

File No.: Z-8336-A

Owner: C. Blake Jackson

Applicant: Chris Smith, Peckham + Smith Architects

Address: 18 Normandy Road

Description: Lot 15R, Normandy Addition [*a replat of Lots 15 & 16, except the South 5 feet the city of Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, being shown on 2008038623, records of Pulaski County, Arkansas.*]

Zoned: R-2

Variance Requested: Variances are requested from Area provisions of Sections 36-156 to allow reduced distance from a residence, and to allow reduced front yard and side street line setbacks, for an accessory structure;  
and,  
From Area provisions of Sections 36-516 to allow reduced front setback distance for a structural wall, and to allow a wall to exceed four feet in height between the front building line and street right-of-way in an R-2 District.

Justification: The applicant's justification is presented in a letter dated August 31, 2020 (attached.)

Present Use: Single-Family Residential

Proposed Use: Single-Family Residential

STAFF REPORT

A. Planning and Development Civil Engineering / Public works Comments:

1. The existing stone wall along Cantrell Road must remain its current height to prevent further impeding of the existing vehicle sight distance.
2. Any additional proposed wall(s) for retention, noise reduction and privacy near the pool and/or in the south portion of the subject lot, may be constructed no less than two feet north of the existing 2.5' high stone wall parallel to Cantrell Road.
3. The typical 50'x50' sight triangle [defined in City Code Section 32-8(a)(1) through (3)] may be reduced to appx. 28'x28' to accommodate the proposed covered patio footprint depicted on the applicant's site plan. The existing mature magnolia tree may remain, but no other structures or plants within the 28'x28' triangle may exceed 30" in height.

4. Obtain a Franchise Agreement from Public works, Civil Engineering Private Development at (501)371-4818 for permitting of private improvements to be located in Normandy Road right-of-way. Staff may authorize landscaping, fencing and other private improvements within the Normandy Road right-of-way, if such improvements will not further obstruct sight distance. Staff will not authorize a Franchise Agreement for parking within the public right-of-way.

The Franchise Agreement application can be found at <https://www.littlerock.gov/cityadministration/city-departments/public-works/>, to be accompanied by a \$75 review fee, payable to City of Little Rock.

B. Landscaping:

In October 2020 the City adopted the “Heights Landscape Design Overlay District,” requiring installation of one tree per 40 linear feet of street frontage within the Heights District Boundary, applicable to a range of uses including residential construction in excess of 600 square feet.

C. Staff Analysis:

Existing Conditions-

The R-2 zoned property located at 18 Normandy Road is occupied by a two-story frame single family residence on a 10,250 s.f. lot, just within the southern limit of the Heights Design Overlay District. Generally surrounded by R-2 single-family zoning, the subject property is situated at the northwest corner of Normandy and Cantrell Roads where high volumes of traffic and traffic noise are persistent. This home site is accessible via the one-way southbound leg of Normandy Road, near its intersection with Cantrell Road. The noticeably steep property sits on a hill, slightly above the two adjacent streets. However, with limited visibility relative to the higher-speed arterial traffic of Cantrell Road, and with relatively little local traffic and no sidewalk on Normandy Road, the subject property is comparatively inconspicuous within its neighborhood context.

A variance allowing the reduction of the north and west setbacks for the principal residence was approved in 2008, at which time the property was re-platted to adjust building setback lines as they exist today. No expansion of the principal residence is proposed with this application, and the current variance request does not affect the 2008 adjusted building lines and re-plat.

Proposed Conditions-

At the south end of the property near Cantrell Road, a covered patio and pool (accessory structures) are proposed. Because the proposed pool is less than 6’ from the existing residence, a variance is required to allow the improvement to a minimum of 4’. Section 36-156(a)(2)(b) states, “ All single- and two-family residences shall be separated from accessory structures by a distance of not less than six (6) feet.”

Also at the south end, a variance is necessary to allow the covered patio and pool (accessory structures) to be located as close as 5' to the front property line. Section 36-156(a)(2)(c) states, "Accessory buildings or structures in the R-1 through R-4A districts shall not be located closer than sixty (60) feet to the front property line..."

Similarly, near the north end of the property where an open carport (accessory structure) is proposed to shelter three existing parking stalls, a variance is necessary to allow said carport within 15' of the right-of-way line, to a reduced distance of 7'.

Section 36-156(a)(2)(c) states, "Accessory buildings or structures in the R-1 through R-4A districts shall not be located closer than....fifteen (15) feet from a street side line..."

As part of the proposed improvements, the applicant proposes a 6' brick wall to retain soil, enhance privacy and mitigate traffic noise from Cantrell Road. To allow a wall to exceed 4' in height in the front (south) yard, a variance must be granted. Section 36-516(e)(1)(a) states, "Between a required building setback line and a street right-of-way, the maximum height shall be four (4) feet."

Additionally, the wall will require a variance to allow its placement within 25' of the front (south) property line. Section 36-516(e)(1)(c) states, "A structural wall as defined in this chapter shall conform to the [25' front] building setback required by the zoning district."

The applicant's proposal includes improvements to the existing driveway, which will remain a "circle" drive yet will enhance circulation to and from the street, improve maneuverability on site, reduce the steepness of the driveway and introduce landscaping upgrades.

#### Conclusions-

As of this writing, two neighboring owners have inquired about the subject application and have indicated their satisfaction with details shared by staff.

As stipulated by City staff after multiple visits to the site, the 6' wall may be no closer than 2' north of the existing stone retaining wall running parallel to Cantrell Road. Additional project stipulations pertaining to sight distance are included in the body of this report, which the applicant has agreed to and addressed via revised plans.

The subject site is relatively unique as it relates to a high traffic roadway (Highway 10/Cantrell Road) and to its neighborhood context, where visibility and direct access are limited. Steep grades, and the tightly confined nature of the existing residence relative to internal property boundaries, are also unusual. Proposed improvements will enhance the quality of the residential site in a variety of ways, yet create no known imposition to outlying properties. Existing sight distance factors identified by Public Works may be significantly improved by the proposed plans. For these reasons and for others stated above, staff finds the subject variance requests to be reasonable and worthy of support.

D. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the variances requested above, subject to compliance with the comments and conditions found in paragraphs A, B and C of the Staff Report, with the following condition:

Install trees, if deemed applicable at the time of building permitting, in accordance with Heights Landscape Design Overlay District requirements.