

Max Grossman

15 Alan Street, West Orange, NJ 07052

Proposal

The objective of this project is to extend the length of the existing garage by eight feet (8') to adequately accommodate parking a modern truck and add additional storage/recreational area for part time hobby business work. The current garage interior length of eighteen feet (18') is insufficient for the length of a modern truck. Furthermore, a small "bump-out," previously added by the prior owner, is situated too close to the property boundary fence and has deteriorated due to accumulation of organic debris that cannot be cleaned out. The bump-out is the cause of the existing rear yard setback measurement of only ten inches (10") in that area. The proposal includes the removal of this bump-out and the restoration of permeable soil and grass seed in its place, which will improve the rear yard setback in that location from 10" to 4.65 feet. The proposed extension will maintain the full height of the structure and be constructed over the existing driveway area.

The second component of this proposal involves the addition of a second floor to the garage for dedicated storage and a hobby woodworking space. Woodworking is a longstanding personal hobby and part time business that currently is very difficult to practice at the residence due to the lack of any suitable dedicated space within the 1,479 square foot dwelling and the small accessory structure. The second floor will provide a clean, insulated environment for hand and power tool woodworking, entirely contained within the structure. This addition would result in a total structure height of 20.6 feet, which exceeds the town's fifteen-foot (15') limit for accessory structures, necessitating a variance for height.

The structure would be modified from a 1.5-story garage, measuring 18.5' x 18.5' (15' tall), to a 2-story garage, measuring 18.5' x 27' (20.6' tall). The existing standard pitch roof will be replaced with a gambrel roof featuring a shed dormer, designed to complement the gambrel roof of the main residence and the existing garage to the north of the property. The footprint will remain in the exact current location, utilizing the existing foundation, with the eight-foot (8') extension requiring the replacement of the asphalt driveway in that location with a new concrete foundation. The finished exterior will be painted to match the residence and feature a roof color consistent with the main dwelling.

The ground floor layout features a single garage door bay sized for the owner's truck, with the remaining ground floor area serving as a utility entry and dedicated woodworking workspace. A single garage door is appropriate and sufficient given that the structure is designed to house one vehicle. If a future owner of the property decides, the header will be appropriately sized to accommodate a second garage door on the other side. The second floor woodworking studio will be accessed via an interior stair and will include windows on the east elevation for natural light and ventilation, as shown in the submitted elevation drawings. There will be a "loading door" located on the second floor so materials can easily be placed directly on the second floor.

A photograph of the neighboring garage to the north—which already features a similar second-floor -- has been submitted alongside the site plans, elevations, engineering plans, and property survey. This photograph includes a scaled drawing of the proposed garage superimposed on it to illustrate the visual compatibility with the existing neighborhood context.

The structure has been designed with high-performance insulation throughout to ensure both climate control and acoustic mitigation. The roof assembly incorporates Rockwool R38 batt insulation (approximately 10" thick), which provides excellent thermal performance for the second floor woodworking studio while significantly attenuating sound transmission from power tools and machinery to the exterior. The first floor walls are insulated with Rockwool R23 batt (5.5" in 2x6 stud bays), providing an additional sound-dampening layer around the ground floor workspace. Rockwool is specifically chosen for its superior acoustic properties relative to fiberglass insulation of equivalent R-value. Together, these assemblies ensure that the hobby woodworking use will have minimal impact on neighboring properties. I have been practicing woodworking as best as I can in the limited space available since I purchased the property in 2018 and have never received a noise complaint from any of my neighbors. I am very conscious about the time I spend using tools and machinery so as not to disrupt anyone.

This construction project will enhance the property's permeable space by removing the non-conforming "bump-out" and replacing it with permeable soil and grass seed. Any additional storm runoff from the larger roof will be controlled by roof gutters and plumbed into the existing underground gutter pipe that drains out to the street gutter. Ultimately, it will transform the garage into a functional, modern structure suitable for its intended purpose.

C-2 Variance Chart for R-T Zone

Standard	Required per Zone	Existing	Proposed	Variance Needed
Accessory Structure Height	15' Maximum	15'	20.6'	Yes (5.6' over)
Side Yard Setback	5' Minimum	5.13' – 5.2'	5.13' – 5.2'	No
Rear Yard Setback	5' Minimum	10" – 4.65' (bump-out causes 10" measurement)	4.65' (improved by bump-out removal)	Yes (improves existing non-compliance)
Second Story on Accessory	1.5 Stories	1.5 Stories	2 Stories	Yes (full height second story)
Accessory Building Proximity to Residence	15' Minimum	42' 9"	34' 9"	No
Rear Yard Coverage of	Not more than ⅓ (33%) of total rear yard (2,617 sq ft)	375.8 sq ft (14.4%)	499.5 sq ft (19%)	No

Standard	Required per Zone	Existing	Proposed	Variance Needed
Accessory Building				
Maximum Building Coverage	Maximum 40% of 4,784.8 sq ft	1,260.2 sq ft (26.3%)	1,395.6 sq ft (29.2%)	No
Maximum Lot Coverage	Maximum 55% of 4,784.8 sq ft	2,940 sq ft (61.5%) — pre-existing non-conformity	2,900 sq ft (60.6%)	Yes (improves existing non-conformity)
Maximum Roof overhang	Maximum 2'	1'	1' on North side (back) 1' 8" on east and west side 1' tapering to 3'11" on south side (front)	Yes (extra roof overhang will be used to cover exposed ridge beam that has been sized to lift machinery and material to second story)

Note: The lot coverage non-conformity (61.5% existing vs. 55% permitted) is a pre-existing condition. The proposed project improves this metric to 60.6%, representing a meaningful step toward compliance.