



Zoning Board of Appeals – Village of Lake Orion Property Address: 96 Park Island Rd.,
Lake Orion, MI 48362

This narrative summarizes the proposed improvements to the property and outlines the reasons why the requested dimensional variances are necessary, reasonable, and consistent with the established development pattern of the surrounding neighborhood.

Project Overview

The applicant is requesting approval for residential improvements on a lakefront property with limited lot depth between the public roadway and the shoreline. The existing home and site conditions were established long before the adoption of current zoning standards, resulting in several nonconforming setbacks that are typical of lakefront parcels in this area.

The proposed work does not expand any existing encroachment toward the lake and does not intensify any nonconforming condition. All improvements are designed to remain within the existing development footprint, including the **rebuild of a historic structure on an existing concrete foundation and pad** at the rear of the home.

Due to the shallow lot depth, historic placement of the home, and the RM zoning classification applied to a single-family property, three variances are required: **front setback, side setback, and rear (waterfront) setback.**

Front Setback Context

The lot is unusually shallow, with very limited distance between the roadway and the lake. Nearly all homes in this neighborhood sit close to the street, reflecting a long-established development pattern. Expanding toward the rear would reduce usable lakefront area and negatively impact the primary amenity of the property. As a result, any functional improvement must occur toward the street.

The requested front setback variance allows the home to be improved in a manner consistent with surrounding properties and does not place the structure closer to the roadway than many neighboring homes.

Side Setback Context

Although the property is zoned RM, it is developed and used as a single-family residence, and every surrounding home maintains a side setback of approximately five feet. The RM side setback standard does not reflect the built character of this neighborhood.

The requested side setback variance aligns the property with the established five-foot side yard pattern and ensures consistent treatment with adjacent single-family homes.

Rear (Waterfront) Setback Context

The existing home sits at a **-12'-6" rear setback**, a condition that predates current zoning and is common among lakefront homes in this area. The structure at the rear of the property is a **historic building being rebuilt on its existing concrete foundation and pad**, and **no additional encroachment toward the lake is proposed**.

The requested variance simply acknowledges the long-standing, legally established footprint and allows the homeowner to maintain and improve the structure without altering its relationship to the shoreline.

Neighborhood Character

The surrounding area consists of older lakefront homes built before modern zoning standards. Shallow lots, narrow side yards, and reduced lakefront setbacks are typical and expected. The proposed improvements maintain the scale, placement, and character of the neighborhood and do not introduce any new impacts to adjacent properties.

Conclusion

The requested variances are necessary due to the unique physical characteristics of the lot, the historic placement of the home, and the mismatch between zoning classification and actual land use. The variances:

- Do not create new encroachments
- Do not intensify existing nonconformities
- Maintain the existing concrete pad and footprint
- Align with the established neighborhood pattern
- Allow reasonable residential improvements
- Protect the lakefront and surrounding properties

For these reasons, approval of the requested variances is justified and appropriate.