

Updated Statement of Outreach to Neighbors

From the beginning of this project, we have tried to be open and to engage with our neighbors. Recently, on October 22, 2017, we made an offer of compromise to our immediate neighbors at 1741 and 1737. The compromise is to pull back to 11 feet on the third floor (top) and 13 feet on the second floor (bottom). This offer is contingent upon the neighbors dropping their opposition before the BZA.¹

When we started this process over a year ago, we were sensitive to the possibility that our neighbors would have concerns. In our discussions with our architects, we tried to come up with a modest plan that would accommodate our needs as a family long-term, while taking into account potential objections our neighbors may have. This is a delicate balance. At the time, of course, we were not aware of the new 10 feet regulations, which had not gone into effect. As our plans firmed up in the spring of this year, we started to have conversations with our neighbors.²

Below is a brief summary of our outreach efforts:

- On May 5, 2017, Peng had lunch with the renter at 1737. Peng told her about our renovation plans, showed her the architects' drawings, and also asked for the owner's contact information. We followed up by email on May 17, 2017.
- Sometime later in May, we discussed the plans in person during a casual conversation with the owner Eric Picard at 1741. He was surprised and not very pleased, but we said we would continue the conversation.
- On June 3, 2017, we sent an email to four immediate neighbors (2 on each side, including 1743, 1741, 1737, and 1735).
- On June 24 2017, we invited Eric at 1741 to come over for one-on-one discussion. During this conversation, we showed him the drawings, explained our reasons for the renovation, and spoke about the BZA process. We said we hoped to avoid an adversarial hearing with our neighbors, and offered to continue the conversation.

¹ As of the date of this Statement, October 25, 2017, the neighbors have not responded to our offer.

² Given the way that these proceedings have gone, future applicants for special exceptions under this regulation will likely start from a very extreme and aggressive position, knowing that they will need to negotiate down in order to gain favor with the ANC. This is not really efficient and exacerbates tensions between neighbors. We argue that we started from a very moderate position. Taking the top floor, for example, there is not much room for compromise between 10 and 12 feet. And indeed, we have offered 11.

- Throughout the summer of 2017, we continued conversations with the owners of 1737 via email because they are absentee landlords. On August 24, 2017, we scheduled a conference call with them and our contractors and architects to address their questions and concerns. Around this time, we learned that they had hired the law firm of Cozen O'Connor to represent them. On October 20, 2017, we had a conference call with their attorney.
- On October 22, 2017, we emailed an offer of compromise to our immediate adjacent neighbors at 1737 and 1741. We offered to scale back our setback to 11 feet on top and 13 feet on the bottom, contingent upon them dropping their opposition to the special exception before the BZA.