Pikes Peak Regional Building Department  
2880 International Circle  
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80910

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 5, 2020  
9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:  
Chair Chris Richardson, Building Contractor A or B  
Vice Chair Steve Horner, Structural Engineer  
Swagata Guha, Architect  
Micah Langness, Master Plumber  
Dan Rial, Mechanical Contractor  
Matt Scheffe, Building Contractor D  
Dale Ryba, Electrical Contractor

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT:  
Virjinia Koultchitzka, Regional Building Counsel  
Jay Eenhuis, Deputy Building Official – Plan Review  
John Welton, Deputy Building Official – Inspections  
Matt Matzen, Permit Supervisor  
Linda Gardner, Executive Administrative Assistant

PROCEEDINGS:

Chair Chris Richardson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

1. CONSIDERATION OF THE JANUARY 2, 2020 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

   A motion was made by Micah Langness to APPROVE the January 2, 2020 Technical Committee Meeting Minutes as written, seconded by Matt Scheffe; the motion carried unanimously.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

Consent calendar items will be acted upon as a whole, unless a specific item is called for discussion by a Committee member or a citizen wishing to address the Committee.

   There were no Consent Calendar Variance Requests.
3. ITEMS CALLED OFF CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no items called off the Consent Calendar.

Chair Richardson stated CSFD has notified RBD staff that it takes no exception to the variance requests on the Technical Committee Agenda.

VARIANCE REQUESTS

4. 1889 Silversmith Road, Permit M33940 – Randy Kopplin requests a variance to Section 608.4.2, ICC A117.1 – 2009, to allow the controls and hand shower to be located on the side wall of a standard roll-in shower, where installation on the back wall is required per Code.

Patrick Donnell, D2 Architecture, appeared and stated he is the architect on this project. He stated his firm designs primarily senior care projects. He stated the ANSI regulations require that the shower controls be installed on the back wall of the shower, which means the staff member has to reach through the water to access the controls. He stated the ADA, however, allows shower controls on any of the three shower walls without interfering with the accessibility of the unit, which helps staff assist patients when showering. Mr. Donnell stated he is requesting that his client be allowed to follow the ADA guidelines and put the shower controls on the sidewall(s), allowing easier access for staff members.

John Welton stated the current ANSI Standard that the 2015 International Building Code references is the 2009 ANSI Standard. He stated the current and most up-to-date version of the ADAAG Regulations are the 2010 Edition. He stated there is a difference between the requirements of the 2009 ANSI and what the 2010 ADAAG Regulations would allow, where not allowed by the ANSI Standards. The “reach” range for where the controls have to be mounted is the same, with the caveat that the ANSI Standard requires that the controls be on the back wall of the shower, where the ADAAG Regulations allows them to be placed on any wall of the shower, as long as they are mounted within “reach” range. Mr. Welton stated RBD staff can only reference the ANSI Standard, which is referenced by the 2015 IBC, as adopted.

This is an assisted living and memory care facility. While this is an accessibility issue, it is also an accommodation issue. Alternative(s) were discussed but presented to be non-efficient under the circumstances. Mr. Donnell stated that the newest ANSI Standard is mindful of the ADAAG Regulations, and therefore an equally good or better form of construction is being proposed herein with the ADAAG Regulations.

Jay Eenhus confirmed the following from the ANSI Standard: “… in addition the new standards continue to provide a level of coordination between the accessible provisions of this standard and the Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines and the newly released Americans with Disabilities and Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines.”
A motion was made by Swagata Guha to recommend to the Board of Review APPROVAL of the variance request because it meets all Federal standards; this is more of an assistance issue, and not an accessibility issue, and this will help the operations of the assisted living facility, seconded by Dale Ryba; the motion carried unanimously.

5. 6795 Campus Drive, Plan C123927 – Adam Thesing, YOW Architects, requests a variance to Section 1104.4, 2015 International Building Code, to omit an accessible route connecting each accessible story and mezzanine, where required by Code.

Adam Thesing appeared and stated this is a 700,000 square foot building, and the back of the building is a 40 foot high warehouse space. He stated they are planning to add mezzanines for storage purposes in the warehouse. He stated they are requesting a variance to omit an accessible route connecting each accessible story and mezzanine. Mr. Thesing stated the warehouse area is occupied by only able bodied employees; the public is not permitted in this area of the building.

John Rice, SARA, stated his company is growing and they require more space. He stated the area in question is a warehouse space, only occupied by employees. He stated they have freight elevators to access the mezzanines. In response to a question from the Chair, Jina Koultchitzka stated the Code prohibits consideration of monetary issues as an acceptable reason for granting minor variances.

Jay Eenhuiss stated this building is required to remain a single story building because unlimited area provisions, and if it was reclassified as a multi-story building, it could no longer meet the unlimited area provision. The ADA Guidelines specifically talk about single story facilities and states mezzanines do not count as a story. However, in the exception that can be utilized from the International Building Code (“IBC”), the term multi-level building is used. Story is a defined term in the IBC, and that section does not state multi-story; only multi-levels. One of those levels would be considered a mezzanine and there is an exception that allows omission of an accessible route to stories and mezzanines that have an aggregate area of less than 3,000 square feet. Two of the mezzanines in question are over that 3,000 square foot threshold, therefore the IBC would require an accessible route to each. Mr. Eenhuiss stated RBD does not have the authority to enforce the ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

Mr. Rice stated the mezzanines are pre-manufactured and brought in and bolted in place. A motion was made by Swagata Guha to recommend to the Board of Review APPROVAL of the variance request because this variance request complies with the exception to the Federal Standards, seconded by Matt Scheffe; the motion carried unanimously.

6. 57 Penrose Boulevard, Permit M18714 – John Wheeler, Architect, requests variances to:

a) Section R305.1, 2009 International Residential Code, to allow a finished ceiling height of 6’11”, as amended by the applicant, where a minimum of 7’ is required by Code;
John Wheeler appeared and stated this home was built in 1957, and the ceiling height in the unfinished basement is 7’. He stated the homeowner would like to install carpet in the basement, which would create a 6’10” finished ceiling height. He stated there is an existing 6” beam with two 8” channels on each side of the 6” beam. Mr. Wheeler stated he would like to change his variance requests to a finished ceiling height of 6’11”; and a finished soffit height of 6’3”. A motion was made by Swagata Guha to recommend to the Board of Review APPROVAL of a 6’11” finished ceiling height, seconded by Dan Rial; the motion carried unanimously.

b) Section R305.1.1, Exception, 2009 International Residential Code, to allow a ceiling height of 6’3”, as amended by the applicant, under dropped beams and ducts where a minimum of 6’4” is required by Code.

A motion was made by Swagata Guha to recommend to the Board of Review APPROVAL of a 6’3” finished soffit height, seconded by Dan Rial; the motion carried 5:1. Steve Horner opposed.

7. 6451 Stonefly Drive, Permit M67809 – Marlyn Echevarria, homeowner, requests a variance to Section G2435.1, 2015 International Residential Code, to allow a mantle to be installed at 16.5” above a vented gas fireplace, where an 18” minimum clearance is required by the manufacturer’s instructions.

Chair Richardson stated this item has been POSTPONED to the March 4, 2020 Technical Committee meeting at the applicant’s request.

8. 511 North Sheridan Avenue, Permit M37143 – Jim Thompson, Thompson Property Services, requests a variance to Section R305.1, Exception 3, 2015 International Residential Code, to allow an obstruction in a basement containing habitable space to project to within 6’1” of the finished floor, where a minimum of 6’4” is required.

Jim Thompson appeared and stated this home was built in 1939, and he added an addition with a basement. He stated there are existing joists and ductwork that prevented a Code compliant soffit height. He stated the issue is in the perimeter of the room; the dropped soffit does not impede the doorway going from the existing basement into the new basement. A motion was made by Steve Horner to recommend to the Board of Review APPROVAL of the variance request due to pre-existing conditions and the lack of passage way under the soffit, seconded by Matt Scheffe; the motion carried unanimously.

9. 525 Lionstone Drive – Prior to plan submittal, Matt Duguid, BluSky Restoration Contractors, LLC, requests a variance to Section 1011.11, 2015 International Building Code, to allow removal of a handrail on one side of a stairway, where handrails are required on each side of a stairway.
Matt Duguid appeared and stated this project is a fire restoration project of a three-story apartment building with twelve units. The ownership group requested that he request a variance to remove one of two handrails from the exterior staircases on this building. They feel one handrail is adequate, and the additional stair width would help the building’s occupants in moving furniture, etc. in and out of the building. He stated there is one set of steps on each side of the building and the stairs access three levels. He stated the other buildings in the complex do not have handrails on the exterior stairways. John Welton stated this was the only building impacted by fire damage, and therefore the only building where permits would have required the handrails to meet current codes. A motion was made by Swagata Guha to recommend to the Board of Review DENIAL of the variance request due to life safety issues, seconded by Dale Ryba; the motion carried unanimously.

10. 19595 East Top O’ The Moor Drive – Prior to plan submittal, Laura Curtin, homeowner, requests variances to:

a) Section R311.1, 2015 International Residential Code, to allow a stairway acting as a means of egress to travel through a garage, where prohibited by Code;

Laura Curtin stated she would like to replace an existing stairwell in her garage with a combination winder/spiral stairway that accesses an existing loft area in her home. John Welton stated Code prohibits a means of egress travel to pass through a garage. He stated the Code requires separation between the garage and habitable space. Ms. Curtin stated the home was built with a stairwell exiting out to the garage. She stated the existing wall in the garage has the plumbing needed for a new bathroom. She stated she is building a main level master bedroom for a relative in an existing “cavity” in her home, and the front door of the home is in close proximity to this future bedroom. John Welton stated upon further review, RBD staff has determined that this variance request is not required, so it can be withdrawn. Laura Curtin requested that this variance request be WITHDRAWN.

b) Section R305.1, 2015 International Residential Code, to allow a ceiling height under stairs in garage to be 52½”, where a minimum of 6’8” is required by Code for non-habitable space;

John Welton stated the construction of the stairs would be floating, ledgered into various points at the outside of the tread, but in order to provide enough clearance for a vehicle to be able to pull into the garage, the stairs are going to be dry walled to conform with the construction shape of the stairs, in which case the worst case scenario head height under the stairs would be 52½”. Ms. Curtin pointed out that this area would only be 10” wide.

c) Section R311.7.1, 2015 International Residential Code, to allow a stairway width of 28” in clear width, where 36” is required by Code;
Swagata Guha expressed life safety concerns specific to Variance Request 10.c).

d) Section R311.7.4, 2015 International Residential Code, to allow a walk line located at 14” from the side where the winders are narrower, where 12” is required by Code;

Mr. Welton stated on a winder set of stairs the Code requires that the walk line be 12” inside of the narrower part of the stairs. That is where you have to accomplish Code compliant run for the treads. In this particular case, in order to get to the correct run for the tread depth, the walk line needed to be at 14”.

e) Section R311.7.5.2.1, 2015 International Residential Code, to allow tread depth at the walk line to vary up to 1”, where tread depth at the walk line cannot vary any greater than 3/8” per Code; and

f) Section R311.7.5.1, 2015 International Residential Code, to allow a riser height of 8¾”, where a maximum riser height of 7¾” is allowed per Code.

Ms. Curtin stated the riser height may vary; it would depend on the landing area and the door location at the top of the stairs. She stated this will be a suspended staircase. Swagata Guha further expressed life safety concerns specific to Variance Request 10.f). She stated the stairs should be designed to meet a minimum riser height of 7¾”.

Micah Langness stated tying into the existing plumbing should not be an issue with regard to the stairs and suggested that the stairs be eliminated. Ms. Curtin stated she would like the convenience and functionality of having the stairs from the garage into the main level of the house. Chris Richardson stated a traditional set of spiral stairs might work better than Ms. Curtin’s design. Ms. Curtin stated a spiral staircase would not give her the tread depth she needs for her husband. Mr. Welton provided the Code differences between a winder staircase and a true spiral staircase.

Mr. Welton stated if Ms. Curtin chooses to “tighten up” her existing design, she would still require variances for Items 10.b), 10.c), 10.d), and 10.e).

Ms. Curtin stated she would like to POSTPONE her variance requests to the March 4, 2020 Technical Committee meeting so she may redesign the stairs to get closer to Code compliance. A motion was made by Steve Horner to CONTINUE Items 10.b) through 10.f) to the March 4, 2020 Technical Committee Meeting, seconded by Dan Rial; the motion carried unanimously.
11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

12. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger N. Lovell  
Regional Building Official  
RNL/llg

Accommodations for the hearing impaired can be made upon request with forty-eight (48) hours’ notice. Please call (719) 327-2989.

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