

City Planning Department



Memo

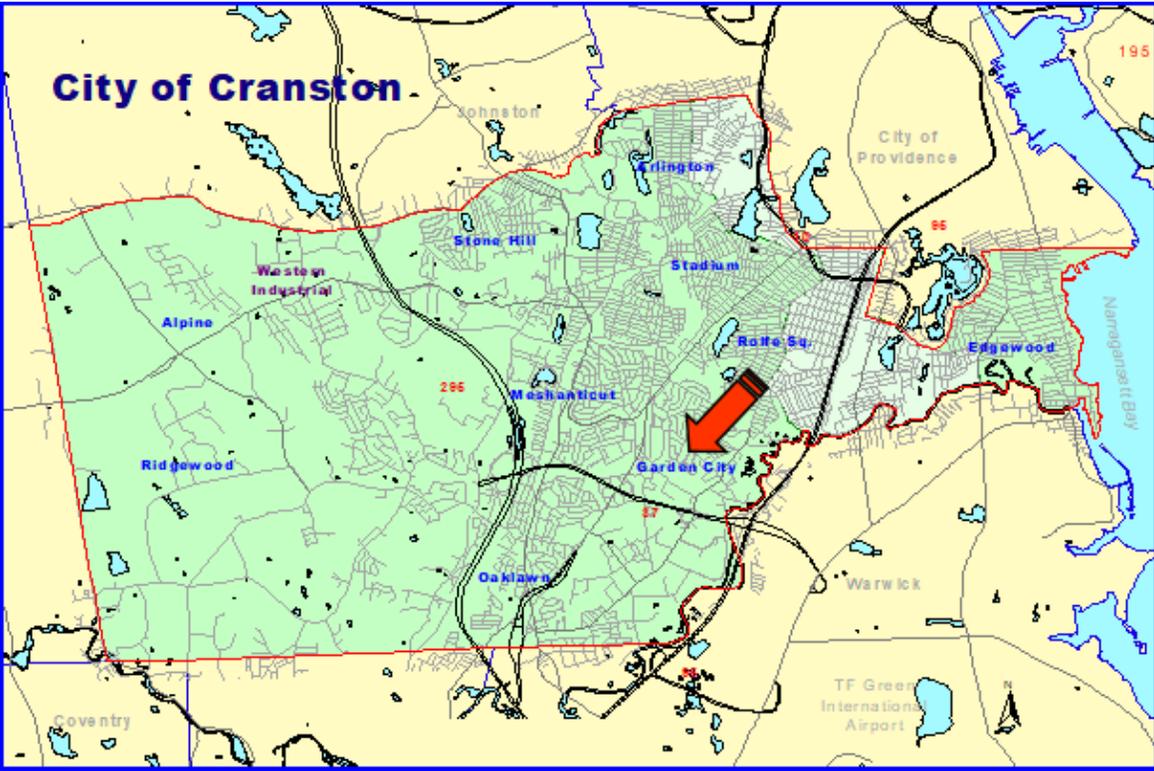
To: Cranston City Plan Commission
From: Joshua Berry, AICP - Senior Planner / Administrative Officer
Date: July 30, 2021
Re: **Dimensional Variance @ 269 Poplar Drive**

Owner/App: Jeffrey A. and Alisha Crins
Location: 269 Poplar Drive, AP 10, Lot 1303
Zone: A-8 (Single-family dwellings on lots of minimum areas of 8,000 ft²)
FLU: Single Family Residential 7.26 to 3.64 units/acre

DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE REQUEST:

1. To allow the construction of an addition to an existing single-family residence that would encroach into a front yard setback on a side corner lot. [17.20.120 – Schedule of Intensity]

LOCATION MAP



ZONING MAP



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FUTURE LAND USE MAP



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AERIAL VIEW



3-D AERIAL VIEW (facing south)



Poplar Dr Facing East



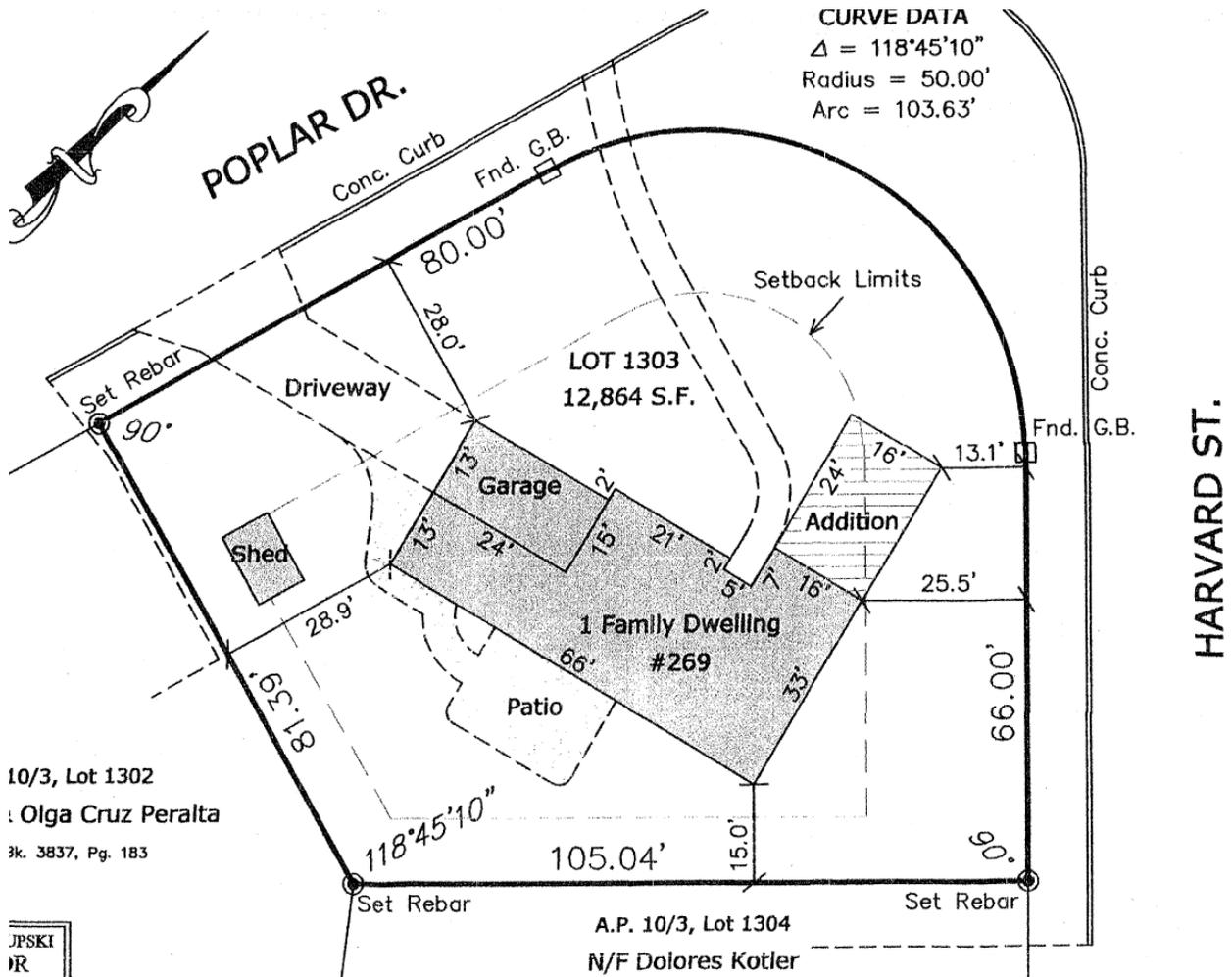
Harvard St Facing South



Harvard St Facing West



SITE PLAN



FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The owner/applicant proposes a 24' x 16' master bedroom/closet/master bath addition to their 1,588 ft² single-family residence. The home currently has 3 bedrooms and one bathroom.
2. The subject site is a conforming 12,864 ft² corner lot in an A-8 zone within the Garden City neighborhood. The frontage on Poplar Drive is the principal frontage due to the vehicle access and orientation of the home. The addition would encroach 11.9' into the required 25' front setback on Harvard Street.
3. Due to the shape of the lot, the two front yard setbacks for the corner lot and the existing footprint of the primary dwelling, alternative locations for expansion of the home are considerably limited. All of the residences in the surrounding area are one-story, so although building upwards may comply with the zoning code, it would not conform to the character of the area.

4. There is existing vegetation that would serve as a partial visual buffer to location where the addition is proposed from Harvard Street.
5. The expansion of the single family use is consistent with the single-family land use designation in the Future Land Use Map.
6. The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element; Principle 4 reads: "*Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life. Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods*" (p. 34). Relief would not detract from the visual resources that define the neighborhood.

PLANNING ANALYSIS

Side corner lots often present setback issues in Cranston, largely because the Code is interpreted as to require a front yard setback from both/any frontage on a public street. According to the narrative provided by the applicant, the front setback on Harvard Street consumes 12% of their land area. The subject lot is 12,864 ft² which constitutes 159% of the minimum lot area in A-8 zoning. despite this fact, there is limited space for the owner/applicant to expand their home within the buildable area of the lot. The applicant could potentially build a second story addition, but staff finds that this would be out of character with the Garden City neighborhood which is comprised of single-story and split-level ranch-style houses.

Staff finds the proposal to be *generally consistent* with the Comprehensive Plan, but this conclusion is a subjective determination based on one's assessment of the visual resources of the Garden City neighborhood. The expansion of the single family use is consistent with the single-family land use designation in the Future Land Use Map. The Comprehensive Plan does not get into very much detail specific to variance requests of this nature, but Land Use Element Principle 4 reads: "*Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life. Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods*" (p. 34). Based on aerial surveillance, staff finds no other encroachments into the front setback are not found in this neighborhood, even on corner side lots. However, in this particular situation, the encroachment into the front setback on Harvard Street may have little aesthetic impacts. Poplar Drive clearly acts as the primary front and Harvard Street acts as a corner side. The existing vegetation on the subject lot largely obstruct the view to those traveling northwest on Harvard Street, and even those traveling southeast would only have clear line of sight to the addition for a brief time at the closest point adjacent to the addition.

For these reasons, without the benefit of public testimony, staff feels that relief would not be detrimental to the visual resources of the neighborhood and therefore finds the request generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation

Due to the findings that the application is generally consistent with the Cranston Comprehensive Plan and that relief would not impair the visual character of the area, staff recommends the Plan Commission forward a **positive recommendation** on the application to the Zoning Board of Review.