

CITY OF AURORA  
OHIO  
**Building Code Board of Appeals**  
Meeting Minutes  
January 19, 2016

The Aurora Building Code Board of Appeals met in a scheduled meeting Tuesday, January 19, 2016 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 9:57 a.m. by Chairman John Drsek.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: John Drsek, Chairman  
Jason Coleman  
Patricia Hovey, Vice Chairman  
Norman Perttula  
David Palchesko

Also Present: Meredith Davis, Asst. Director Planning, Zoning, Building Division  
Lionel Finch, Residential Building Official  
Albert Hall, Residential Building/Zoning Inspector  
Marie Lawrie, Secretary

**DECLARATION OF OATH:**

Mr. Drsek swore in those that planned to speak.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**STEPHEN MANSFIELD, 1254 EAST BLVD (1512001) – REPLACING SPIRAL STAIRCASE**

Stephen Mansfield, homeowner, was present to represent an appeal from the Ohio Building Code section 311.7 as pertained to his renovation project. This home in the Geauga Lake area consists of two downstairs bedrooms and a second floor loft. There is an existing spiral staircase leading to the second floor. The existing spiral staircase is non-conforming to the current Ohio Building Code. Conflicting information states the Cape Code style bungalow was erected sometime in the early 1900's with several additions added over time. The applicant considers the current staircase too narrow and dangerous. It provides no way to take furniture to the loft, and currently has no safety railing around the opening at the top. The space available and the configuration of the home do not lend themselves to building a replacement staircase that meets the current codes. Mr. Finch stated that the front door and bedroom door on the first floor are approximately six feet apart on either side of the stairs making it near impossible to build any stair system within the codes. He further stated that an exterior staircase would be an option.

The applicant was proposing to erect a ships ladder type of straight staircase. The proposed staircase would also be non-conforming to the Ohio Building Code, but safer

and better for people and furniture. Mr. Finch stated that he was not opposing any suggestion of the Board for the proposed replacement staircase.

Ms. Hovey asked if there was any other access to the loft area. Mr. Finch stated there was not. The size of the loft was stated as 300-400 square feet. Plans for the space include a guest bedroom as well as a bathroom. There was a discussion about how emergency services could evacuate the loft if necessary. The applicant reported that a window on the west side of the second floor was considered an egress window with approximately a nine foot drop straight down. Discussion took place about installing an emergency drop down escape ladder from that window. Mr. Drsek stated that it might be possible to take a medical backboard up the proposed staircase but not a stretcher. The proposed staircase along with the egress window provides two ways to evacuate the space if necessary.

It was stated that to build a staircase that changes direction with a landing part way up would not comply with Ohio Building Code due to the necessary amount of head space at the landing. The ceiling was stated to be 7'2" in height. The required headroom needed is 6'8" in height. In addition that type of stair would not meet code for landing requirements. Every landing shall have a minimum dimension of 36" measured in the direction of travel. Without floor plans available to the members, it was difficult to determine another course of action.

The applicant was asked if he understood that depending on the loan type, some lenders would not approve the staircase. He stated that he understood that he would have to disclose that the staircase did not comply with the Ohio Building Code. He further stated that he plans to reside in the residence himself and that he has no young children.

The proposed plans were considered an improvement over the existing staircase; however, Mr. Palchesko voiced concern about someone getting hurt on the proposed staircase. There was discussion about ways to construct the stairs with not more than 6" of open space between treads and with regards to the handrail system.

There was a conversation initiated by Mr. Perttula pertaining to what would be involved in replacing the stairs with a new spiral staircase which would meet code. Mr. Mansfield described moving gas lines, Hvac duct work, creating a larger opening and losing living space to accommodate this. Mr. Coleman asked if it could be done in that space. Mr. Finch stated that it could probably be done; however, it would fill that 60" opening between the doors.

There was a detailed conversation pertaining to the size of the tread. Mr. Perttula requested that the treads be constructed 36" wide to conform to code. The applicant agreed to provide detailed building plans for final approval to the Building Department. These plans will be emailed to the board members when available.

**MOTION:** To approve the appeal on the condition that the stairs and railings are constructed such that any openings are no larger than 6 inches to prevent persons/children from falling through the staircase or through the railing and that the stairs be erected (36) thirty-six inches wide, and finally a drop down escape ladder be erected in the second floor egress window. Plans are to be submitted to the Building Department and emailed to the members. Occupancy will not be granted if the applicant does not comply.

Mr. Palchesko moved for approval; Mr. Coleman seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0, on a roll call vote.

Yeas: Mr. Palchesko, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Drsek, Ms. Hovey, Mr. Perttula

Nays: None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Drsek adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

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John Drsek - Chairman

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Marie Lawrie - Secretary