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John Sacco
625 Q Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

25 June 2002

Ms. Jerrily Kress
Director, Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION REQUESTS FOR 625 Q STREET, NW

Dear Ms. Kress

Background. Kevin Keefe and I purchased the house at 625 Q Street, NW four years ago in May, 1998. To the best of my knowledge, the house was built between 1874 & 1878. In the last half of the 20th century the house was converted from a single-family townhouse to a 2-unit flat. We plan to convert it back to a single-family house and it will remain a single family house under our ownership. We are told that over 15 years ago, a previous owner constructed the deck that we are now planning to cover.

The house is in substantially the same configuration as when we purchased it. Specifically, we have not added any new structure. The existing deck was there when we purchased the house. Since then, however, we have nearly completed the restoration of the exterior facades and we have excavated below the existing deck to provide better drainage and access to the basement.

Proposal. We wish to screen-in, and roof-over, the existing deck so that we may enjoy our outside space, free of mosquitoes, for more of the year than is currently possible. Currently, because of insects, and our concern about the increasing danger they may pose, we are restricted from using the deck during the late spring through early fall.

The proposed special exception will be consistent with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map. Single family houses are specifically allowed in the R-4 zone and therefore consistent with the intent and purpose of Regulations and Map. Our town house will remain a single family residence with the approval of this special exception. The existing rear yard will remain the same size as it exists currently and the special exception will not alter its dimensions. The existing rear yard is not inconsistent

BZA
Case No. 16923
Exhibit No. 8

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16923
EXHIBIT NO.8

with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map in that it affords adequate distance between structures.

Allowing the use will not adversely affect the use of the neighboring property-i.e. traffic, noise, lighting, etc. Allowing us to cover and screen the existing deck will not change either the existing use of the property as a single-family residence or the use of the deck/porch as an outdoor seating area. While we do anticipate using the deck more often when it becomes a screened porch, we have never received a complaint from neighbors for our past use of the deck and do not intend that our sensitivities toward our neighbors will change with a screened porch. Therefore, the use will not adversely affect the use of the two neighboring properties at 627 Q Street, NW (next door), and 1608 Marion Street, NW (at the rear) in terms of traffic, noise, or lighting.

We have spoken with these two neighbors regarding our application for a Special Exception, and have received no unfavorable comments.

The light and air available to neighboring properties wall not be unduly affected. The existing deck lies 90% in a natural recess defined by the party-wall of 627 Q Street and the rear of our house. There are no windows in the party wall and none will be blocked by roofing and screening the existing deck. Therefore granting the special exception will not affect light and air for the interior of 627 Q Street. The remaining portion of the existing deck projects 1'-0" beyond the party wall. We respectfully submit that this 1'-0" extension, when screened in, will not unduly affect the neighbor's light and air. In our discussions with the neighbors, they have told us that they agree there will be no undue adverse effect to the light and air on their property. Similarly, the side wall of 1608 Marion Street, at the rear of our property, contains no windows and light and air will not be affected by granting the Special Exception request.

The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties will not be unduly compromised. Because the use of the deck/porch will remain the same, there will be no adverse change in the privacy and enjoyment of neighboring properties. If any change is to be noted, it may be that the privacy of 627 Q Street is actually increased, by virtue of the increased separation between activity on our deck and in their yard afforded by the screen and roof supports.

The addition, together with the original building, as viewed from the street, alley, and other public way, does not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the street frontage. As witnessed by the enclosed drawings, and photographs, we have made considerable effort by hiring an Architect who has designed the screened porch in a sympathetic manner to both our existing house and neighboring houses.

In demonstrating compliance with the above, we have enclosed graphical representations

and photographs sufficient to represent the relationship of the proposed project to adjacent buildings and the view from public ways.

Special Exceptions Required. As I understand it, before we cover and screen our deck, we need two Special Exceptions.

1. The first Special Exception is required under SS 223.3 because the addition is to be built onto a one-family dwelling in a zone permitting such structure and use and the addition does not comply with SS 403 (lot occupancy) or SS 404 (rear yard) or 405 (side yard). In such instances, additions are permitted as Special exceptions in an R-4 district up to a lot occupancy of 70%.

As I understand it, the existing deck defines the rear yard because it is a structure over 4' high but it does not contribute to lot occupancy because no portion of deck (except the rail which is excluded) extends above the level of the main floor of dwelling. As such we will not be altering the existing dimensions of the rear or side yards, which will remain unchanged.

We propose increasing the lot occupancy. The proposed lot occupancy will increase from the current 56% to 66%, which is less than the 70% permitted under SS 223.3

In accordance with SS 223.3, we have, as described above, taken measures to ensure that the light and air to neighboring properties will not be unduly affected; that the privacy and use of neighboring properties will not be unduly compromised, and that the structure will not intrude upon the character, scale and pattern of houses in the neighborhood.

2. The second Special Exception is required under SS 3104.1 because all Special Exceptions are required to meet the criteria of this section. I submit that by merely extending a roof and screening an existing deck, we are not out of harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps and, as described above, the resulting screened porch will not adversely affect the neighboring properties.

This request is respectfully submitted so that I can more fully use my existing deck, free of mosquitoes. I hope the BZA will give favorable consideration to my Special Exception requests.

Sincerely,

John L Sacco

John Sacco