



PLANNING AND ZONING

Cerro Gordo County Courthouse

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CERRO GORDO COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

VARIANCE STAFF REPORT

Summary of Request

Public Hearing Date: January 27, 2026

Applicant:

Joe Strotman
5212 Springbrook Dr
Ames, IA 50014

Owner:

Joseph Strotman & Jacob Hanson

Property Address: 4616 Wesley Dr, Clear Lake, IA 50428

Brief Legal Description: Lots 118 & 119, Clear Lake Methodist Camp, Clear Lake Township

Zoning: R-3 Single Family Residential District

Background

This property is located at the corner of Stuntz Avenue and Wesley Drive. The dwelling sits on two lots and is addressed from Wesley Drive. Since this is a corner lot, and the shorter of the two sides abutting the streets is on Stuntz Avenue, the front lot line, by definition, is along Stuntz. The applicant would like to construct a 15'x20' roof over a portion of the existing deck on the east side of the dwelling. All construction will be inside the footprint of the existing deck. The deck was reconstructed in 2013, and the Board of Adjustment granted a variance for the deck to be 12' from the rear lot line on August 26, 2013.

Variance Request

1. Request a 12' rear yard setback – 30' is required.

Findings of Fact

1. Joseph Strotman & Jacob Hanson are the owners of the subject property.
2. The property is zoned R-3 Single Family Residential.
3. The proposed roof will be 12' from the rear lot line; 30' is required.
4. The application was filed on December 12, 2025.

ANALYSIS

The requested variance involves an area, dimensional, or other numerical limit (e.g., setbacks, height, lot size, parking, signage) and must meet the following five criteria as allowed under Iowa Code Chapter 335.15 (4). The Board of Adjustment is provided the power to grant a variance under Section 24.4(A)(3) of the Zoning Ordinance. In its review, the Board may attach certain conditions to any variance granted in order to observe the spirit of the Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan and mitigate any potential impacts that may directly result from the requested variance.

Discussion of Standards of Review per Iowa Code Section 335.15(4)

1. Public interest: Granting the variance is not contrary to the public interest.

The proposed roof will cover the northerly portion of the existing deck and will be inside the footprint of the existing deck. The proposed roof should not impact any views. The granting of the variance does not appear to be against the public interest. **The standard appears to be met.**

2. Special conditions – practical difficulties: Owing to special conditions of the property, a literal enforcement would cause “practical difficulties” for the property owner trying to make a beneficial use of the property allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.

The house was constructed in 1977. The original deck was constructed sometime in the early 2000's and then reconstructed in 2013. Any proposed additions to the existing dwelling and/or deck would not be possible without at least a slight exception to the Zoning Ordinance. **The standard appears to be met.**

3. Spirit observed – substantial justice done: The spirit of the Ordinance is observed, and substantial justice is done by granting the variance.

The proposed roof will be inside the footprint of the existing deck. The roof addition conveys the spirit of the ordinance and maintains the integrity of the neighborhood. **The standard appears to be met.**

4. Unique and not self-created: The difficulties are unique to the property and not self-created (e.g., lot shape, topography, prior lawful platting).

The dwelling and deck were constructed prior to the applicant taking ownership in 2025. The applicant has a reasonable use of the property without the roof over the deck. However, the roof will provide protection from the elements and increased usability of the deck. **The standard appears to be met.**

5. Neighborhood character protected: The variance will not significantly alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The granting of a variance would not appear to significantly alter the essential character of the neighborhood. The impact of the proposed roof is minimal. **The standard appears to be met.**

Staff Conclusions and Recommendation

The criteria for granting a variance is evaluated above. Multiple definitions of “practical difficulty” appear to have in common some unique aspect of the land in question. Staff recommends the Board of Adjustment review the findings as related to the criteria set out above from the Code.

BOARD DECISION

The Board of Adjustment may consider the following alternatives:

Alternatives

1. Grant the requested variances subject to any conditions as deemed necessary by the Board.
2. Grant relief less or different from the requested variance by modifying the requested variances.
3. Deny the variances.

The following motions are provided for the Board’s consideration:

Provided motion of approval:

- I move to adopt the staff report as the Board’s findings and to approve the variance as requested by Joe Strotman, subject to the following conditions:
 1. All construction shall comply with the Site Plan submitted on November 25, 2025.
 2. No construction shall begin until a Zoning Permit has been issued by the Planning and Zoning Office.

Provided Alternate Action:

- I move to adopt the staff report as the Board’s findings and to approve the variances with the following changes (list changes).
 1. No construction shall begin until a Zoning Permit has been issued by the Planning and Zoning Office.

Provided motion of denial:

- I move to adopt the staff report as the Board’s findings and to deny the variances as requested by Joe Strotman for the following reasons:
The request does not meet the criteria in Iowa Code Chapter 335.15.
[STATE ANY OTHER REASONS FOR DENIAL]

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: Figures 1-5 photos
- Exhibit 2: Variance Application dated December 12, 2025
- Exhibit 3: Site plan
- Exhibit 4: Parcel Highlight

Figure 1
Looking at the deck on east side of dwelling from Wesley Drive



Figure 2
Looking at the east side of deck (rear)



Figure 3
Looking east to west along the north side of dwelling/deck



Figure 4
Looking north to south at Wesley Drive

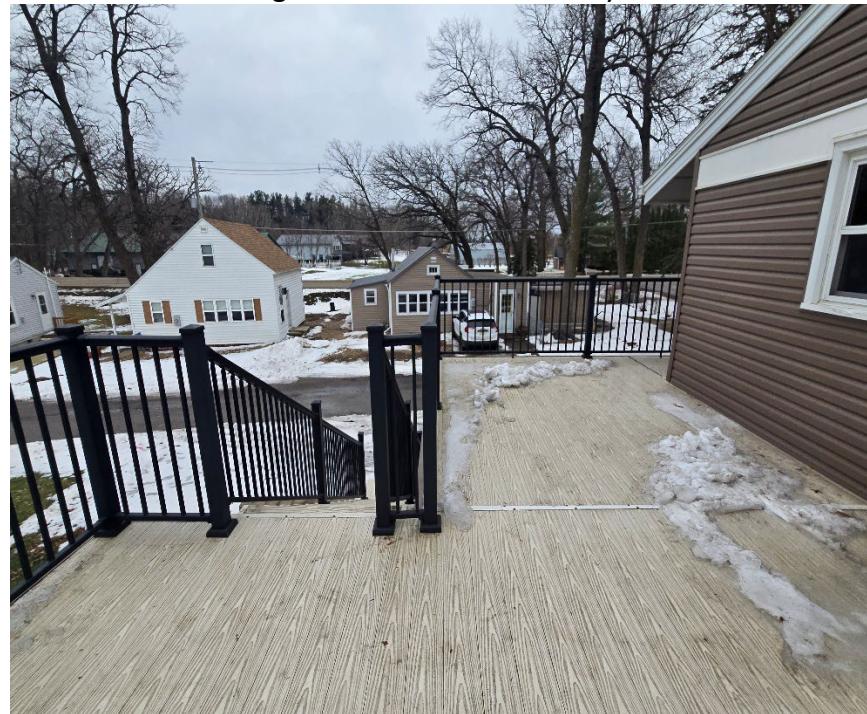
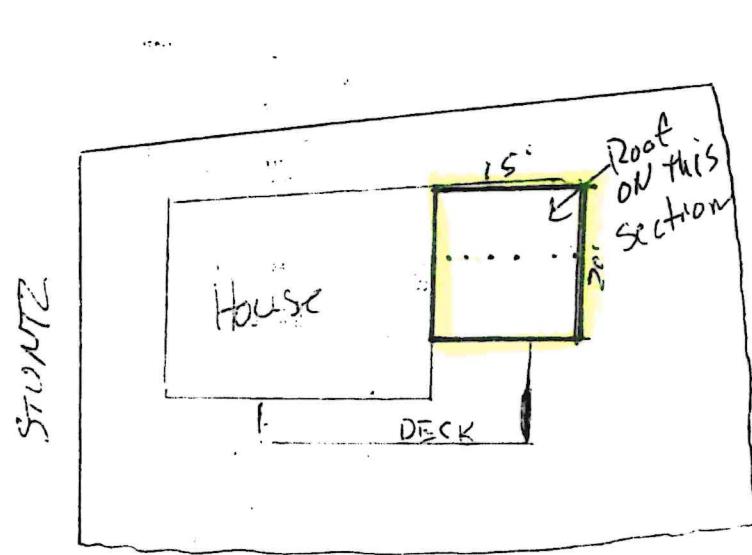


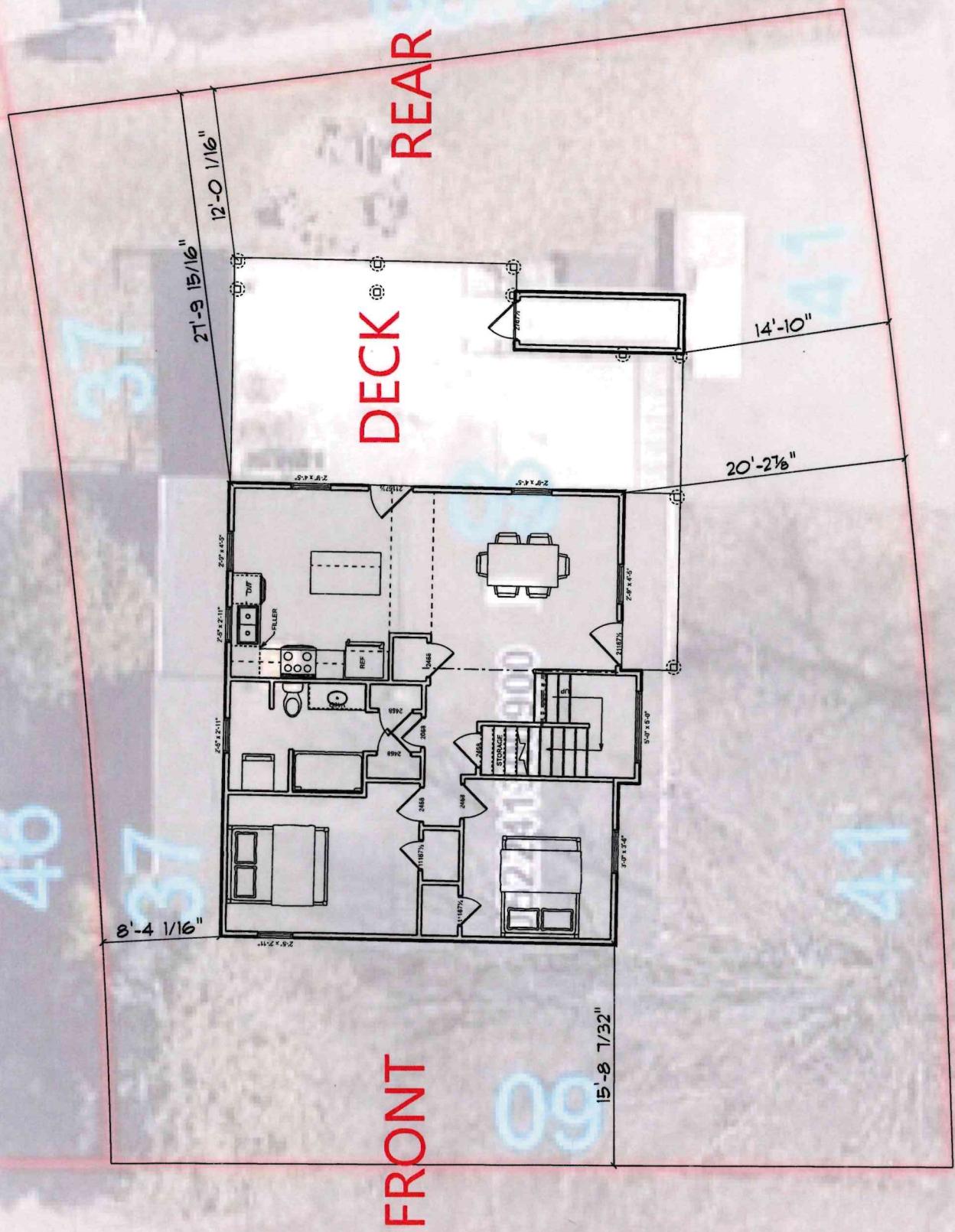
Figure 5

Looking at location of proposed roof over a portion of the deck. The stairs will not be covered





Wesley Dr.



STUNIZ AVE

WESLEY DR

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