

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division****Variance Request  
BZZ-3899**

**Applicant:** Kathy Wetzel-Mastel on behalf of the City of Minneapolis

**Address of Property:** 2525 James Avenue North

**Contact Person and Phone:** Kathy Wetzel-Mastel, (612) 721-7556

**Planning Staff and Phone:** Brian Schaffer, (612) 673-2670

**Date Application Deemed Complete:** December 11, 2007

**Publication of Staff Report:** January 4, 2008

**Public Hearing:** January 10, 2008

**Appeal Period Expiration:** January 22, 2007

**End of 60 Day Decision Period:** February 9, 2007

**Ward: 5**      **Neighborhood Organization:** Jordan Area Community Council

**Existing Zoning:** R1A Single Family District

**Proposed Use:** An open front porch on a new single family dwelling

**Proposed Variance:** A variance to reduce the established front yard setback from 32.8 feet to 26.2 feet to allow for an open front porch on a new single family dwelling located at 2525 James Avenue North.

**Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance:** 525.520 (1)

**Background:** The size of the subject site is 48 feet by 127 feet (6,100 square feet). The property is currently vacant and is owned by the Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) Department of the City of Minneapolis. CPED is working with Powderhorn Residents Group, Inc. (PRG) to develop and a new single family dwelling on the property.

The applicant is proposing to construct a single family dwelling on the site. The proposed dwelling will be located 32.8 feet from the front property line and will have an open front porch that projects six feet in front of the dwelling. The porch will be 26.2 from the front property line and will be 16 feet wide. The home is designed with an entry that is recessed 6 feet from the front building wall. Due to the recessed entry of the home the front porch has a depth of 12 feet for half its width. The Zoning

Ordinance states that when a front porch is located in the front yard it shall not have a depth of greater than 8 feet. The proposed open front porch has depth of 12 feet and therefore requires a variance.

**Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:**

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed by the official controls and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

The applicant has requested a variance to reduce the established front yard setback from 32.8 feet to 26.2 feet to allow for a 12 foot deep open front porch. The proposed porch is 16 feet wide and is 6 feet deep for half of the width and 12 feet wide for the other half. The recessed entry of the proposed dwelling increases the depth of the porch to 12 feet. The recessed entry is a common design feature of the housing stock found in the neighborhood. Staff believes it is a reasonable use of the property to have a front porch that is in keeping with the design and layout of the existing housing stock in the neighborhood.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

The conditions upon which the variance is requested is unique to the parcel. The applicant is proposing a home design that is in keeping with the surrounding housing stock. The applicant did not design the existing surrounding dwelling, and is attempting to make the proposed infill house compatible with its neighborhood.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

The proposed setback variance will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood. The front building wall will be no closer to the front property line of the adjacent dwellings, or will the porch project closer to the front property line than those of the adjacent dwellings. The proposed recessed entry design is in keeping with the essential character of the neighborhood and with the spirit and intent of the ordinance.

The proposed setback variance will have a positive impact on the character of the locality. The variance allows for the proposed home to meet the existing setbacks of the adjacent dwellings, which strengthens the street presence of the block. The proposed open porch will allow for some activity in front the of the dwelling and follow Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals by increasing the eyes on the street.

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- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

Granting the variance would not likely increase congestion in the area or increase the danger of fire safety, nor would the terrace variance be detrimental to welfare or public safety.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the Board of Adjustment adopt the findings above and approve a variance to reduce the established front yard setback from 32.8 feet to 26.2 feet to allow for an open front porch on a new single family dwelling located at 2525 James Avenue North in the R1A Single Family District with the following condition:

1. CPED-Planning review and approve final site plan, floor plans, and elevations.