

Statement in Support of Special Exception Relief under Subtitle X § 901.2

Applicant: Willis Capital Group LLC

Representative: Sahnur Bostan, Axis Architects

Property Address: 616 and 618 55th Street NE, Washington, D.C.

Zoning Relief Requested:

- Special Exception from the **side yard setback requirement**
- Special Exception from the **lot coverage limit (up to 50%)**

Applicable Zoning Sections:

- Subtitle X § 901.2 (Special Exception Standards)
- Subtitle D § [side yard and lot coverage relief sections Subtitle D Sections D 5201.1(a) and 5201.1(b)]

The Applicant seeks special exception relief from the required side yard setback and lot coverage limit to construct two new residential buildings on adjacent vacant lots at 616 and 618 55th Street NE. The homes are being built as high-quality infill housing, consistent with the surrounding neighborhood of single-family and two-unit dwellings. The requested relief allows for livable, well-designed homes that maximize functionality while maintaining neighborhood compatibility.

General Special Exception Standards – Subtitle X § 901.2

(a) The proposal is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

The project contributes to the city's infill housing goals while aligning with the scale, use, and design of neighboring homes. The requested side yard and lot coverage relief allow efficient use of narrow lots in a residential zone, consistent with the Zoning Map and Comprehensive Plan.

(b) The proposal will not adversely affect neighboring property.

The homes are designed to preserve air, light, and privacy for adjacent neighbors. The additional lot coverage and reduced side yard do not create crowding, excessive bulk, or disruption to the surrounding homes.

(c) The project meets all other applicable zoning conditions.

The proposal complies with height, rear yard, use, and other dimensional standards. No additional zoning relief is requested beyond what is listed.

Additional Relief Criteria – Side Yard & Lot Coverage

The application also satisfies the criteria for relief from both **side yard** and **lot coverage** requirements:

(a) *Light and air available to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected.*

The proposed buildings are properly scaled, and the massing has been carefully designed to preserve airflow and daylight for neighboring homes. The increase in lot coverage does not result in overshadowing or bulk out of scale with the block.

(b) *The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised.*

The building layout, window placement, and setbacks have been designed to limit sightlines into adjacent yards or homes, thereby preserving the privacy of neighbors.

(c) *The proposed buildings will not substantially visually intrude on the character, scale, or pattern of houses along the street or alley.*

The buildings match the height, setback rhythm, and material expression of nearby homes. Increasing lot coverage to 50% enables a more livable interior layout while keeping the homes visually compatible with the neighborhood.

(d) *Plans, photos, and elevations are provided to demonstrate compatibility with the surrounding properties and public space.*

This application includes site plans, elevations, and photos showing how the new construction relates to neighboring buildings and the broader streetscape.

Justification for Lot Coverage Relief and Side Yard Relief

The increase in lot coverage to **50%** is necessary to provide **adequate interior living space** for future residents. Due to the narrow width of the lots, additional lot coverage ensures the home layouts are functional, comfortable, and appropriate for family use — without adding unnecessary height or massing. This modest increase allows for better room configurations and livable square footage while respecting the neighborhood context. Side Yard Relief will aid the construction of the home. We will need 4ft side yard relief to assist in building a 16ft wide home seeing as though the lot is only 20ft wide. The side yard relief will not hinder light, air, or privacy of the neighbors. Due to the narrow lot width and existing development pattern in the neighborhood, strict compliance with the side yard setback would create a practical difficulty and limit the buildable area. The proposed design maintains light, air, and privacy for neighboring properties and is consistent with the character of the surrounding homes. Therefore, the requested side yard relief will not adversely affect the use or enjoyment of adjacent properties.

Conclusion

This application meets the standards for a special exception under Subtitle X § 901.2 and the additional criteria for both side yard and lot coverage relief. The project provides high-quality infill development that is compatible with the

surrounding neighborhood in character, scale, and impact. The Applicant respectfully requests approval of the requested relief.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Willis

Date: 7/23/2025

