Request For Zoning Variance for 910 East Capitol Street, NE

Project Description

The project consists of a three story addition to the rear of 910 East Capitol Street, NE totalling 1,000 square feet. The purpose of the addition is to increase the space of this single family residence to accommodate a young growing family. Although the facade of the existing house is imposing and goes well with the scale of many of its East Capitol Street neighbors, the house itself is currently quite small. The existing footprint is only 20' by 24' whereas most houses on this block are 20' wide by 60' long.

The planned addition will include a new bedroom, bath, kitchen, and rec room. There will also be some modest modifications to the existing structure to improve circulation and add central air-conditioning.

In order to achieve the greatest square footage for the addition, while respecting the immediate neighbors, the new structure is proposed to be nearly as wide as the existing house, but will only go back as far as each of the adjacent houses. The plan was also chosen so that openings in the rear wall of the existing house could be utilized, minimizing the need for structural alterations. Scale issues were considered and residential materials will be used to make the addition compatible with the neighboring properties. The Historic Preservation Review Board has already approved the project in concept.

The issues brought up for review and variance by the Board of Zoning Adjustment are:

1. Side Yard Setback:

The existing house shares a party wall on the East side of the property with 912 East Capitol Street. On the West side the house is set back 2'-10.5" from the property line. This space is essentially a private alleyway, gated and used only by the owner to move his bicycle and lawn-mower between the front and back yards. There are no windows onto this space from either 910 East Capitol Street or the adjacent property, number 908.

It should be noted that number 908 is built up to the property line. Also, there is a public alleyway at the rear of number 910 which provides an alternate means of egress from the property.

The proposed addition would be just slightly narrower than the existing house and this results in a 3'-4.5" space along the West side of the addition. Again, there are no openings onto this space from either house and as previously stated, this portion of the addition only extends to the line of the rear wall of number 908.

Section 405.9 of the Zoning Code calls for an eight foot offset for side yards. Following this standard would significantly reduce the size of the addition and would make interior circulation unworkable, particularly at the second floor.

2. Lot Coverage:

Section 403.2 of the Zoning Code states that only 60% of the lot area be used for building. With the proposed addition, the house would cover only 66% of the lot, slightly over the allowable amount, but maintaining the spirit of the code and remaining consistent with typical land-use ratios on the block. Much of the 6% overage will be used as a porch which will help soften the scale of the rear of the house. Again, note that the house will be no longer than the immediate neighbors and significantly shorter than several of the houses on the block.

BZA
Case No. 16670
Exhibit No. 3

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
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EXHIBIT NO.3

3. Density (Gross Area Relative to Lot Size):

Section 1203.3 of the Zoning Code calls for houses on Capitol Hill to not exceed a ratio of 1.8 gross square feet relative to lot size. The proposed addition would result in a ratio of 1.9. The overage is minimal and the intention is not to increase the density of the property, but rather to enlarge the interior spaces for single family residential use. The only increase in density is that the owners wish to make room for another child and expand their family space by replacing a 6' by 10' galley kitchen with a table-space kitchen.

Although these items require review and variance by this board, we believe that they are justifiable and in keeping with the spirit of the code and the character of the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Thank you for your consideration.