August 12, 2005

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Margaret Nowack
Francois Huet
165 Adams Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Board of Zoning Adjustment Application No. 17134, Vincent Jerome Walker at 163 Adams Street NW.

Dear Mr. Griffis,

Mrs. Beverly Bailey recommended that we write to you in the hope that changes can be made to the above referenced structure, or at least a written explanation or recognition of error by the DCRA regarding this case be sent to us. I have included two letters sent to Patrick Canavan in order for you to understand the situation.

We have not, to this date, received a response, despite constant communication with the DCRA office. Additionally, Jerome Walker intermittently works on his "porch", which is really a solid structure, and the back of his house and yard are a mess.

The windows, which have finally been placed in the wall facing our house are standard size, generally non-offensive, but they compromise our privacy by being less than four feet away from our property line and looming over our back garden. I do not trust that neither the DCRA nor the BZA have made an informed decision regarding this building and we will continue to wait for an explanation.

Very sincerely,

Margaret Nowack
202 387 4062 extension 20, mnowack@woodrowwilsonhouse.org
Francois Huet

BZA
Case No. 17134
Exhibit No. 42

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17134
EXHIBIT NO. 42

April 22, 2005

Mr. Patrick Canavan
DCRA Director, Room 9500
941 N. Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Margaret Nowack
Francois Huet
165 Adams Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Canavan,

Please regard this letter as a formal complaint against the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, and against Mr. Toye Bello, the Director of this department. It concerns Board of Zoning Adjustment Application No. 17134, Vincent Jerome Walker at 163 Adams Street NW.

I will try to give some background on the situation and then state my complaint. Mr. Walker intends to build an addition on the back of his house. We are immediate neighbors to 163, on the west side. The row houses occupying the block from 2nd Street, NW eastward to the first alley, have no alley running behind them. Bryant and Adams Streets, NW, form a triangle, creating back lots in this half block that progressively become smaller as they reach 2nd Street, NW.

Basically, there are very tight quarters in the back of those houses in the smallest part of the triangle. The lots are already damp and dark, mosquito havens in the summer, and frankly, desirable vegetation has a very difficult time establishing itself there.

The incomplete addition at 163 Adams Street is now taking up over 70% of the lot. The results will benefit them greatly. The sunlight falls on their addition, but will not reach our modest four foot porches, nor those of our neighbors to the west. The real concern is that the value of our property will decrease, in addition to which, to avoid looking at the side of 163's addition, we will need to extend our own porches. We have been fighting the building of the structure since its inception. This involved the DCRA and Mr. Toye Bello and his staff.

I was successful in contacting and scheduling an inspector, Inspector Antoine Walker, when I realized the foundation Mr. V.J. Walker had built was much larger than the initially approved plans. After inspection, Mr. V.J. Walker was given a "Notice of Violation" and never a "Stop Work Order", which I was given the distinct impression had been issued. I called a second time when Mr. V.J. Walker continued to build after this inspection. My phone calls to Inspector Walker were not returned, therefore I turned to Mr. Toye Bello. His explanation was very loose, stating there had been an administrative error and Mr. V. J. Walker had been told by DCRA he could continue building his addition.

Mr. V.J. Walker now claims it would be prohibitively expensive to scale the structure back to its original approved dimension of 7'4", from the current 10'. The 1st and 2nd storey of the structure, erected between December 24th and 28th—during the holiday week-- is constructed of two by four and plywood boards. It is, in my opinion, not too late to scale it back. The size is ridiculous, regardless.

I would like to understand why Mr. V.J. Walker was allowed to continue building on top of the "mistake"—the too-large foundation—when zoning knew about it when it was only the foundation. A "Stop Work Order" issued at the time of the foundation would've saved both parties a lot of grief.

In summary, I feel as if there were errors and oversights made by DCRA regarding the construction of this porch. There have been discrepancies between the approved plans for his porch and the actual structure. In addition, our identity, which we requested be anonymous, was revealed to Mr. V.J. Walker. When asked how Mr. Walker had discovered our identity, Mr. Bello's answer was: that "we would have had to reveal our identity anyway by attending a hearing". I find this explanation very flippant and do not believe that Mr. Bello's authority extends to this degree.

When we met with Mr. Bello, he would not allow us to meet with the inspector who was responsible for inspecting the property at 163 Adams Street. He also did not care to hear the background of the case, stating that no matter which mistakes had been made, which discrepancies had been revealed, or what unexplained events occurred, the case was relevant only where it stands today. This is a completely irresponsible point of view and reflects very poorly on the DCRA.

Please contact me by phone, mail or electronically with an explanation. I am curious to know why our legitimate complaint, registered in a timely manner, was not addressed with any seriousness or logic.

Very sincerely,

Margaret Nowack
202 387 4062 extension 20, mnowack@woodrowwilsonhouse.org

Francois Huet

c.c. Mr. Toye Bello

April 28, 2005

Mr. Patrick Canavan
DCRA Director, Room 9500
941 N. Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Margaret Nowack
Francois Huet
165 Adams Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Board of Zoning Adjustment Application No. 17134, Vincent Jerome Walker at 163 Adams Street NW.

Dear Mr. Canavan,

As much as it pains me to be a squeaking wheel, I feel I must bring this matter to your attention once again. If you are not the appropriate person to whom this letter should be addressed, please direct it to that department.

Much to my dismay and disbelief, Mr. V. Jerome Walker was given permission on April 7th, 2005, to continue on the structure on the back of the house at 163 Adams Street NW. As you are well aware, because we did not attend Mr. Walker's initial hearing held on March 23rd, 2004, we were not invited to participate in the second, which was held on March 28th, 2005. We did not attend the first hearing because, after a civilized discussion with Mr. Walker and his architect in 2004, we agreed upon a "sun porch full of windows and 7'4" in depth".

After the "mistaken" enlargement of the foundation, we anticipated being present at the second hearing to voice our discontent. We never received a notice for this hearing, which we were promised by a staff member in your office. I must bring to your attention the fact that, because there was a variance of almost 3 feet, the subject of the second hearing should not have been considered the same matter at all. Although small on paper, the variance is quite substantial in the context of our back garden.

For illustrative purposes, I have enclosed a photograph taken at the time when we called the DCRA to schedule an inspection. This foundation measures 10'. Wouldn't it have made sense to halt the construction while still a foundation?

I am disgusted at the cavalier manner with which the case has been handled and the discouraged by the successful deviousness that has been employed by Mr. Walker in order to continue his project. Mr. Walker has not resided at 163 Adams Street in the three years we have lived at 165. He claimed to be "out of town" when the error occurred.

As there is nothing to be done at this juncture except file a lawsuit with the District's Court of Appeals, my husband and I seem to be involuntarily working to raise the consciousness of your department for the next resident who may find themselves in the same disagreeable situation. Please advise if we are able to intercept the permit Mr. Walker is hoping to obtain.

Very sincerely,

Margaret Nowack
202 387 4062 extension 20, mnowack@woodrowwilsonhouse.org
Francois Huet

Enclosure
c.c. Mr. Toye Bello, Mr. Rick Nero