

STANDARD VARIANCE APPLICATION

City of Cleveland Heights

There are some instances in which a Cleveland Heights property owner, due to unusual conditions on his or her property, may request a variance from strict adherence to the standards of the Zoning Code. Variances are reviewed and acted upon by the **Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)**. To obtain a variance, an applicant must demonstrate, to the BZA's satisfaction, that literal enforcement of the Zoning Code result in a "practical difficulty" for the applicant. The factors to be considered in determining whether a practical difficulty exists are listed on page 4. It is not necessary for the Board to find that all the listed factors apply but **applicant should discuss as many factors as possible**.

BZA meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month, with some adjustments for holidays, at 7:00 p.m., in City Council Chambers, on the second floor of City Hall. **Applications are due on the second Wednesday of the preceding month** (see page 2 for this year's dates).

Contacting the Planning Department

Prospective applicants are strongly advised to consult with Planning Department staff before submitting an application. Staff members will explain the process and make applicants aware of the regulations that apply to their projects.

The department's main phone number is 216-291-4878; its e-mail address is planning@clvhts.com. Application forms can be downloaded from the City's website, www.clevelandheights.com.

Application Process

The following materials should be included with all applications:

- (1) the completed application form (14 copies);**
- (2) a written statement of practical difficulty (14 copies, see page 3);**
- (3) scale drawings in an 8-1/2-by-11 or 11-by-17 format, or, if necessary to maintain legibility, a larger format (14 copies);**
- (4) proof of control of the property by ownership, option, or lease (1 copy); and**
- (5) application fee: \$80.00 for single, two-and three-family residential; all others \$150.00 (checks should be made payable to the City of Cleveland Heights).**

The application may be dropped off at the Planning Department on the main floor of City Hall or mailed to City of Cleveland Heights, Dept. of Planning, 40 Severance Circle, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118.

Public Hearing and Board of Zoning Appeals Review

At the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting, City staff will make a presentation summarizing the requested variance and applicable zoning regulations. City staff may also present neighborhood and historical context. The applicant then will have the burden to demonstrate to BZA that the literal enforcement of the Zoning Code will result in practical difficulties. The factors that BZA may consider are provided on page 3 and 4. Applicants should demonstrate as many factors as possible by discussing facts that relate to those factors. Staff can provide samples, as needed.

Neighbors, who will be notified in advance of the hearing by mail, and other interested parties will have the opportunity to participate during the public-hearing portion of the BZA meeting. BZA may grant or deny the variance, or it may postpone making a decision to consider or seek additional information. It is BZA's responsibility to make decisions based on the preponderance of the evidence presented within the framework of factors established by the Zoning Code.

Other approvals

The granting of a variance does not imply approval of specific plans by the Building Dept., Architectural Board of Review, or other City entities. Questions about building permits and regulations may be addressed to the Building Dept. at 216-291-4900.

BZA MEETING DATES FOR THE YEAR 2018

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated, and are held in City Council Chambers on the 2nd floor of Cleveland Heights City Hall. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the previous month.

The applicant or the applicant's representative must be present at the meeting. Variances granted by BZA are not effective until approved by City Council.

Application deadline

Meeting date

January 10

February 21

February 14

March 21

March 14

April 18

April 11

May 16

May 09

June 20

June 13

July 18

July 11

August 15

August 08

September 26*

September 12

October 17

October 10

November 28*

November 14

December 19

*Holiday related date change

STANDARD VARIANCE APPLICATION FORM

Please type or print clearly.

Contact information: Calendar number _____
Date submitted _____

Applicant(s) _____

Address of subject property _____

Phone _____ e-mail address _____

fax _____

Mailing address of applicant(s) _____

Applicant's representative, if any _____

Phone _____ e-mail address _____

fax _____

Address of representative _____

Property owner, if different from applicant _____

Phone _____ e-mail address _____

fax _____

Address of property owner _____

Brief summary of variance request (please complete the Statement of Practical Difficulty):

Supporting documentation (check all that apply):

- _____ Completed Application (14 copies)
- _____ Detailed statement of practical difficulty (14 copies)
- _____ Proof of ownership, option, or lease agreement (1 copy)
- _____ Scale drawings (site plan; & floor plan if applicable) in an 8-1/2-by-11 or 11-by-17 format, or, if necessary to maintain legibility, a larger format (14 copies);
- _____ Elevations, if applicable (14 copies)
- _____ Application fee check no. _____



**CLEVELAND
HEIGHTS**

I swear or affirm that the information in this application is true and correct to the best of my abilities.

Applicant's signature _____ Date _____

STATEMENT OF PRACTICAL DIFFICULTY

To obtain a variance, an applicant must show by a preponderance of the evidence, to the satisfaction of the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), that strictly adhering to the Zoning Code's standards would result in a "practical difficulty" for the applicant. To this end, a written statement of practical difficulty must accompany an application for a standard variance. Please complete this Statement of Practical Difficulty, **by addressing all of the factors listed below that are relevant to your situation.** Additional documents may be submitted as further proof.

In deciding whether to grant a variance, BZA will consider the following factors in determining whether a practical difficulty exists:

- A. Explain special conditions or circumstances that exist which are peculiar to the land or structure involved and which are not applicable generally to other lands or structures in the same Zoning District. (examples of this are: exceptional irregularity, narrowness, shallowness or steepness of the lot, or adjacency to nonconforming and inharmonious uses, structures or conditions):

- B. Explain how the property in question would not yield a reasonable return or there could not be any beneficial use of the property without the variance.

- C. Explain whether the variance is insubstantial:

Explain whether the variance is the minimum necessary to make possible the reasonable use of the land:

- D. Explain whether the essential character of the neighborhood would be substantially altered or adjoining properties would suffer a substantial detriment as a result of the variance.

E. Explain whether the variance would adversely affect the delivery of governmental service (e.g., water, sewer, garbage).

F. Did the applicant purchase the property without knowledge of the zoning restriction?

G. Explain whether the special conditions or circumstances (listed in response to question A above) were a result of actions of the owner.

H. Demonstrate whether the applicant's predicament feasibly can be resolved through a method other than a variance (e.g., a zone-conforming but unworkable example).

I. Explain whether the spirit and intent behind the zoning requirement would be observed and/or substantial justice done by granting the variance.

J. Explain whether the granting of the variance requested will or will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this regulation to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district.

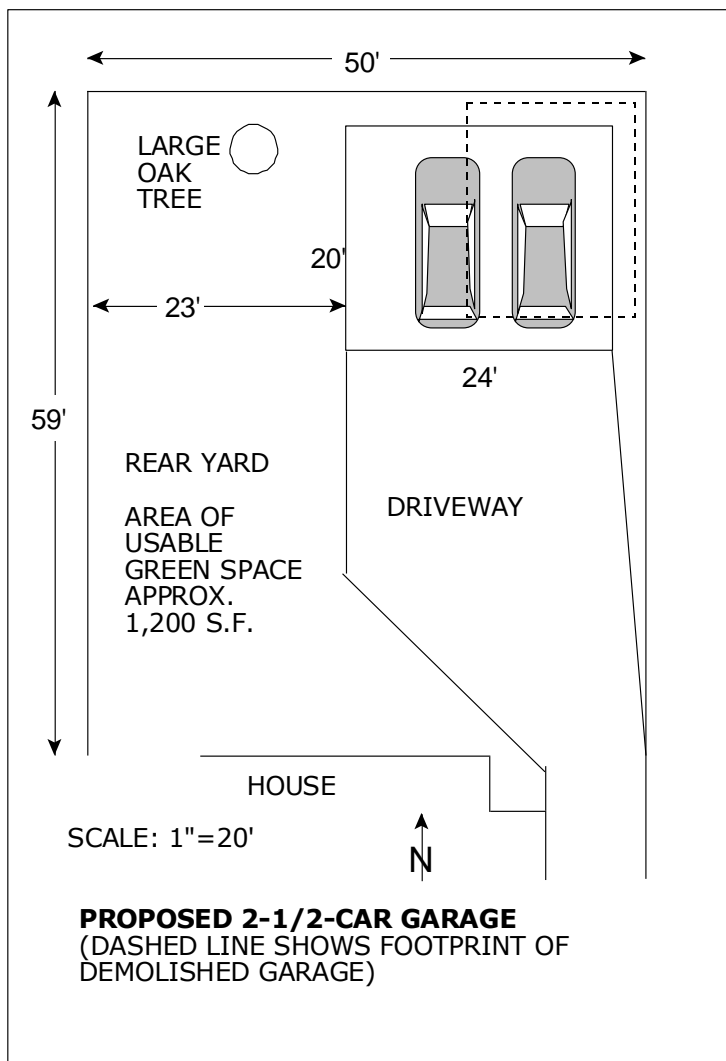
If you have questions, please contact the Planning Department at 216-291-4878 or planning@clvhts.com.

The factors listed above can be found in Subsection 1115.07(e)(1) of the Cleveland Heights

SAMPLE SITE PLANS

The site plans shown on this page and the next are examples of the kinds that may be needed with your application for a variance from the standards of the Cleveland Heights Zoning Code. Before submitting your application, it is recommended that you discuss your situation with staff to determine exactly what kinds of drawings will be needed.

Drawings should be produced at appropriate scales in 8-1/2-by-11 or 11-by-17 formats (larger if necessary to maintain legibility). The samples below are drawn to scale, but the scale may be slightly off if you downloaded this application package from the Internet.



Sample Site Plan #1

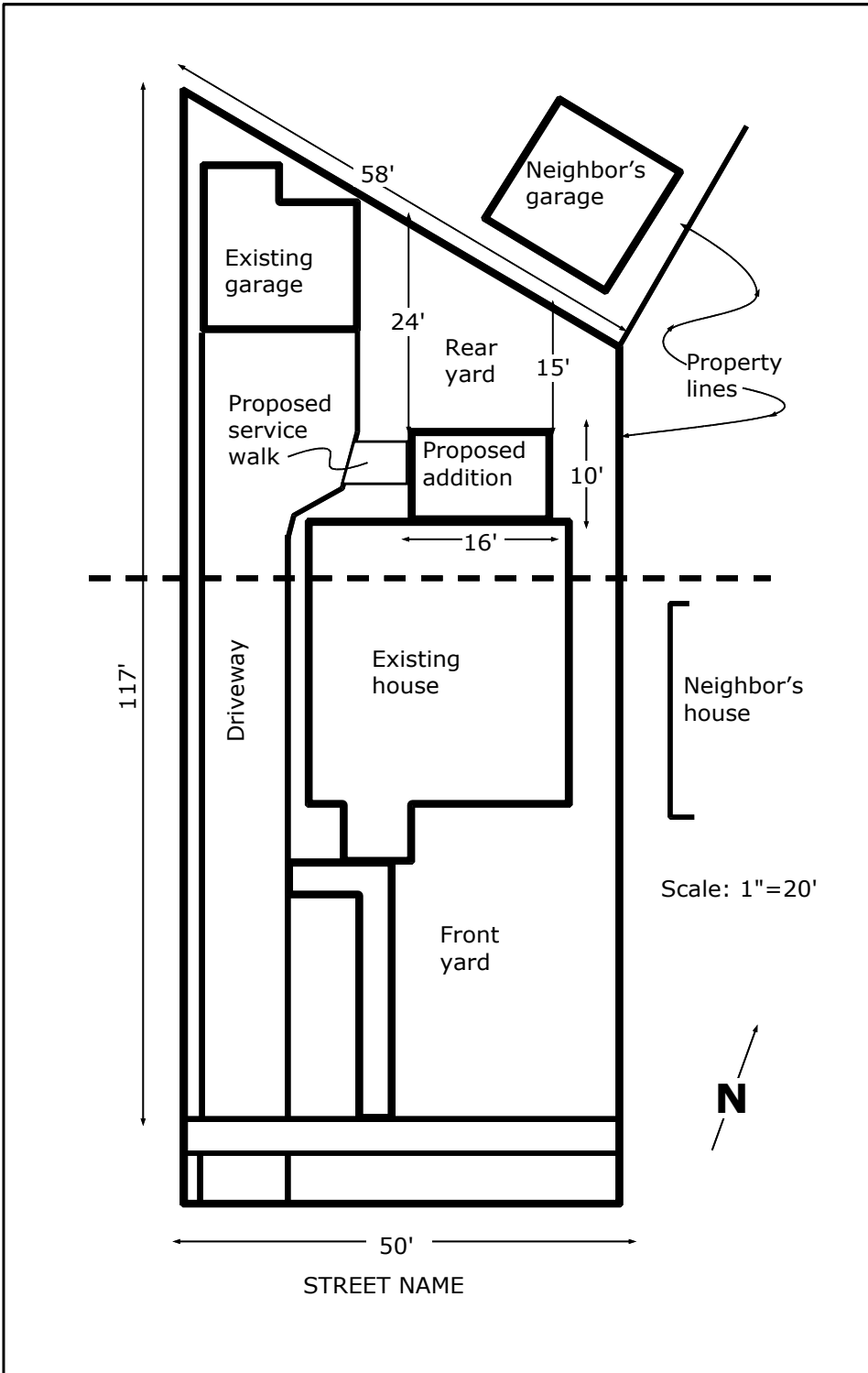
The site plan example on this page depicts a proposal for a 2-1/2-car garage in the rear yard of a 2-family house. Since 2-family houses are generally required to have 4-car garages, a property owner would be required to seek a variance before replacing the property's original garage with something smaller than a 4-car garage.

This drawing shows what the property owner is proposing in a clear, concise manner. It also shows the two reasons why the property owner is seeking the variance: a four-car garage would require removal of a large oak tree and reduce the amount of usable green space in the rear yard to an unacceptably low level.

A problem with this drawing is the lack of information regarding the distance of the proposed garage from the rear and side property lines. If the drawing is true to its 1":20' scale, though, as it is required to be, the distances can be measured off the drawing.

The scale drawings of cars parked in the garage are helpful, but not necessary.

Sample Site Plan #2



On the imaginary property depicted at left, the property owner is seeking a variance from the required 30-foot rear-yard setback requirement. The variance is needed to build a proposed addition.

Since the variance request involves the rear yard, the information shown above the dotted line is essential. The information below the line, while not essential, is helpful and should be provided if possible.

It is also beneficial to show the location of nearby buildings on other properties. This helps to show whether granting the variance would have a negative impact on those properties.

Drawings should be clear, concise, and drawn to scale. They should also illustrate the property owner's reasons for seeking a variance.

In this case, the odd shape of the lot, the lot's relatively small size, and the unusually deep front setback are all conditions that could lead a property owner to request a variance, and these conditions are all illustrated in the drawing.

Proposed landscaping improvements should also be shown.