

March 3, 2015

Mrs. Mitchell, the owner of 440 Ridge St NW, Washington DC 20001, is seeking an area variance for an addition per section 11-403. The use of the property is currently a Single Family Row Dwelling and will remain as such. The lot is zoned R-4.

In it's current conditions, the dwelling exceeds the maximum lot occupancy requirement of 60% and is 60.5%, the requested relief is to increase the lot occupancy to 67.8%, to allow for a modest increase in living space.

Mrs. Mitchell's property is unique due to the exceptionally small size of the lot, at 857.6 sq. ft., well below the norm in an R-4 district, and less than half the recommended size of 1,800 sq. ft. The diminutive size of the lot creates a practical difficulty in accommodating sufficient living space for her family, while satisfying Historic Preservation requirements, without relief from the 60% maximum lot occupancy requirement.

Mrs. Mitchell intends to replace an existing 1-story rear addition with a 3-story rear addition. The proposed alterations to 440 Ridge St NW have been reviewed and were approved by the DC Historic Preservation Review Board. The design was revised twice since the original application, as follows:

- Proposal 1 included a new master suite entirely on the new proposed 3rd story, which presented the problems of requiring the demolition of existing roof framing and made the addition too large from a massing standpoint;
- Proposal 2 moved the master suite to the 2nd story and located a smaller 3rd bedroom on the proposed 3rd floor addition. Although a significant improvement, this version did not sufficiently address the need for demolition or massing concerns raised by the HPO and failed to generate sufficient HPO staff support.
- Proposal 3 moved the addition farther back by enlarging the footprint of the new rear addition slightly, minimizing the need for demolition of historic fabric and decreasing the impact of the addition on the massing of the historic row house. It also became virtually invisible from Ridge St. This proposal was approved on January 29th, 2015.

The approved proposal requires increasing the footprint of the rear addition in width to encompass the full width of the lot, and in length by 1'-8" beyond the location of the existing addition rear wall. The 1'-8" coincides with the rear yard buildable limit of 20' and provides just enough space to accommodate a master suite on the 2nd floor of the house, as requested by the Historic Preservation Office.

