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Application of John B. Ritch Associates
1830 24th Street, NW
Square 2506, Lot 44

February 27, 2012

This statement is submitted on behalf of John B. Ritch Associates ("Applicant") by its architects, Mangan Group Architects, by John Mangan and Jennifer Verbeke, in support of an application for the area variance described below.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

The Property, located at 1830 24th Street, N.W., is located on the west side of the street, between S and California Streets in the Sheridan-Kalorama Historic District. It is zoned R-1-B and has a total lot area of 4,261.0 square feet. The Property is almost rectangular in shape. The lot is improved with a four-story stucco and brick semi-detached dwelling, plus a one-story brick garage at the north west corner of the lot adjacent to a twenty foot public alley. The lot slopes down from 24th Street towards the public alley with a change in elevation of approximately seven and a half feet.

The subject Property is presently non-conforming with respect to the lot area, lot width, lot occupancy, number of stories, building height and side yard setback requirements.

EXISTING AND INTENDED USE

The existing four-story house is currently used as a single family residence. It was built in 1927 by the developer Harry Wardman. The Applicant has met with the Office of Planning, Historic Preservation Office regarding massing of the proposed addition and preserving any contributing factors to the historic fabric of the neighborhood. (Exhibit C)

The Applicant is proposing to extend and enclose an existing second story porch for use as a dining room and to improve the existing kitchen. The existing dining room will be used as a family room lounge area. Off of the reconfigured kitchen and new dining room would be an elevated deck for use in outdoor entertaining and as a connection to the rear yard with steps. The Applicant is also proposing to extend the first floor area underneath and beyond the existing second story kitchen in order to create a family room play area. This space will open directly into the private backyard. The proposed expansion area will allow for an increase in both the first and second story living area. All alterations and extensions to the building are to the rear of the building. No changes are proposed for the street side of the building.

A new elevator is proposed to allow for ease of use of the property as the Applicants age. In order to access the fourth floor bedrooms by elevator, the Applicant is proposing a small addition to the rear of the fourth floor to accommodate the elevator and an access hall. This addition would be completely within the perimeter of the existing low roof above the existing third floor. This would also allow access to the rear flat roof above the existing third floor for use as a roof deck. All other renovations to the building are interior. (Exhibit D)

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 18368
EXHIBIT NO. 4

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REQUIREMENTS FOR A VARIANCE UNDER §3103.2

In order to satisfy the standards for area variance relief, the Applicant must satisfy a three part test:

1) The property must be subject to an extraordinary or exceptional situation or conditions;
2) A practical difficulty will result if the applicant is required to satisfy the strict application of the Zoning Regulations; and
3) No harm to the public or to the zone plan will occur as a result of the approval of the variance application

The Applicant meets the variance test as follows:

EXTRAORDINARY OR EXCEPTIONAL SITUATION OR CONDITIONS

The Property is developed with a semi-detached dwelling in a zoning district which is designed for and normally accommodates single-family detached dwellings. The subject lot is significantly smaller than is provided for in an R-1-B district. R-1-B has a minimum lot width dimension of 50 feet with a minimum area of 5,000 square feet. The Property at 1830 24th Street has a maximum width dimension of 33.40 feet and a total area of 4,261 square feet. The existing dwelling is 26.3 feet wide. This building width does not count two chimney projections of approximately 1.2 feet.

The existing house is four stories tall, with an approximate height of 47' 3 ½" tall as viewed from the street. The maximum allowable height for R-1-B is listed as a three story building with a total height of not more than 40 feet tall. No change in overall height is proposed.

The existing building has no side yard at its north side and has a side yard of 7.7' at its south side, though 8.0' side yards are required in the R-1-B district. Cantilevering the proposed dining room by a maximum of 1.0', which does not go beyond the existing chimney extensions into the side yard would allow for a slightly wider dining room then simply enclosing the existing 10' wide porch, but would not affect the width of the green space in the side yard as this extension is only on the second floor level.

The maximum allowable lot occupancy is forty percent, or 1,704.4 square feet. The existing building has a lot occupancy of 2,035.81 square feet. This represents a lot occupancy of approximately 47.78%. The enclosure of the existing second floor porch would not increase the lot occupancy on the building. The extension of the first floor family room and cantilever of the second floor dining room and deck area would create a lot occupancy of approximately 2,402.52 square feet, an increase in lot occupancy of 8.6% over the existing lot occupancy, which includes the porch and the garage. (Exhibit E)

PRACTICAL DIFFICULTY

As the existing lot and dwelling are non-conforming, it would be a practical difficulty to make the Property conform without serious detriment to the historic fabric of the neighborhood as demolition would be required. As demolition is not permitted within a Historic District, particularly at the street facing side, it would be impossible to conform to the Zoning Requirements for R-1-B.

The width of the existing house is approximately 26.3' wide. The cantilevered addition at the second floor proposes an extension into the side yard a maximum of 1.0', which does not go beyond the existing chimney extensions, would allow for a much more useable dining room width. With the cantilevered extension, the total width of the building would be 26.7', still far less than the maximum allowable width

of 34.0' in the R-1-B district. The applicant's proposal extends an existing party wall at the north side of the Property in order to create a larger first floor family room and second floor deck area. If both side yard set backs were to be complied with on this property, the house could be no more than 17.4' wide total.

NO HARM TO THE PUBLIC GOOD OR ZONING PLAN

All proposed alterations are to the rear of the house and would have no perceived impact to the historic fabric of 24th Street and the attached dwelling at 1832 24th Street. Three Wardman houses exist in a row, numbers 1832, 1830 and 1824. Both the residences at number 1832 and 1824 have enclosed their second floor porches. Number 1832, which is attached to the Property presented here, has a very similar in scale rear addition at both the first and second floor. The Applicants proposed enclosed addition would not extend as far as the neighbors at the second floor level. As no changes are being proposed to the front of the house and the proposed addition is in keeping with the existing building, this proposal is in keeping with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Plan and creates no adverse impacts on the surrounding properties.

NEIGHBOR CONSENT

The Owner, John B. Ritch, has spoken directly with both immediate neighbors, Richard Hanlon of 1832 24th Street, N.W. and Mack McLarty of 1824 24th Street, N.W. regarding the proposed work to the property. Neither neighbor offered any objection as the addition emulates what has already been done to their own homes.

CONCLUSION

For all of the above reasons, the Applicant is entitled to the requested variance relief.

Respectfully submitted,

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