

BFD/KEY ARCHITECTURE

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To the El Dorado Planning Commissioners:

I was asked to review the proposed detached garage/living addition at 1627 Player Ct. and to provide a professional opinion regarding the overall site layout, proposed encroachments, and overall height of the structure. It appears that the proposed project will require a major variance at the front setback and a minor variance at the side setback as part of the project. The current proposal involves a two-story structure, where the bottom floor is the garage and the top story is additional living space. It is not clear why the proposed structure includes a living space since the requested variances are for garage encroachment only. In my professional opinion, the proposed garage could be placed and built where it would not impair the views and privacy of the neighboring Lee property at 1625 Player Ct.

The proposed height is a major subject of contention, since if the structure encroaches into the setbacks as proposed, and is as tall as proposed, it will significantly affect the adjacent property at 1625 Player Ct. Per the TRPA Code of Ordinances, Ch. 37, Table 37.4.1, maximum allowed height for any structure is determined by both the slope of the parcel and the slope of the roof. TRPA **does not** have a minimum height requirement; in theory, a structure that is under 8' tall is permissible, and a single-story garage would have no issues being approved at the building department.

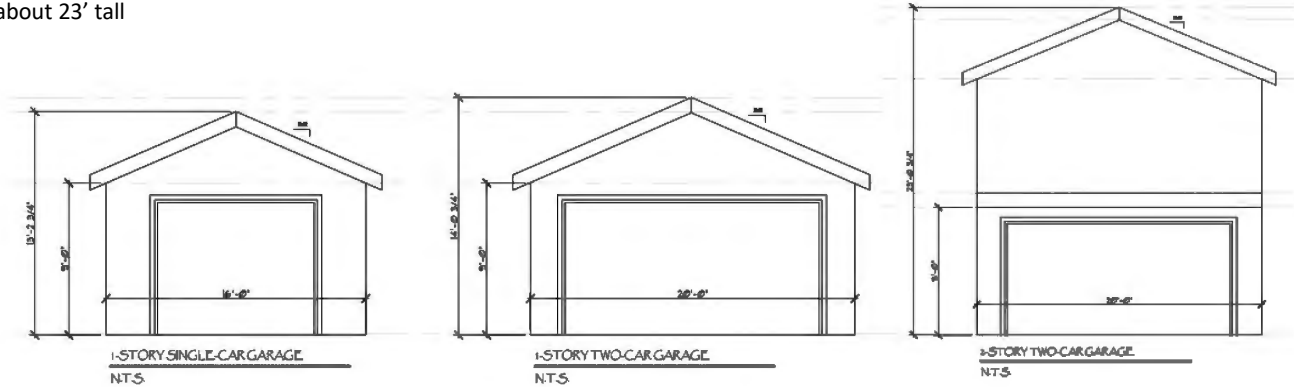
A typical floor to ceiling height, for either homes or garages, is anywhere between 8'-10'. Although El Dorado County encourages a roof pitch of 5:12 for snow shed, this is not mandatory and multiple examples exist of structures with a roof-pitches lower than that throughout the Tahoe Basin.

Local examples of 1-story, 2-car garages with flat or pitched roofs:



Potential height differences for 1 & 2 story garages:

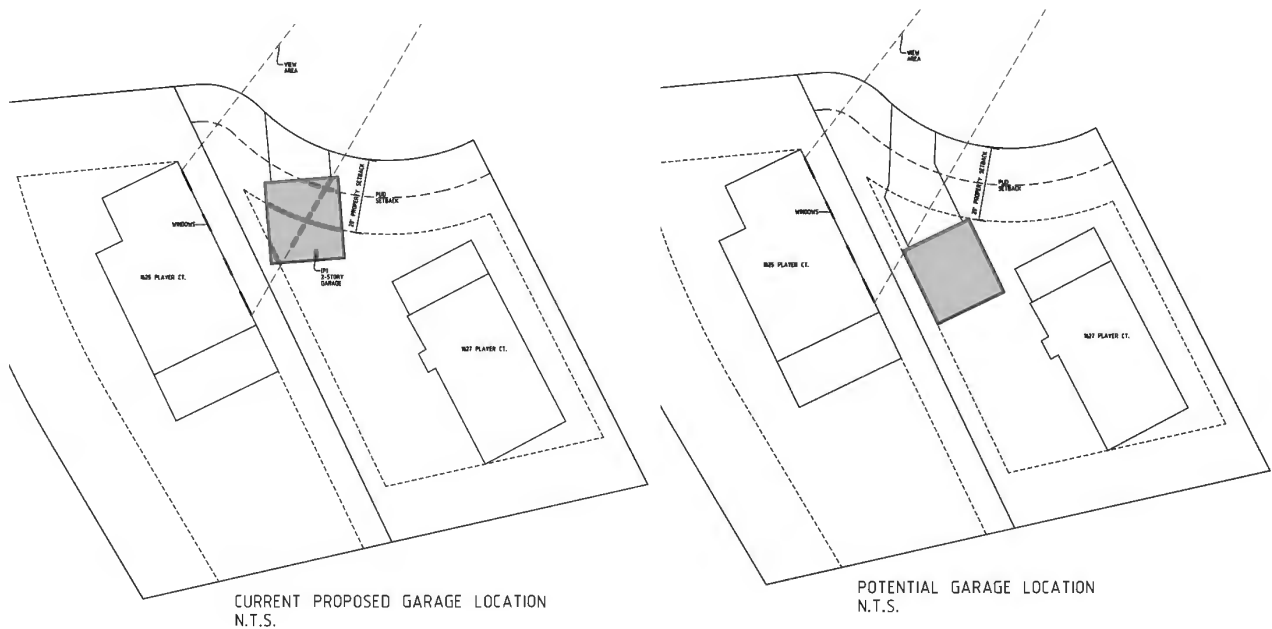
1. A single-story garage with a flat roof would be feasible on this lot, and would likely be 10' tall
2. With a steeper pitch, such as a 5:12, a single car garage would be feasible and about 13' tall
3. With a steeper pitch, such as a 5:12, a two-car garage would be feasible and about 14' tall
4. A double car garage, with a full second floor and a 5:12 pitch roof, would be almost 10 feet higher than the previous options, or about 23' tall



In other words, it is the addition of the second-floor area which creates the massive 23' barrier to views and affecting the privacy of the adjacent residence. If the space above the garage becomes a living area, as currently proposed, it will further affect the privacy of the neighboring property since its windows will be directly in the view line of the existing house. Again, it is not clear why a variance for a garage must include living space above, when it is the additional living space that creates the problem. The requested variances are for a garage, not living area.

For the front setback encroachment: this appears more intrusive as it proposes to place a portion of the garage not only within the front setback, but also within a 10' Public Utility Easement. Per my professional opinion, the structure could easily be shifted further back on the parcel and fit within the existing 20' front setback while meeting coverage requirements. This would require a design change, but as this is a preliminary planning proposal, it is at the Commission's discretion whether or not to enforce the setbacks before the project is fully completed and engineered for construction. The larger encroachment would likely necessitate a Major Variance, for which there has to be sound reasoning outside "just because."

From an architectural perspective, it appears that the proposed side encroachment is not necessary – the building could be modified or rotated without affecting the existing home or any defensible space requirements.



Per the El Dorado County Planning Services, variances require the following findings:

1. There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the land, building, or use referred to in the application which circumstances or conditions do not apply generally to land, buildings, or uses in the vicinity and the same zone, and have not resulted from any act of the owner or applicant.

This parcel does not have any exceptional conditions or circumstances that would prevent the owner from enjoying residential uses within the existing setbacks

2. The strict application of the provisions of the ordinance requested to be varied would deprive the applicant of the reasonable use of the land or building, allowed for other land in the vicinity and the same zone.

Enforcing the setbacks would not deprive the applicant from enjoying residential uses on their property

3. The variance is the minimum necessary for the reasonable use of the land or building.

The variances are not necessary to build residential space as a primary house already exist, and may not be necessary for a garage either.

4. The variance is in conformity with the intent of this article and not detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare, or injurious to the neighborhood.

The proposed location of the additional residential space is injurious to the neighborhood in that it is unnecessarily tall, blocks views, and invades privacy.

It is my professional opinion that the overall site layout for the structure could be modified in a way where the encroachments are reduced, or eliminated, and for which there is still enough coverage to make it a viable garage-only build. Alternatively, the second floor living quarters could be eliminated, thereby reducing the height of the proposed garage and removing the injurious impacts on 1625 Player Court.

Thank you for your consideration,


- Natalia Wiczorek

