



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

BOARD OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

WAYNE K. CURRY COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, LARGO, MARYLAND 20774  
TELEPHONE (301) 952-3220

## *NOTICE OF FINAL DECISION*

## *OF BOARD OF APPEALS*

RE: Case No. V-47-25 Sylvia Syphax

Enclosed herewith is a copy of the Board Order setting forth the action taken by the Board of Appeals in your case on the following date: October 22, 2025.

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that on December 19, 2025, the above notice and attached Order of the Board were mailed, postage prepaid, to all persons of record.

Ellis Watson

Ellis Watson  
Administrator

cc: Petitioner  
Adjoining Property Owners  
M-NCPPC, Permit Review Section  
Town of Fairmount Heights  
DPIE/Building Code Official, Permitting

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF APPEALS FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**  
*Sitting as the Board of Zoning Appeals*

Petitioner: Sylvia Syphax

Appeal No.: V-47-25

Subject Property: Lots 6 and 7, Block N, Fairmount Heights Subdivision, being 611 60<sup>th</sup> Place, Fairmount Heights, Prince George's County, Maryland

Witnesses: Thomas Ahmann, Architect

Andrea Syphax, Daughter

Heard: October 22, 2025 and Decided: October 22, 2025

Board Members Present and Voting: Omar Boulware, Chair  
Phillippa Johnston, Vice Chair  
Dwayne A. Stanton, Member

**RESOLUTION**

This appeal is brought before the Board of Appeals, sitting as the Board of Zoning Appeals for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Prince George's County, Maryland (the "Board"), requesting a variance from the strict application of the provisions of Subtitle 27 of the Prince George's County Code (the "Zoning Ordinance").

In this appeal, a proceeding pursuant to Section 27-3613 of the Zoning Ordinance, Petitioners request that the Board approve a variance from Section 27-4202(e)(2) prescribes that a lot shall have a minimum net lot area of 6,500 square feet, a minimum width of 65 feet measured along the front building line, a minimum front yard depth of 25 feet, a minimum side yard width of 8 feet, and a minimum rear yard depth of 20 feet. Variances of 750 square feet net lot area, 15 feet lot width, 10.25 feet front yard depth, and 4.5 feet side yard width are requested.

**Evidence Presented**

The following testimony and record evidence were considered by the Board:

1. The property was subdivided in 1900, before the adoption of the *Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations* (Zoning Ordinance), contains 5,750 square feet, is zoned RSF-65 (Residential, Single-Family-65), and is improved with a 2-story dwelling. Exhs 2, 5, 9, 10, and 12.

3. The Petitioner proposes to validate existing conditions (net lot area, lot width, front yard depth, side yard width) and obtain a building permit for the construction of a proposed 13' x 13' screened porch with second-floor addition, a proposed 13' x 14.9' second-floor addition, and a proposed 5.8' x 12' two-story addition. Variances of 750 square feet net lot area, 15 feet lot width, 10.25 feet front yard depth, and 4.5 feet side yard width are requested. Exhs. 1, 2, 3 (A) thru (D), 4, 6 (A) thru (N), and 12.

4. Chair Boulware asked the Petitioner, Ms. Syphax, to explain her need for a variance.

5. In response, Ms. Syphax testified that she purchased the property from her now deceased neighbor, and her brother is moving from Florida. Additionally, she would like to enhance the subject property for her brother's benefit and comfort.

6. Also, Ms. Syphax testified that she has spoken to her neighbors and has enthusiastically received their approval. Ms. Syphax testified that she also spoke to the Town of Fairmount Heights and gained its approval as well. Exh. 16.

7. Further, Ms. Syphax testified that the house is small, and the front porch has rails that are too short and are painted with lead-based paint. Additionally, Ms. Syphax testified that she needs access to the basement from the outside as she plans to install a furnace.

8. Chair Boulware stated that he noticed the subject property has severe sloping. In response, the Architect, Mr. Ahmann, testified that the house was built in the 1930s before the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance, and the historical placement of the house on the subject property makes seeking variances necessary for any improvements. Exhs. 4, 6 (A) thru (N), and 11 (A) thru (F).

9. Vice Chair Johnston agreed with Chair Boulware that the subject property is narrow and asked about the requested additions. Mr. Ahmann testified, explaining the additions to the Board. Exhs. 1, 2, 3 (A) thru (D), and 4.

10. Chair Boulware stated that the subject property met the criteria for granting a variance and called for a motion.

11. Vice Chair Johnston made the Motion to Approve V-47-25, and the motion was seconded by Board Member Stanton. Motion carried by a 3-0 vote.

#### Applicable Code Section and Authority

The Board is authorized to grant the requested variances if it finds that the following provisions of Section 27-3613(d) of the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance are satisfied:

##### (d) General Variance Decision Standards

A variance may only be granted when the review board or official, as appropriate, finds that:

- (1) A specific parcel of land is physically unique and unusual in a manner different from the nature of surrounding properties with respect to exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape, exceptional topographic conditions, or other extraordinary conditions peculiar to the specific parcel (such as historical significance or environmentally sensitive features);
- (2) The particular uniqueness and peculiarity of the specific property causes a zoning provision to impact disproportionately upon that property, such that strict application of the provision will result in peculiar and unusual practical difficulties to the owner of the property.
- (3) Such variance is the minimum reasonably necessary to overcome the exceptional physical conditions.
- (4) Such variance can be granted without substantial impairment to the intent, purpose and integrity of the General Plan or any Functional Master Plan, Area Master Plan, or Sector Plan affecting the subject property.
- (5) Such variance will not substantially impair the use and enjoyment of adjacent properties; and
- (6) A variance may not be granted if the practical difficulty is self-inflicted by the owner of the property.

#### Findings of the Board

After hearing all the testimony and reviewing the evidence of record, the Board finds that the requested variance complies with the applicable standards set forth in Section 27-3613(d), more specifically:

Constructed in the 1930s before the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance, the subject property is physically unique and unusual in a manner different from the nature of surrounding properties due to its narrowness and severe sloping. *See, North v. Saint Mary's County*, 99 Md. App. 502, 638 A.2d 1175 (1994).

The particular uniqueness and peculiarity of the specific property, if applied, would render the Petitioner unable to construct any improvements to the subject property. Additionally, the Board concluded that these variances are minimally necessary to overcome the exceptional physical conditions found on the property, as the historical placement of the house on the subject property necessitates variances for any modifications. The Board reviewed the record and found that granting the relief requested would not substantially impair the intent, purpose, and integrity of the General Plan or Functional Master Plan, Area Master Plan, or Sector Plan affecting the subject property. Moreover, there is no evidence in the record that the variances would substantially impair the use and enjoyment of the property; to the contrary, evidence was submitted through the approval letter from the Town of Fairmount Heights. Lastly, the Board found that the practical difficulty was not self-inflicted, as the Petitioner had not commenced construction before seeking a permit.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, by a 3-0 vote, that variances of 750 square feet net lot area, 15 feet lot width, 10.25 feet front yard depth, and 4.5 feet side yard width on the property located at 611 60<sup>th</sup> Place, Fairmount Heights, Prince George's County, Maryland, be and are hereby APPROVED. Approval of the variance is contingent upon development in compliance with the approved site plan, Exhibit 2, and approved elevation plans, Exhibit 3 (A) thru (D).

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

By:



Omar Boulware (Dec 18, 2025 01:48:51 EST)

Omar Boulware, Chair

APPROVED FOR LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

By:



Ellis Watson (Dec 18, 2025 11:26:40 EST)

Ellis F. Watson, Esq.

**NOTICE**

Within thirty (30) days from the date of this decision, any person, firm, corporation, or governmental agency who was a party to the Board's proceedings and is aggrieved by its decision may file an appeal to the Circuit Court of Prince George's County.

Further, Section 27-3613(c)(10)(B) of the Prince George's County Code states:

A decision of the Board, permitting the erection of a building or structure, shall not be valid for more than two (2) years, unless a building permit for the erection is obtained within this period and the construction is started and proceeds to completion in accordance with the terms of the decision and the permit.

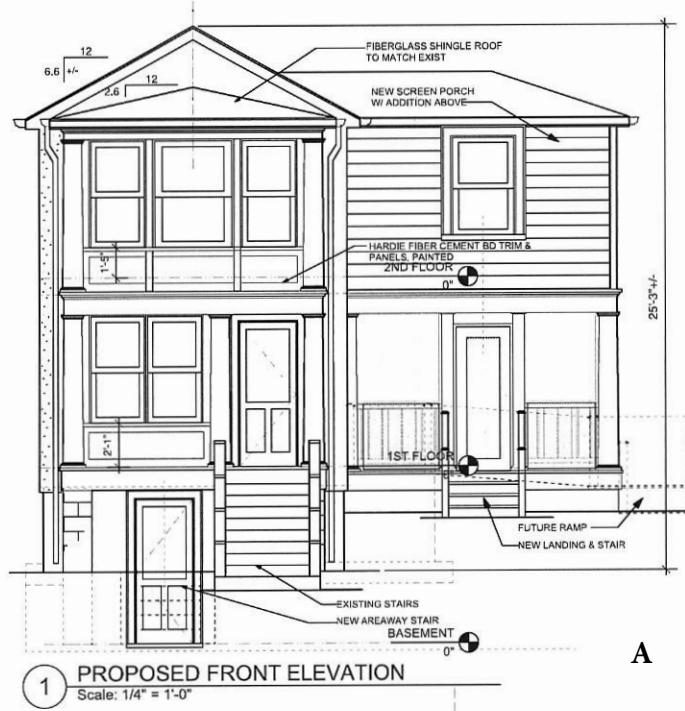


BOARD OF APPEALS

APPROVED OCT 22 2025

Ellis Watson  
ADMINISTRATOR

EXHIBIT  
3(A-D)  
V-47-25



NOTE:  
FLOOR PLAN INTERIOR LAYOUT FROM  
OWNER PROVIDED FLOOR PLANS, TO BE  
VERIFIED. ALL EXISTING CONDITIONS TO  
BE FIELD VERIFIED. INFORM ARCHITECT  
OR ENGINEER IF EXISTING CONDITIONS  
VARY FROM THAT SHOWN OR ASSUMED.

A



B

PROPOSED  
RIGHT ELEVATION  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED  
ELEVATIONS

SYPHAX RESIDENCE  
611 60TH PLACE  
FAIRMOUNT HEIGHTS, MD 20743

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

PRELIMINARY DRAWINGS  
NOT FOR PERMIT OR  
CONSTRUCTION

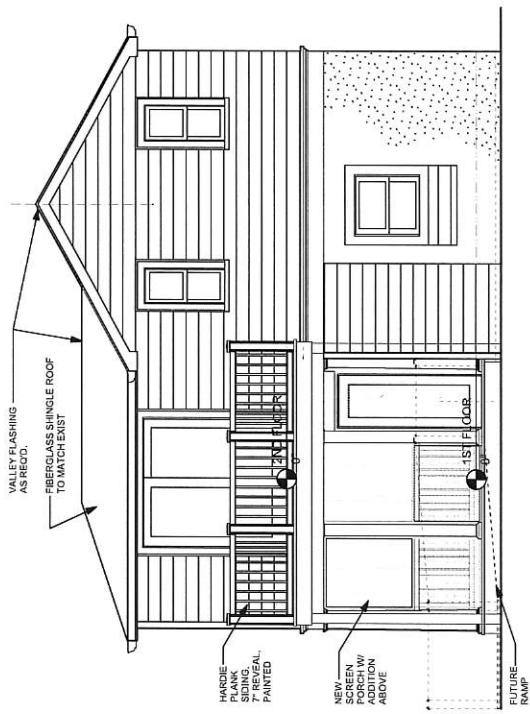
ISSUE DATE  
14 MAY 2025

A-2

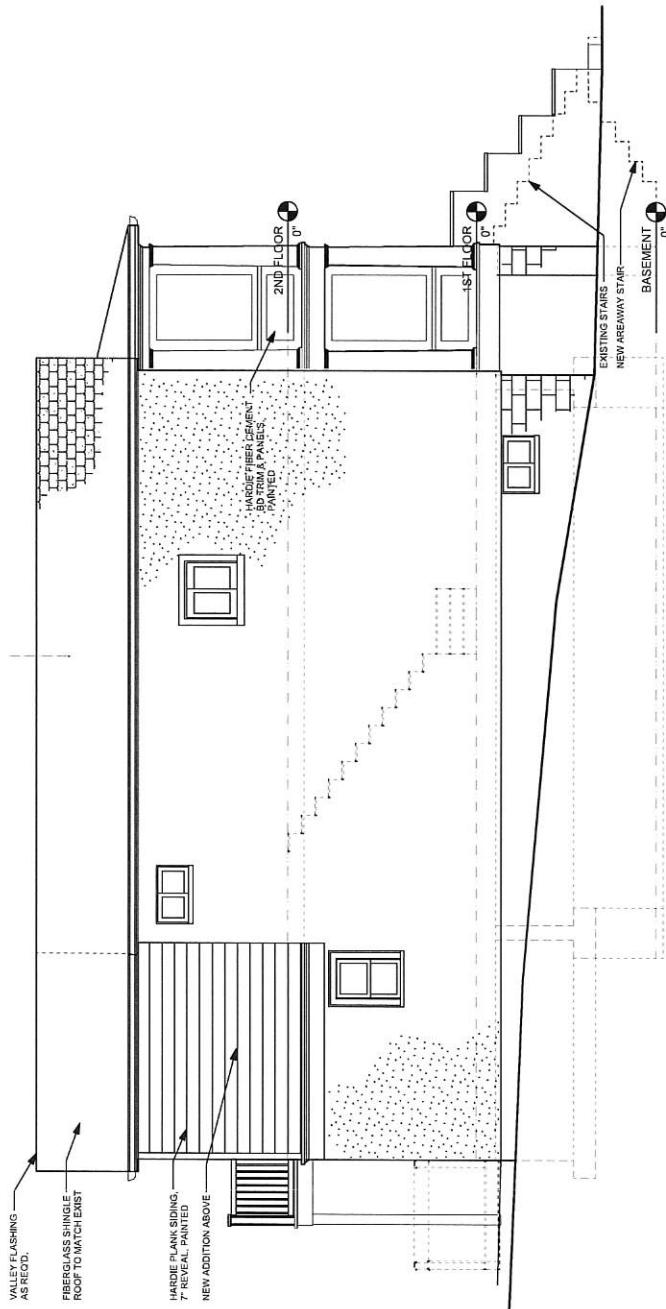
AHMANN LLC  
© 2025

AHMANN LLC  
ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES  
408 REEDWOOD ROAD, UNIVERSITY PARK, MARYLAND 20784  
PHONE: 301-864-1334  
FAX: 301-864-6818

NOTE:  
FLOOR PLAN INTERIOR LAYOUT FROM  
OWNER PROVIDED FLOOR PLANS TO BE  
VERIFIED. ALL EXISTING CONDITIONS TO BE  
FIELD VERIFIED. INFORM ARCHITECT  
OR ENGINEER IF EXISTING CONDITIONS  
VARY FROM THAT SHOWN OR ASSUMED.



1 PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION C  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 PROPOSED LEFT ELEVATION D  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

PRELIMINARY DRAWINGS  
NOT FOR PERMIT OR  
CONSTRUCTION

ISSUE DATE  
14 MAY 2025

A-3

AHMANN LLC  
© 2025