the existing deteriorating structure on the lot now (0.9').

The house will be constructed within all building code requirements. The walls that are proposed to be 3'-1" of the side yard property line will be 1-hour fire rated, as required. This complies with building code requirements.

To address the concern about rainwater drainage, all downspouts on the new house are required to be connected to the underground rainwater drainage system at the street. So, the neighbors will not be affected by any increase in rainwater from the new residence, in any regard, including to their yards or basements.

The future homeowner/builder will follow all rules regarding construction work times & cleaning of the site, as required by the City of Cincinnati. The street sidewalk & driveway curb cut will be approved by the City of Cincinnati, as well.

The required construction & inspection requirements regarding connection to the water & sanitary lines will also be followed.

According to the zoning code, the house could be twice as long as what we have designed & would not require any zoning variance. The homeowners do not want a house of this length, but it would be allowable under the current zoning ordinance. There is no maximum lot coverage rule; the standard setbacks are the only limit to house size. If the house were to comply with the front, rear, & side yard setbacks, it could actually be 122'-11 ½" long (which could be a 2,398 sqft footprint) and would not require any zoning variance. The proposed house is 25'-1" wide x 61'-8" long. (1,547 sqft footprint). The back porch, which is open space with just with a roof, is an additional 14'-0" long.

As stated in the previous zoning hearing, the zoning ordinance for this portion of neighborhood was written more for parcels that are 50'-0" wide. This parcel is 33.33' wide. The Zoning ordinance has calculations that allows the side yard setbacks to be reduced, to compensate for the narrowness of the lot. This regular rule in the zoning ordinance granted another 2'-1" on either side (50" total) of distance into the traditional side yard. We asked for a variance of just another 1'-10" on one side (44" total for both side yard setbacks) and the Zoning Board granted that.

Conclusion:

The size of the house, as designed, has been dictated by us, as the future homeowners, predicting what space we will need for our growing family. We have a baby & are expecting another baby. We want to stay in the neighborhood but need more space. We would also like to have backyard play space for our children & dog.

The proposed house design complies with the Zoning Ordinance in all respects except the side yard setbacks. The existing house, which will be removed, is violating the Zoning Ordinance to a greater extreme than our request. The house, as designed is a reasonable use of space on the lot, is respectful of the neighbors, and provides the future homeowners with the space needed for their growing family.

Sincerely,

Daniel & Nicole Gudorf, homeowners of 3730 Drake Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45209

Julie Phalen, Grove Architects

List of New Construction homes in Oakley and Hyde Park with similar attached front-facing garage design, as our proposed plans for 3730 Drake Ave:

**This list is not fully inclusive and even so, you can see how common this home design is. With urban lots that are narrow and deep, the front facing attached garage is extremely common and practical.

Oakley (45209):

- 3808 Drake Ave (new build in 2018 with attached front facing garage)
- 3706 Hyde Park Ave (new build with narrow lot and front facing garage)
- 3925 Paxton Ave (also a very narrow lot with front facing garage)
- 3921 Paxton Ave (also a very narrow lot with front facing garage)
- 3309 Bach Ave. (also a very narrow lot with front facing garage)
- 3217 Bach Ave (also a very narrow lot with front facing garage)
- 3211 Bach Ave (also a very narrow lot with front facing garage)
- 3723 Drakewood (also a very narrow lot with front facing garage)
- 3725 Drakewood (also a very narrow lot with front facing garage)
- 3755 Drakewood (front facing garage)
- 3757 Drakewood (front facing garage)
- 3766 Drakewood (front facing garage)
- 3725 Maple Park Ave (very narrow lot with front facing garage and slightly downward sloped driveway)
- 33rd Ave Cincinnati OH 45209 (very narrow lot with front facing garage and slightly downward sloped driveway)
- 3410 Brotherton Ave (very narrow lot with front facing garage)
- 3259 Berwyn Place (front facing garage)
- 3873 Mt Vernon Ave. (front facing garage)
- 3831 Mt Vernon Ave. (narrow lot, front facing garage)

Hyde Park (45208): All of these homes listed below also have front facing attached garages

- 3048 Lavina Ave
- 3050 Lavina Ave
- 3046 Lavina Ave
- 3044 Lavina Ave
- 3319 Menlo Ave
- 4930 Bouton St.
- 4940 Bouton St.