GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

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D.C. OFFICE OF PLANNING

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Andrew Altman
Director

DATE: October 21, 2003

SUBJECT: BZA Application 17068

APPLICATION
Eric and Holly Takamura, the Applicants, request a special exception in order to construct a two-story addition to their two-story semi-detached dwelling on property located at 622 A Street, N.E. (Square 867 Lot 93) pursuant to Sections 223 and 3104 under Title 11 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Zoning,

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION
The Office of Planning recommends denial of this application. In the alternative, OP recommends approval when the Applicants submit revised plans into the public record with a tabulation showing sufficient reduction in total building area to reduce the planned lot occupancy to 70%.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION
The subject property is a 2,652 square-foot (0.06-acre) interior lot along the northern tree-lined frontage of A Street, N.E. It is bounded to the east by an alley 15-feet wide extending north from A Street, and to the north by another alley 30-feet wide. A two-story row dwelling of masonry construction with a partial basement occupies the A Street frontage, and a one-story masonry garage fronts the northern alley. The dwelling's U-shape forms a court that opens to the alley from A Street. The rear ground floor kitchen continues into one-story structure approximately 10' x 13' the holds a vanity, storage area, and rear exterior door (refer to Exhibit 1). Except for this kitchen extension, the dwelling and garage generally extend to both side property lines with six-foot tall wooden picket fences bordering unoccupied court and rear yard areas.

Development nearby consists mostly of 2-story masonry row and semi-detached dwellings, most with garages along the rear alley. The subject and surroundings properties are zoned R-4 Residential (refer to Exhibit 2), and are located within the Capital Hill Historic District.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL
The Applicants originally proposed to replace the kitchen extension with a two-story 10' x 19' addition. Revised building plans submitted with a letter dated October 14, 2003 to Jerrily R. Kress, Director, Office of Zoning increase the size of the two-story addition to 10' x 19'-8".

BZA
Case No. 17068
Exhibit No. 29

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17068
EXHIBIT NO. 29

Thus, the new addition would also extend to both side property lines. Planned construction would create a new utility area in a fully excavated basement; a breakfast room, expanded kitchen, and enclosed rear basement stair at ground level; and an expanded master bedroom and bath on the second floor.

The addition would have exterior windows on east (side) and north (rear) elevations, but no windows in the western wall on the shared property boundary. A second basement stair would replace the open court alongside the alley, and an exterior window above the stair converted into a door to access a new 5' x 15'-4" balcony. Applicants also plan to install a masonry patio in the rear yard, and enlarge existing basement windows and light wells along A Street. No other changes are proposed.

Building plans to this addition was referred to the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) for consideration by the Zoning Administrator in a memorandum dated January 31, 2003 (refer to Exhibit 3).

EXISTING ZONING AND RELIEF REQUESTED
The subject property is zoned R-4. Section 199 of the Zoning Regulations includes the following definitions:

> "**Building area** – the maximum horizontal projected area of a building and its accessory buildings. The term 'building area' shall include all side yards and open courts less than five feet (5 ft.) in width, and all closed courts less than six feet (6 ft.) in width. *Except for outside balconies,* this term *shall not* include any projections into open spaces authorized elsewhere in this title, nor shall it include portions of a building that no not extend above the level of the main building, if placed so as not to obstruct light and ventilation of the main building or of buildings on adjoining property. ...
>
> **Dwelling, row** – a one-family dwelling with no side yards. ...
>
> **Dwelling, two-family** – a dwelling used exclusively as a residence for two families living independent of each other. *A two-family dwelling is a flat.* ...
>
> **Flat** – a two-family dwelling"

Review of the architectural plan reveals that the proposal could allow conversion of the existing basement into a second dwelling unit on the premises. Section 330.5 (a) and (b) of the Zoning Regulations (per Section 320.3 [b]) allows Row dwellings and Flats in this zoning district as a matter of right.

In light of the "building area" definition, the area of the proposed second-floor balcony is included in the following building area calculation:

Structure/Projection	Floor Area
Existing dwelling [1]	1,328 s.f.
Kitchen extension (to be demolished)	-(136 s.f.)
Garage	409 s.f.
Two-story addition	195 s.f.
2nd Floor balcony [2]	77 s.f.
TOTAL	1,873 s.f.

The property is also subject to the following provisions:

Standard	**R-4 Requirement**	**Existing**	**Proposed**	**Required Relief**
Lot Area	1,800 s.f. [3]	2,652 s.f. [1]	Same	N/A
Lot Width	18 feet	19.5 feet	Same	N/A
Floor Area	N/A	2,929 s.f. [1]	1,873 s.f. [2]	N/A
Floor Area Ratio	N/A	--	--	N/A
Height	40 feet	< 40 feet	< 40 feet	N/A
Lot Occupancy (max.)	60 %	65%	71% [4]	Variance/SE
Rear Yard	20 feet	59 feet [5]	59 feet	N/A
Side Yard	8 feet	0 feet	0 feet	Variance/SE
Parking (on-site)	1 space	2 spaces [6]	2 spaces	N/A

This review indicates that the request generally meets zoning requirements, however relief is required from the 60% lot occupancy limitation because the expanded dwelling would occupy 71% of the site, and the side yard setback requirement because the addition would have no side yard along the eastern property boundary.

ANALYSIS

Section 3104.1 grants the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) the authority "to grant special exceptions where in the judgment of the Board, those special exceptions will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps." The referenced special exception, to allow a semi-detached flat in R-4 to exceed

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[1] D.C. Land Records
[2] Revised architectural plans submitted to Jerrily R. Kress, Director, Office of Zoning dated October 14, 2003
[3] Minimum lot area for a row dwelling or flat
[4] Result reflects above-referenced building area
[5] D.C. Surveyor's Plat dated August 27, 2001 (edited)
[6] Based on the existing two-vehicle garage

the allowable lot occupancy and waive the required minimum side yard set back, is subject to the provisions of Section 223.

Compliance with Section 223
Requirements under this section include the following:

223.2 The addition shall not have a substantially adverse affect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property, in particular;

(a) The light and air available to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected; The subject property is separated from the adjacent dwelling to the east by a 15-foot wide alley. The addition wall along the western-shared lot line would not include any exterior windows. The entire addition would not extend further into the rear yard than the existing kitchen extension. As a result, the availability of light and air to neighboring properties would not be affected. The garage and landscape screen along the northern alley would be unchanged, so this proposal would also not affect properties on the opposite side of the alley.

(b) The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised; The proposed addition would not extend any further into the rear yard than the existing shed extension, and the western wall of the addition along the shared boundary would not include exterior windows. New second floor exterior windows in the eastern wall would overlook the unoccupied rear yard of the dwelling across the alley. In addition, one of the Applicants indicated that existing fences would remain along both sides of the property. This proposal would not affect properties across the alley because of the existing garage and landscape screen.

(c) The addition, together with the original building, as viewed from the street, alley, and other public way, shall not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale and pattern of houses along the street frontage; and ... Staff does not think the proposed addition would "intrude" upon either alley frontage, and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff is requiring the Applicants to provide landscaping adequate to screen the expanded window wells from A Street.

(d) In demonstrating compliance with (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection, the applicant shall use graphical representations such as plans, photographs or elevation and section drawings sufficient to represent the relationship of the proposed addition to adjacent buildings and view from public ways. Sufficient graphical documentation was submitted for staff review and analysis.

223.3 The lot occupancy of the dwelling or flat, together with the addition, shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) in the R-l and R-2 districts or seventy percent (70%) in the R-3, R-4 and R-5 Districts. The approximate total lot occupancy of 71% (including the proposed balcony) exceeds the allowable occupancy increase. Staff informed the applicant of this circumstance and recommended the Applicants:

(a) reduce total proposed building area to no more than 1,857 square feet (70% of the 2,652 square foot lot area); and
(b) submit revised plans into the public record with illustrating tabulations showing the revised building area and lot occupancy totals.

223.4 *The Board may require special treatment in the way of design, screening, exterior or interior lighting, building materials or other features for the protection of adjacent and nearby properties.* Additional treatment is not recommended because, according to the submitted plans, the addition will be constructed with bricks and windows that match the existing dwelling, and the rear yard currently is adequately screened. SHPO staff is also requiring the Applicants to provide landscaping adequate to screen the expanded window wells from A Street.

Based on these findings, OP concludes this application does not meet the requirements of Section 233 because the resulting lot occupancy would exceed 70%.

Compliance with Section 3104.1:
Based on the findings under Section 233, granting the requested relief would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations, and Zoning Map, and proposed changes will not tend to affect adversely the use of the neighboring properties.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
The Comprehensive Plan Generalized Land Use Map designates this area for Moderate Density residential development characterized by row houses and garden apartments as predominant uses. The Comprehensive Plan states, as its first principle, the importance of stability for residential neighborhoods.

Policies in support of Section 1103, Objectives for Residential Neighborhood include: "Promote the conservation, enhancement and revitalization of the residential neighborhoods of the District for housing and neighborhood-related uses; ..."

Ward 6 Objectives for Urban Design under Section 1721.1 also include the following:

"(a) To acknowledge and protect the unique architectural character of Ward 6 and preserve the continuity of the well established, essential and historic areas; ...
(c) To encourage a high quality of architecture consistent with the styles and characteristics of buildings in Ward 6."

Based on these provisions, the proposal is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6C reviewed this application during a regularly scheduled meeting on September 10, 2003 and unanimously recommended approval (refer to Exhibit 4).

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) reviewed this request because the property is located in the Capitol Hill Historic District. HPRB considered and approved the proposal in concept after a public hearing on December 19, 2002, subject to final approval of the construction plans by SHPO staff (refer to Exhibit 5). SHPO staff continues to work with the Applicants.

The Fire and Metropolitan Police Department also received copies of the application. The D.C. Fire and EMS Department expressed no objection as long as emergency vehicle access (to the alley) is maintained during construction (refer to Exhibit 6). No other comments have been received.

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends denial of this application. In the alternative, OP recommends approval when the Applicants submit revised plans into the public record with a tabulation showing sufficient reduction in total building area to reduce the planned lot occupancy to 70%.

AA/afj

Attachments:

Exhibit 1	DC Surveyor's Plat dated August 27, 2001(edited)
Exhibit 2	Aerial Including Zoning
Exhibit 3	Memorandum from Robert W. Kelly, Zoning Administrator, to Board of Zoning Adjustment dated January 31, 2003
Exhibit 4	Letter from Mark Dixon, Vice-Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6C to Jerrily Kress, Director, Office of Zoning dated September 23, 2003
Exhibit 5	Historic Preservation Review Board Staff Report and Recommendation on 622 A Street, S.E. for the Meeting on December 19, 2002
Exhibit 6	Memorandum from Richard D. Fleming, Acting Battalion Fire Chief, D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department to Andrew Altman, Director, Office of Planning date October 2, 2003

Exhibit 1

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE SURVEYOR

Washington, D.C. [illegible] 200*

Plat for Building Permit of [illegible]

Scale: 1 inch = [illegible] feet Recorded in Book [illegible] Page [illegible]

Receipt No. [illegible]

Furnished to [illegible]

Surveyor, D.C.

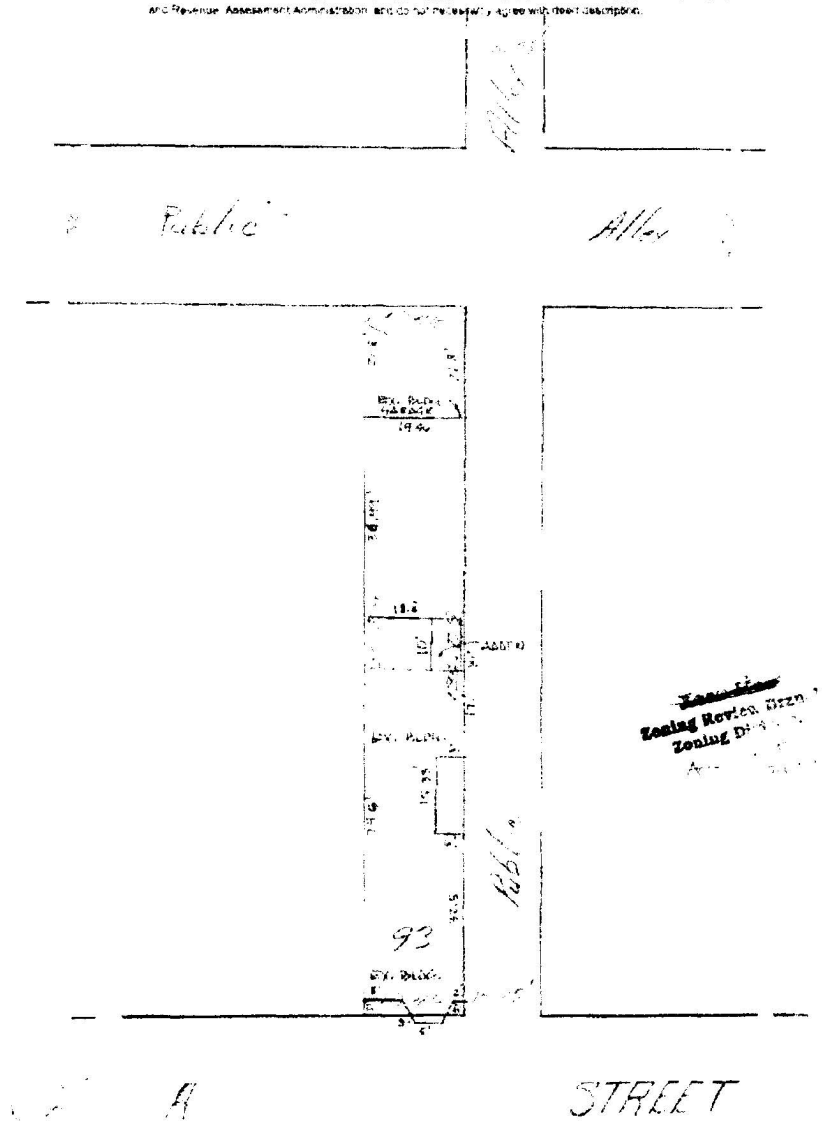
By [illegible]

I hereby certify that all existing improvements shown hereon, are completely dimensioned and are correctly platted; that all proposed buildings or construction, or parts thereof, including covered porches, are correctly dimensioned and platted and agree with plans accompanying the application; that the foundation plans as shown hereon is drawn and dimensioned accurately to the same scale as the property lines shown on this plat and that by reason of the proposed improvements to be erected as shown hereon the size of any adjoining lot or premises is not decreased to an area less than is required by the Zoning Regulations for light and ventilation; and I further certified and agreed that accessible parking areas where required by the Zoning Regulations will be reserved in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and that this area has been correctly drawn and dimensioned hereon. It is further agreed that the elevation of the accessible parking area with respect to the Highway Department approved curb and alley grade will not result in a rate of grade along centerline of driveway at any point on private property in excess of 20% for single-family dwellings or flat or at excess of 12% at any point for other buildings. (The policy of the Highway Department permits a maximum driveway grade of 12% across the public parking and the private restricted property.)

Date: 1903

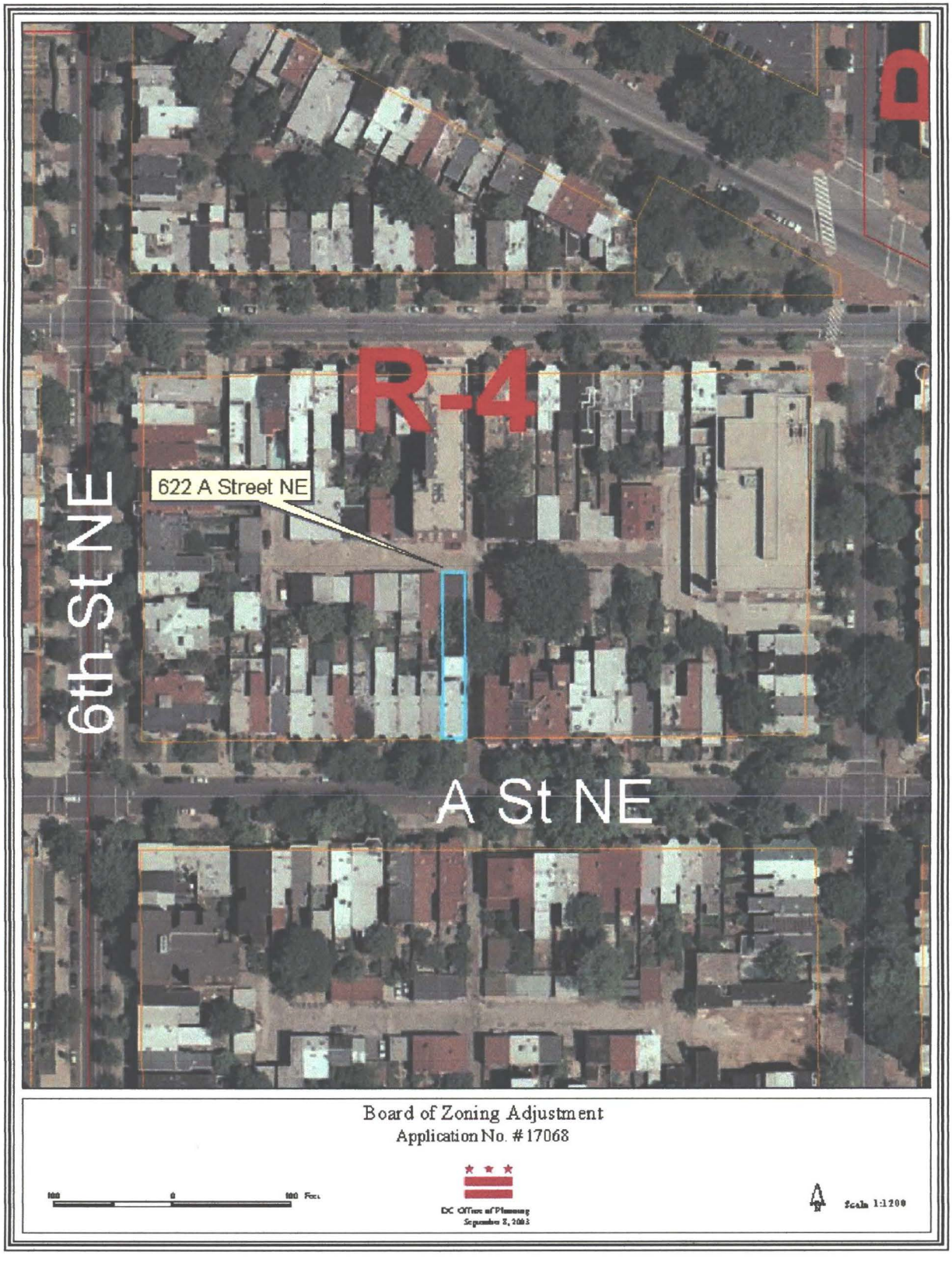
[illegible]
(Signature of owner or his authorized agent)

NOTE: Data shown for Assessment and Taxation Lots or Parcels are in accordance with the records of the Department of Finance and Revenue, Assessment Administration, and do not necessarily agree with deed descriptions.



Zoning Review
Zoning D[illegible]

Exhibit 2


R-4
622 A Street NE
6th St NE
A St NE
Board of Zoning Adjustment
Application No. #17068
DC Office of Planning
September 8, 2003
Scale 1:1200

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Building and Land Regulation Administration
Office of the Zoning Administrator

January 31, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Robert W. Kelly
Zoning Administrator

SUBJECT: Building a New Two Story Addition to an Existing Non-conforming Structure located at premises 622 A Street, N.E., Lot(s) 93, in Square 867, Zoned R-4

Review of plans for the proposed new two story addition to an existing structure at the above subject premises indicates that the Board of Zoning Adjustment approval is required as follows:

1. Special Exception relief from Sections 223 and 403.2 to allow enlargement to an existing non-conforming single family dwelling in the R-4 Zone. (Section 3104.1)

RWK/AS/ee

Exhibit 4

Government of the District of Columbia
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C

September 23, 2003

Ms. Jerrily Kress
Director
Office of Zoning
441 Fourth Street, N.W., Room 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 17068 of Eric and Holly Takamura; 622 A Street, N.E. (Square 867, Lot 93)

Dear Ms. Kress:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6C respectfully requests that the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) approve the above-referenced application by Mr. and Mrs. Takamura for special exception relief. The Takamura's appeared before the ANC and presented their plans to expand the lot occupancy of their home. Following discussion, ANC 6C voted to support the Takamuras' application at the ANC's regular meeting on September 10, 2003, which was properly noticed and at which a quorum was present -- five (5) commissioners are necessary for a quorum and five (5) commissioners were present at this meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Please give the ANC's position "great weight" in your decision on this matter.

Bill Crews, ANC 6C07, in whose single member district this property is located, is authorized to testify at the BZA hearing on this matter. If for any reason Mr. Crews cannot attend, Robert L. Hall, Jr., Chair ANC 6C, or Mark Dixon, Vice Chair ANC 6C are authorized to testify.

Sincerely,

Mark Dixon

Mark Dixon
Vice-Chair of ANC 6C

cc: Andrew Altman, Office of Planning

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	**622 A Street, NE**	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	**Capitol Hill Historic District**		Consent Calendar
		X	Concept Review
Meeting Date:	**December 19, 2002**	X	Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	**03-096**		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	**Emily Paulus**		Demolition
			Subdivision

The applicant, architect Fernando Zuniga-Pflucker for owner Eric Takamura, seeks conceptual design review for alterations and an addition to a rowhouse in the Capitol Hill Historic District. The alterations would be visible from public space while the addition would not.

The house is a two-story, late-nineteenth century, brick rowhouse. A narrow drive runs along the east side of the house, providing access to the alley at the rear. The proposal calls for the construction of a two-story addition at the rear, which measures approximately 10 feet by 10 feet. The addition would be finished in brick. Fenestration would include wood, two-over-two sash windows. A bank of French doors would be located at the first floor. The staff's only recommendation for refinement on the rear addition is to eliminate the beltcourse and restudy the ornate patio railing, in an effort to simplify the detailing.

On the main block, the proposal calls for the insertion of stairs and a small areaway at the front of the projecting bay, leading down to the relocated gas and electric meter boxes. In addition, the sills at the basement bay windows would be dropped to provide additional light into the basement apartment. The perimeter of the areaway would be bound by an iron fence. The proposal also calls for the insertion of a balcony within a recessed portion of the side elevation. To accommodate doors that would provide access to the balcony, the sills of the existing windows would be dropped and the openings converted to doors, while the first floor openings would remain intact. Stairs, a door, and two windows would be located at the basement level within the recessed portion. The existing vertical wood fence would be replaced with a metal gate. Also along the side elevation, four small windows would be located at the basement level. Finally, the existing six-over-six windows on the side elevation would be replaced with two-over-two wood windows.

While the rear addition is generally well-conceived, the most problematic aspect is in the creation of the stairs and areaway at the front façade. The insertion of the stair appears to be solely to provide access to the relocated utility boxes. Moreover, the addition of the railing along the perimeter of the areaway only calls attention to the stair. Staff would encourage the applicant to find a less invasive alternative, particularly as utility boxes are almost always relegated to secondary or rear elevations. The Board does, in some cases,

approve the creation of window wells at primary elevations, where the depth is minimal and where the change is virtually indistinguishable from the street. The applicant may want to explore the possibility of inserting a shallow window well and dropping the sills of the basement windows, to provide additional light to the basement apartment. In order to have minimal impact on public space, the window well should not have exterior stairs or doors opening to them, and should be limited to no more than three feet in depth or width.

The proposed new railings and gate also require further study, as they appear rather ornate, particularly for secondary and rear elevations. Finally, staff would urge caution in the creation of the basement apartment, as the side wall of the building (fronting the alley) will be particularly vulnerable during excavation and underpinning.

The staff recommends that the Review Board approve the project in concept as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, direct the applicant to work on design development as outlined above, and delegate final approval to staff.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Andrew Altman
Director
Office of Planning

FROM: Richard D. Fleming
Acting Battalion Fire Chief

DATE: October 2, 2003

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 17068

The D.C. Fire and EMS Department has reviewed the above request.

The applicant proposes to replace a one-story extension at the rear of the existing dwelling with a two-story addition to provide a basement mechanical room, ground floor breakfast area, and a master bedroom and bath on the second floor. The existing open court along the alley would also be converted into a basement stairway as part of this project.

We have no objection to this request, provided fire department access is maintained during the duration of the construction process.

If you have any questions concerning this review, please contact my office at 727-3659.