

Gabriel and Stephanie Klein
1100 Euclid St. NW
Washington, DC 20009

May 28, 2015

Burden of Proof – Area Variance

Form 120 – BZA for Area and Rear Yard Variance: Supporting Documentation

BZA Case #: FY-15-45-Z
1100 Euclid St. NW
Washington, DC 20009
Lot 0115 Square 2865
Zoned R-4
DCRA File Job #: B1505044

The corner site for the house at 1100 Euclid St NW, reveals a classic, unresolved architectural problem in the District of Columbia; how to design for a corner condition. While the house has a nicely resolved secondary façade on 11th street, the slope and land-locked yard, pushed up hard against a neighbors blank party wall, left only one solution when the garage was built (likely 90+ years ago based on materials): a 90 degree orientation toward 11th street, approximately 10 feet below grade, and under the back yard.

The owners and occupants of the house at 1100 Euclid St. NW, purchased and moved into the property in December of 2001, and now with a growing family, are seeking to renovate the house to fit their long-term needs and avoid having to leave the city. These needs include adapting the house to include: 1) obtaining a certificate of occupancy for an existing basement rental, like most of the houses in the neighborhood, and 2) adding an accessory building over the existing garage for use in the short-term as a home office, and the long-term as possibly an au-pair room, and then ultimately a granny flat in the decades to come.

Basement Rental:

Since the house is currently classified as a “semi-detached” rather than as a “row-dwelling” because of its location on the corner at the end of a block of identical row-houses (all built at the same time by the same developer in 1906-10 by The Columbia Heights Development Corporations as a “suburb of D.C.”), technically the house is not allowed to incorporate a basement unit, despite the fact that every house on the block is virtually identical and most have a basement unit. This condition is increasingly understood as an anomaly in a growing city with a housing crisis.

Furthermore, when the house was purchased by the present owners, the basement already had a rental unit without a certificate of occupancy, which the owners would now like to remedy. The owners have been paying the DC Franchise tax for the unit and paying DC taxes on any rental income for over a decade.

Accessory Building:

Because of its land-locked position on a corner on a steep slope, the existing garage faces 11th Street because there was no alley for access. Similarly, the steep built-up slope put the garage on a level below the back yard which faces the blank party wall of the adjacent neighbor.

The present owners would like to build an accessory building on top of the existing garage for short-term use as an office and long-term use as outlined above. This proposal will require two variances;

- 1) Reduction of the minimum rear yard setback from 34 feet to a 15'-6" space between the back wall of the house and the accessory building.
- 2) An increase in allowable lot occupancy from 1054 sf or 34% to 1247 sf or 41.13%

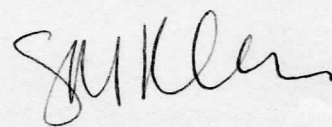
These three adaptations (a basement rental unit, the reduction in the rear yard, and the slight increase in lot occupancy) represent the general social trends of the city of Washington as it grows and adapts. The growing demand for housing within the District will require greater intensification and efficient use of space on the one hand, and the growing need for energy efficiency, which only reinforces the trend toward smaller units within existing owner-occupied houses. This trend will also accommodate and support the stable development of families who are committed to staying in the District and ageing-in-place, both social goods. As families age, change in size and structure, so do their housing needs, and more families in Washington staying for the long term creates more social stability and tax base.

We believe these three proposed adaptations will not be inconsistent with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map.

Thank you.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G Klein'.

Gabriel Klein

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stephanie Klein'.

Stephanie Klein