



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT • 1140 Terex Road • Hudson, Ohio 44236 • (330) 342-1790

MEMORANDUM

To: Architectural and Historic Board of Review
From: Nick Sugar, City Planner; Lauren Coffman, Associate Planner
Date: October 24, 2025
Subject: 2160 Bristol Court – AHBR Case no. 2025-1042

Background

The AHBR reviewed a request for 2160 Bristol Court, Case No. 2025-1042, at the August 27, 2025 meeting. The request was for an exterior alteration that included the following:

- Replace all siding on the home with matching Dutch lap siding, except the front façade would be replaced with stone.
- Replace a man door on the attached garage, like for like.
- Replace a double casement window along the rear façade, like for like.

AHBR Review:

The AHBR reviewed the request on August 27, 2025 and denied the application due to the applicant proposing masonry only on the front façade terminating at an outside corner. The AHBR adopted a written finding of fact at the following meeting on September 10, 2025 and documented a conflict existed with Section IV-4(d) of the Architectural Design standards stating *the materials used in any mass must be applied consistently on that mass on all sides of the structure* and did not proceed with consideration of a waiver.

BZBA Review:

The property owner appealed the decision of the AHBR. The appeal was reviewed by the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals (BZBA) at the October 16, 2025 meeting. The BZBA had an executive session discussion to consider applicable law and then remanded the request back to the AHBR without appreciable further discussion (remand order attached).

The remand order references the following summarized documentation:

- a. At the August 27 hearing, the compatibility of the neighborhood was not discussed.
- b. No findings were made regarding Appellant's request for a waiver, and no reasons were given for denying a waiver.
- c. BZBA did not take evidence or testimony or argument because the final decision of the AHBR contained no findings regarding the request for a waiver.
- d. BZBA finds that the AHBR's final decision was incomplete

- e. BZBA unanimously approved a motion to remand this case to the AHBR with instructions to make findings adequate to support its denial of a waiver.
- f. BZBA is required by § 1212.01(g) to give instructions to the AHBR to “conduct further analysis, explain its reasoning more clearly . . . and issue a new, more thorough and well-supported explanation for its factual determinations.” The Board has determined that it is necessary for the AHBR to collect additional evidence, if necessary, and to make findings on each of the factors that govern the granting of waivers.

Staff has prepared the following analysis for AHBR consideration.

Staff Analysis of the Waiver request in Section II-1 “*Approval and Discretion of the AHBR*”

c. The AHBR may waive any requirement of these Standards in order to approve a proposed project, if the AHBR finds that the project fulfills the five principles enumerated in Section I-2, and meets one of the following conditions:

- 1. The project is an exceptional design, meaning that it is either especially creative or it is designed in response to unique situation, such as a very difficult site or an unusual program requirement.*
or
- 2. Exceptional and unique conditions exist that create a practical difficulty in complying with the requirements of these Standards. The AHBR should consider the factors enumerated in as defined in the Land Development Code in determining "practical difficulty".*

Five Principles of Section I-2

- a. *The creation and maintenance of the "public realm" takes precedence over individual buildings. The "public realm" is that space occupied both in physical and visual terms by the public. It is created by such elements as the parts of the building that are visible from the street, the front yard, the sidewalk, street trees and lighting, and the street itself.*

Staff Comment: The proposal would not negatively affect the public realm and the surrounding public realm contains the application of masonry on the street façade as the predominant design style.

- b. *Buildings shall maintain a high level of architectural quality.*

Staff Comment: The proposed materials represent quality improvements to the home.

- c. *The site plan and building shall respect the land and the environment in which they are placed.*

Staff Comment: No site work is proposed. The home would maintain the same footprint.

- d. *There shall be architectural variety within a defined framework.*

Staff Comment: The proposed stone would create variety as there is not a similar masonry material in the immediate adjacent homes. The proposal would be within a defined framework based on the surrounding masonry applications.

- e. *New buildings and alterations shall respect the existing context and framework.*

Staff Comment: The proposal would respect the existing context and framework as this façade treatment is prevalent throughout the subdivision.

Conditions:

As noted above, in addition to fulfilling the five principles the AHBR must find that the project meets one of the following conditions:

1. *The project is an exceptional design, meaning that it is either especially creative or it is designed in response to unique situation, such as a very difficult site or an unusual program requirement.*
or
2. *Exceptional and unique conditions exist that create a practical difficulty in complying with the requirements of these Standards. The AHBR should consider the factors enumerated in as defined in the Land Development Code in determining "practical difficulty".*

Staff Comment: Staff notes the proposal does not meet condition #1 as it is not especially creative nor designed in response to a unique situation. Staff notes the project is relevant to condition #2 as exceptional or unique conditions do exist that create a practical difficulty in complying with the requirements of these Standards.

The following are the factors for practical difficulty as stipulated in Section 1204.03 of the Land Development Code and referenced above. Staff notes, when determining practical difficulty, the reviewing body should collectively weigh these standards:

1. *Whether the property in question will yield a reasonable return or whether there can be any beneficial use of the property without the variance;*

Staff Comment: There can be beneficial use of the property without the variance; however, the proposal would allow the owner to make improvements to the home while staying within the existing context of the neighborhood.

2. *Whether the variance is substantial;*

Staff Comment: The variance is not substantial when compared to existing conditions prevalent in the neighborhood.

3. *Whether the essential character of the neighborhood would be substantially altered or whether adjoining properties would suffer a substantial detriment as a result of the variance;*

Staff Comment: The essential character of the neighborhood would not be altered, nor would adjoining properties suffer a substantial detriment as a result of the variance as a significant amount of the surrounding properties have a similar design.

4. *Whether the variance would adversely affect the delivery of governmental services such as water and sewer;*

Staff Comment: The variance would not adversely affect the delivery of governmental services.

5. *Whether the applicant purchased the property with knowledge of the requirement;*

Staff Comment: The applicant purchased the property when the current standard was in effect.

6. *Whether the applicant's predicament can be obviated feasibly through some method other than a variance; and*

Staff Comment: The applicant's predicament can be obviated by utilizing siding on all facades. The applicant can not reasonable install some masonry accent; however, as the house was built prior to the adoption of the design standards. The house does not contain a reasonable inside corner to meet the need for all sides of a mass to have compatible materials.

7. *Whether the spirit and intent behind the requirement would be observed and substantial justice done by granting the variance.*

Staff Comment: The spirit and intent behind the requirement would be observed and substantial justice would be done by granting the variance.

Additional Staff Comment:

The Weston Hills subdivision. is unique as a significant number of homes have masonry applied to their front façades. The images below are of homes within 500 feet of the property in question.



Staff notes the AHBR has previously considered the existing context and neighborhood for similar requests, including 60 E Case Drive, case no. 25-526. This exterior alteration request was approved to apply stone along the front façade. The AHBR deemed appropriate as this design was consistent throughout the neighborhood.



Final Determination

Staff recommends the AHBR fully review the following:

1. The applicant submittal
2. BZBA remand order
3. Testimony from the applicant (including additional if requested by the applicant), and
4. Each criteria/step applicable to consideration of a waiver.

After review of the above, the AHBR shall advance expanded findings of fact to:

1. Support and authorize approval of the requested waiver; or
2. Document that a waiver is not justified and submit expanded findings of fact responsive to the remand to the BZBA for their further consideration of the appeal on November 20, 2025.