Applicants' Explanation of How
The Application Meets the Tests for Variances

This application seeks a variance from the Zoning Regulations for the construction of certain improvements to existing structures located in an R-3 zone in the Sheridan-Kalorama Historic District. The subject property (2234 California Street, N.W.) is a corner lot and includes a semi-detached dwelling and garage, both built in 1917 – before the promulgation of the D.C. Zoning Regulations.

The proposed improvements will consist of a terrace and wood privacy screen that will replace an existing wood deck and screen resting on the garage roof, new wood stairs from the garage roof terrace down to a new wood deck that will replace an existing ladder, concrete landing and steps, and a new masonry wall facing California Street that will visually link the facades of the dwelling and the garage and hide the new stairs from street view.

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Applicants are seeking a variance from the lot occupancy requirements and the restrictions on additions to non-conforming structures.[1] The lot occupancy of the existing dwelling and garage is 73.49%, exceeding the Zoning Regulations' 60% limit for maximum lot occupancy. The improvements will increase the total lot occupancy to almost 80%, according to calculations of the Zoning Administrator. This increase in lot occupancy is about a 10% increase from the existing lot occupancy and a 32.4% increase from the required lot occupancy.

This proposal meets the standards for variance approval set by D.C. Zoning Regulations § 3103.2 and District of Columbia Office of Zoning Form 121.

1. **Physical Characteristics of the Property:** The atypical lot shape and size in addition to the placement of the dwelling and garage limit the owners' outdoor use and enjoyment of the subject property.

The only meaningful outdoor space is on the east side of the dwelling, facing a large condominium building ("side yard"). A single-car garage occupies the majority of the side yard. There is an area between the dwelling and garage that is 16 feet in length and varies in width from 6 to 10 feet. The previous owners decked and fenced the garage roof area and for access used a wood ladder. The applicants seek to address the safety, appearance, and functional issues presented by the existing use of the garage roof terrace, while preserving that necessary use. The improvements are designed to provide the most effective and integrated configuration of this limited private, multi-level outdoor area.

2. **The Public Good:** Granting the application will be consistent with and not of any detriment to the public good – traffic, noise, lighting, etc. Furthermore, the proposed

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[1] The R-3 Zoning Regulations permit maximum lot occupancy of 60% for a row dwelling (Section 403.2 of the D.C. Zoning Regulations). The zoning regulations also prohibit additions to existing non-conforming structures unless, among other things, after the additions the structure conforms to percentage of lot occupancy requirements and the addition does not increase or extend any existing nonconformity (Section 2001.3(a) & (c)).

BZA
Case No. 16981
Exhibit No. 11

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 16981
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construction will not adversely affect the adjacent neighbors. The neighbors to the south and the east have reviewed the plans and have confirmed that they have no objection.

The applicants believe the quality of the design of the improvements will confer a public benefit that is consistent with the historic character of the neighborhood. The improvements will replace previous dilapidated stockade fencing and screening and will contribute to the public good by enhancing the aesthetic appeal from the street of the facade of the house and garage. The improvements have received the support or approval of the Historic Preservation Review Board, the Board's staff, and the Sheridan-Kalorama Historic Association.

3. **General Intent and Purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map:** The improvements are fully consistent with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map. The general purposes are, among others, to provide adequate light and air, prevent undue concentration of population and overcrowding, and provide use of land favoring protection of property and recreational opportunities (Section 101).

The improvements are consistent with the specific purposes of R-3 zoning. The improvements are intended to enhance the ability of the owners of the subject property to engage in recreational residential uses of the outdoor portions of the subject property. The use of a deck and a garage-top terrace also is consistent with the character and use of numerous other houses in the R-3 zoning district within the Sheridan-Kalorama historic district.

The improvements also promote the more general purposes of the Zoning Regulations and Map, since they will allow more light and air for the outdoor area between the dwelling and the garage. The proposed improvements also encourage the stability of the district and enhance the land value of the subject property.