

June 11, 2025

Mr. Greg Fedner  
Mr. Doug Holz  
City of Columbus, Stormwater Plan Review  
111 North Front Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

**RE: 487-489 and 491-193 Mithoff Street - Type II Variance from Stormwater Drainage Manual**

Dear Mr. Fedner and Mr. Holz,  
Please find attached our Statement of Support for a Type II variance from the City of Columbus Stormwater Drainage Manual.

The proposed project is to construct, on adjacent vacant lots, two 2-unit dwellings with a shared courtyard (green-space) between them and parking accessed from the rear alley. See Exhibit 1. The lots are currently vacant but once had residential structures. The two buildings we propose to build will each contain two 2-bedroom units—1 on the ground floor and 1 on the second floor. The entry doors to all units are located within the shared courtyard.

Despite the fact that these are small, urban infill parcels platted over 100 years ago, concurrent development of four dwelling units on two lots is deemed to be a “Larger Common Development” and subject to the requirements for both detailed stormwater designs and expensive on-site detention and connection to city stormwater infrastructure.

A variance is requested because to fully comply with the requirements of the Stormwater Drainage Manual is impractical. See Exhibit 2. The requirement for both a CC plan and on-site stormwater controls impose incredibly significant financial and scheduling hardships and would result in the project NOT being viable and NOT being built.

The following information is provided in support of the application:

**Project Name:** 487-489 and 491-493 Mithoff St

**Parcel #s:** 010-016029 and 010-019180

**Site Area:** 9,100 Sq ft (0.2 acres)

**Owner:** Front Porch Development, LLC

**Primary Contact:**

Alex Kirk, Managing Member

Front Porch Development

(614) 354-1175

Jakirk21@gmail.com

**Statement in support of an exemption from full compliance with stormwater requirements****487-489 and 491-493 Mithoff St, Columbus, OH 43206**

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**THE PROJECT**

The proposed project is to construct, on adjacent vacant lots, two 2-unit dwellings with a shared courtyard (green-space) between them and parking accessed from the rear alley. See Exhibit 1. The lots are currently vacant but once had residential structures. The two buildings we propose to build will each contain two 2-bedroom units—1 on the ground floor and 1 on the second floor. The entry doors to all units are located within the shared courtyard.

The city of Columbus has a significant shortage of housing and is promoting increased density, especially in the urban core as a highly actionable solution. The city is encouraging the construction of duplexes and has even published FREE building plans (Greater Ohio Policy Center) to speed up the process and reduce costs.

Our project has support of the local civic association and will be presented to the area commission on June 14 and June 17.

**IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:**

1. Our project has a similar stormwater impact to the previous structures. Existing city infrastructure accommodates this.
2. Each parcel is below the 2,000 square foot impervious area threshold requiring stormwater planning.
3. Combined impervious area:
  - Buildings 2 @ 1,000 sq ft
  - Garage or parking area: 2 @ 400 sq ft
  - Sidewalks: 2 @ 240 sq ft
  - Total for 2 parcels: 3,280 sq ft
4. Our past projects, including this project, add quality housing units to a city that desperately needs additional housing in areas zoned for higher density.
5. Constructing a single-family house on each parcel is a possibility, but not the best option. If we change to building single-family houses, the project:
  - will not perform as well financially: significantly reduced income and only marginally reduced construction and development costs
  - may not meet lender requirements, specifically the debt-service-coverage ratio (1.2x)
  - Underutilizes the site, zoned R-4
  - has equal or more impact on the city stormwater system
  - will delay the project start and subsequent revenues by 4-6 months for development of new architectural plans, site plans and potential building variance submissions.

**CHALLENGE**

That the Stormwater Manual considers the development of two duplexes on infill lots a “Larger Common Development” is illogical and not in keeping with the spirit of the manual to control stormwater when developing larger land areas with significant impervious areas.

We will assume that:

- city storm capacity is in place for existing urban lots
- when the houses were demolished, the storm-water capacity was not decreased
- building small infill housing is not a net addition to the stormwater burden

To fully comply with the requirements of the Stormwater Drainage Manual is impractical. The requirement for both a CC plan and on-site stormwater controls impose incredibly significant hardships and would result in the project NOT being viable and NOT being built. It is unfair and unreasonable to burden small builders and developers with the cost of storm water infrastructure.

We have included in the exhibits depicting possible solutions.

Exhibit 1 – preferred solution

Exhibit 2 – full compliance solution

Based on the scale of the project and the specificity of the stormwater manual, we do not see any partial or “minimal impact alternative” that is possible.

**Hardship imposed:**

The increased delays and costs incurred for onsite stormwater will make this project NOT viable and without a variance the project will NOT be built. This is a small project, not a greenfield development or a new neighborhood. Additional delays, additional work, and additional costs include:

**Delays:** (based on Exhibit 2 – full compliance solution)

1. add 4-6 months: most qualified civil engineers are remarkably busy and are not eager to take on such small projects. Most home builders working in the urban core have NO experience with storm water detention.
2. add 4+ weeks for design review and approval
3. 4-8 weeks for installation and inspections (depending on ROW work)

**Additional work** (based on Exhibit 2 – full compliance solution)

1. civil engineering, storm design and calculations, surveying, ROW permits & inspections
2. on-site construction: excavation for underground detention
3. off-site and ROW construction: tie into city infrastructure (frequently old brick chambers)
4. detention materials (storm chambers, manifolds, piping, fabrics, etc.)

**For Exhibit 2 – full compliance – below are the additional costs compared to Exhibit 1 – preferred solution.**

| <b>Item</b>                                                                                 | <b>Estimated costs</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Civil engineering, storm design and calculations, surveying, ROW permits & inspections      | \$20,000 - \$30,000    |
| On-site construction: excavation for underground detention                                  | \$10,000-\$20,000      |
| Off-site and ROW construction: tie into city infrastructure (frequently old brick chambers) | \$10,000-\$20,000      |
| Detention materials (storm chambers, manifolds, piping, fabrics, etc.)                      | \$20,000-\$30,000      |

**Total additional costs for full compliance      \$60,000-\$100,000**

The preferred design solution has no additional delays, work, or cost implications.

#### **OUR REQUEST**

Based on the hardships above, we are requesting that Lot A and Lot B be considered separately and that the two lots are NOT considered a “Larger Common Development” and that requirement for CC plans are waived.

#### **EXHIBITS**

|           |                                        |        |
|-----------|----------------------------------------|--------|
| Exhibit 1 | Proposed site plan (preferred design)  | Page5  |
| Exhibit 2 | Site Plan (schematic: full compliance) | Page 6 |
| Exhibit 3 | Certified address – Lot A              | Page 7 |
| Exhibit 4 | Certified address – Lot B              | Page 8 |

Exhibit 1 – Preferred Solution

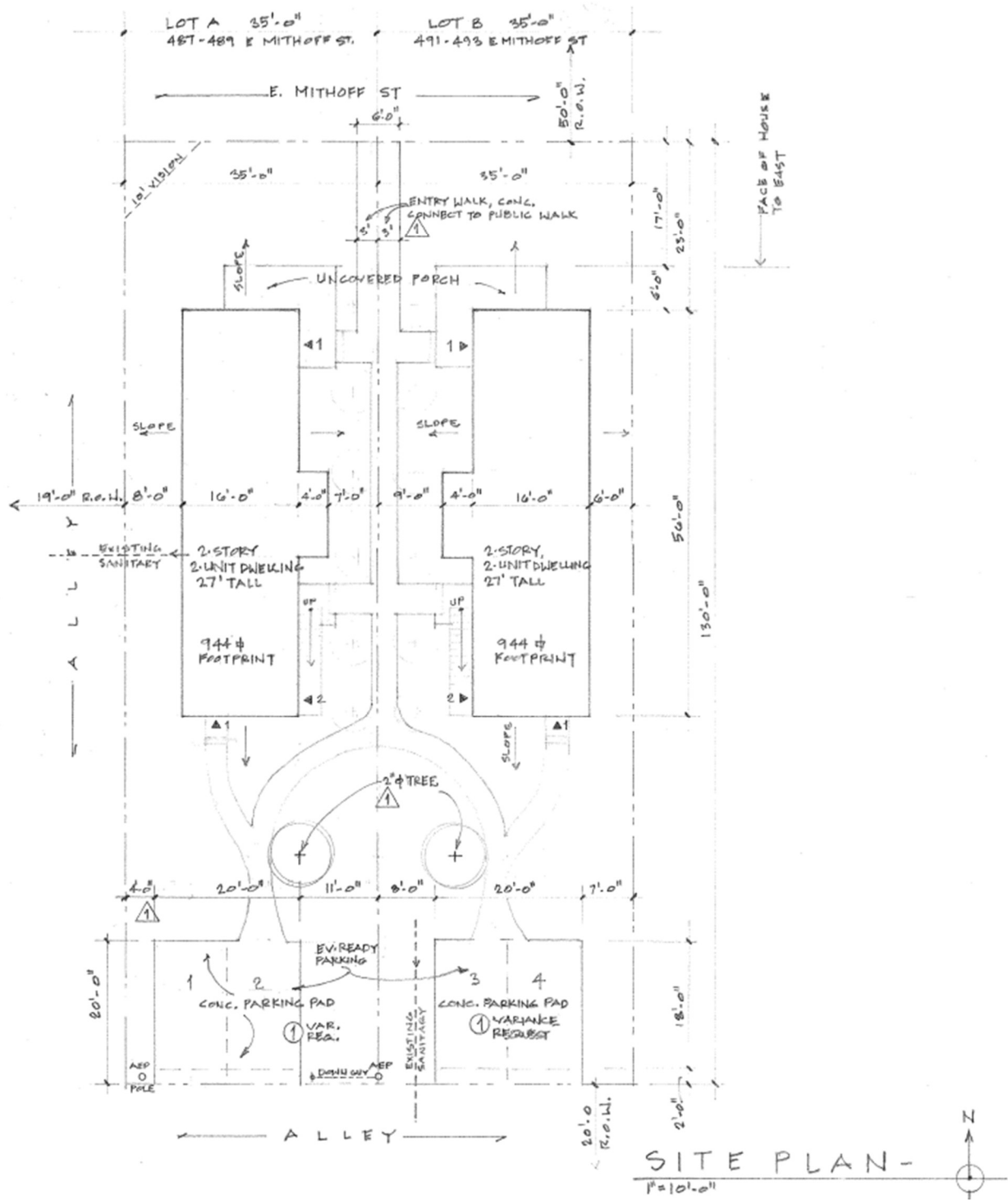




Exhibit 3

THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

SCOTT MESSER  
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING  
AND ZONING SERVICES

**CERTIFIED ADDRESS**

The address numbers contained on this form are herein  
certified for the securing of building & utility permits

Address Number: 487 & 489

Project Name: DUPLEX

Street Name: MITHOFF STREET

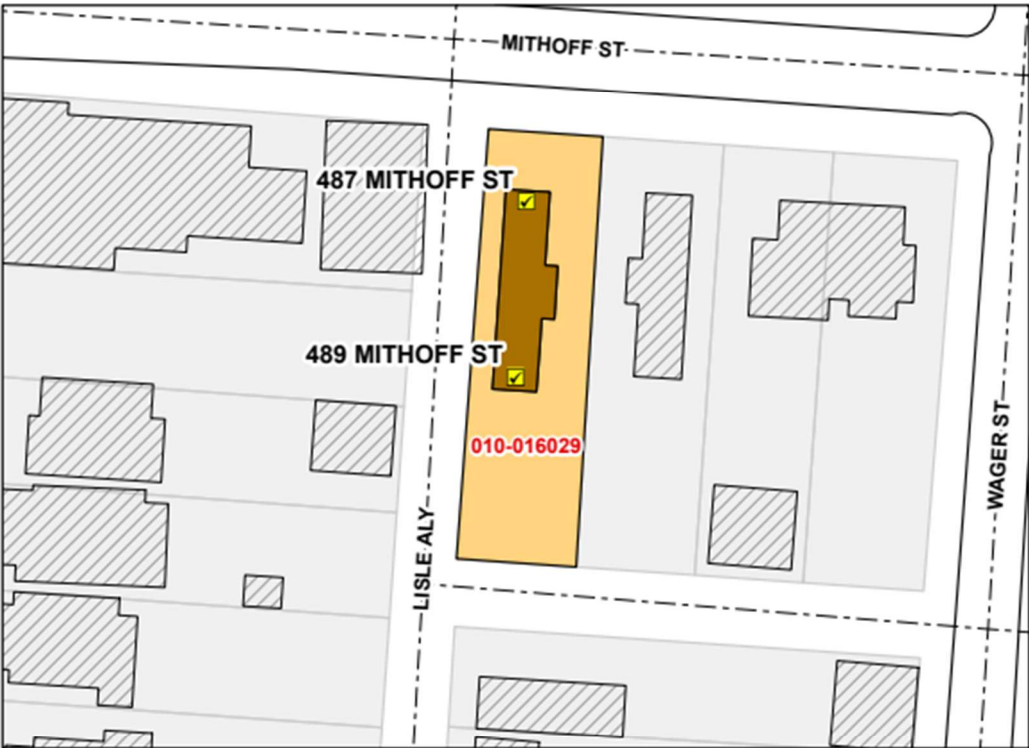
Subdivision: SHERAS ADD

Parcel ID: 010-016029

Lot Number: 8

Work Done: NEW

Complex: N/A



GIS File Number: 1772091

Applicant Name: ALEX KIRK - FRONT PORCH DEVELOPMENT, LLC

Date: 4/3/2025

Printed By: *Se Syl*



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**Exhibit 4**



DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING  
AND ZONING SERVICES

SCOTT MESSER  
DIRECTOR

## CERTIFIED ADDRESS

The address numbers contained on this form are herein  
certified for the securing of building & utility permits

**Address Number: 491 & 493**

**Project Name: DUPLEX**

**Street Name: MITHOFF STREET**

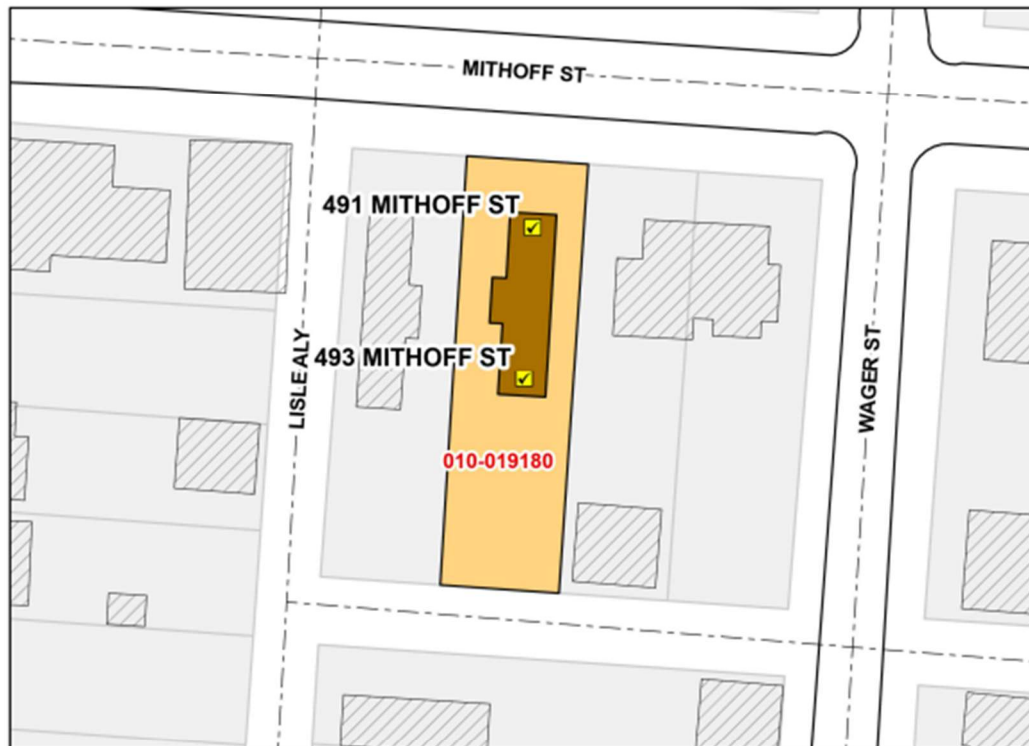
**Subdivision: SHERAS ADD**

**Parcel ID: 010-019180**

**Lot Number: 9**

**Work Done: NEW**

**Complex: N/A**



**GIS File Number: 1772089**

**Applicant Name: ALEX KIRK - FRONT PORCH DEVELOPMENT, LLC**

**Date: 4/3/2025**

**Printed By:**

*See Syl*



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