STATEMENT OF EXPLANATIONS AND REASONS

SUPPORTING AN APPLICATION

TO THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FOR A VARIANCE PURSUANT TO §§2001.3 AND 3103

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ZONING REGULATIONS

6106 19th Street, N.W.

(SQUARE 111, LOT 52)

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INTRODUCTION

This is a Statement of Explanation and Reasons supporting the application of Alan Skvirsky for a variance to permit construction of an addition to a single family house which will not comply with the requirements of §2001.3 at 1606 19th Street N.W. (Square 111, Lot 52) pursuant to Section 3103 of the Regulations of the Zoning Commission, (11 DCMR §§2001.3 and 3103) (hereinafter, "Regulations").

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICANT

The applicant/owner of the house used as a Bed and Breakfast are Alan Skvirsky and Anexora Skvirsky. Alan Skvirsky resides at 1606 19th Street, N.W. They are active members of the Dupont Circle Citizens' Association and the Kalorama Citizens' Association.

THE SUBJECT PROPERTY

A. Location and Description of the Property

The property which is the subject of this Application is at 1606 19th Street, N.W., Square 111, Lot 52. It is a single family house in an R-5-B Zone, which permits moderate density, general residence. The property has been operated as a bed and breakfast since 1996 when Mr. Skvirsky restored it to its former glory. It is a contributing building in the Dupont Circle Historic District.

B. Area Surrounding the Property

Surrounding the property are commercial and residential uses as follows: South of the adjoining single family house is commercial. North of the building and across the street are brownstones used as residences. On the West side, bordering the alley at the rear of the subject dwelling are commercial buildings with Connecticut Ave addresses.

C. Zoning History and Use History

The area is zoned R-5-B. The house was built in 1883 and has always been a Residence.

REASONS IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION FOR VARIANCE

A. Compliance with D.C. Zoning Regulations

Because the house is a non-conforming structure, which was built prior to the revision of the Zoning Regulations in 1958, a variance is necessary to build the enclosure shown in the attached plans. The new addition will not add any new sleeping areas, and will add only marginally to the living areas of the house.

Extraordinary or exceptional practical difficulties

More important, grant of the variance will solve two practical difficulties created by the proximity of the building to commercial buildings in the alley. The proximity to the very loud HVAC system directly across the 15 foot alley (at the rear of a restaurant at 1601 Connecticut Ave, called "the Wrapworks") creates an offensive and disagreeable ambiance for the owner's sleeping rooms as well as the guest rooms. It further creates an extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition that can only be alleviated by the installation of a glass addition to act as a buffer for the sleeping areas. Despite many protests to the Wrapworks owners and numerous requests for the HVAC system to be moved to the roof or screened with sound-deadening materials, there has been no effort to correct the problem.

The second exceptional situation created by the proximity to the Wrapworks is the fact that rats, which are attracted by the garbage generated by the restaurant and other commercial buildings, find refuge in the rear yard of the subject property. Only constant watchfulness prevents rats from entering the house. By substituting a solid garage door for a metal picket fence, the rats will be prevented from entering the rear yard of the subject building. At the same time, the two current parking spaces at the rear of this building and its neighbor will be preserved.

B. No Adverse Affects

No part of the addition will be visible from historic 19th Street. There will be no alteration of the look or historic character of the building or the neighborhood. The glassed-in addition will only be visible from the alley and from the commercial part of Q Street at Conn. Ave.

Use of the property as a bed and breakfast has been a plus for the Dupont Circle neighborhood. It is a busy, vibrant, part of the city. Residential and commercial activities blend well and complement each other. Moreover, the owner provides parking at 11 Dupont Circle, a nearby facility, for any guests who wish to take advantage of it so that guests cars need not compete for space on the street.

BENEFITS OF PROPOSED USE

By designing the addition so that no part of it is visible from 19th Street, the historic character of this residential area is preserved. In addition, Dupont Circle, which is a significant Washington tourist draw, benefits from a range of housing options. Today, many tourists prefer the homey ambiance and convenience of a bed and breakfast to the less personal and more institutional character of a hotel. Finally, the greenhouse enclosure will help to protect the fabric of the rear of this contributing building.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. Appropriate Residential Use

The provision of guest rooms in private houses is an appropriate residential use where there is no substantial negative impact on the neighborhood.

B. Historic Preservation

The subject property is a contributing building in the Dupont Circle Historic District. The plans for this addition have been presented to and tentatively approved by the Dupont Circle Conservancy and the Historic Preservation Review Board.

CONCLUSION

Alan Skvirsky should be granted a variance to allow an addition at the rear of the property on the alley. Permitting the variance will have no additional affect and will be in harmony with the purpose of the Zoning Regulations.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen N. Gell, Esq.