

Applicant Statement
Special Exception Application

2901 Ellicott Terrace NW (Square 2278, Lot 0028)

To: The Board of Zoning Adjustment
Government of the District of Columbia
Suite 210 South 441 4th St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Date: December 1, 2025

Subject: Replacement and Expansion of Existing Rear Addition to Single-Family Home

1. Nature of Relief Sought

The Applicant seeks special exception relief pursuant to Subtitle D § 5201 (Additions to a Building or Accessory Structure) and Subtitle C § 202.2 (Additions to Non-Conforming Structures) to allow for the replacement and modest expansion of an existing rear addition to a single-family home in the R-1-A/FH Zone. Relief is required because the expansion extends a wall that is non-compliant with the required rear yard setback (25 feet) as established in Subtitle D § 207.1

2. Background

A. Description of the Property and Surrounding Area

The Subject Property is located in an R-1A/FH Zone with a total lot area of 13,378.51 square feet. The property is improved with a two-story single-family home with basement. The existing building height is 25 feet, well below the maximum allowed height of 40 feet.

Currently, the lot occupancy is 8.7% (1,163.78 SF) with the main dwelling occupying 1,786 SF. The R-1A/FH Zone allows a maximum lot occupancy of 30% (4,013.55 SF). The existing rear yard setback is 13.61 feet, and the minimum required rear yard setback for the zone is 25 feet.

B. Proposed Project and Construction Logic

The Applicant is proposing to remove the existing rear bump-out (5' wide x 6' deep) and construct a new, wider rear addition (15' wide x 6' deep) to accommodate the expansion of the existing kitchen area.

Scope: The project adds approximately 54 square feet of additional living space (expanding the width by 10 feet while maintaining the existing 6-foot depth).

Setback Preservation: Critically, the expansion will not extend the rear addition further from the rear property line—the depth remains constant at approximately 13.61 FT from the rear property line. The proposal only increases the width, thereby maintaining the existing non-compliant rear setback and not increasing the degree of the existing non-conformity. The rear yard setback line is preserved exactly.

Site Condition: The construction area is currently a paved patio, minimizing disruption to vegetated areas.

Design: The new addition is a one-story replacement structure. It maintains the existing pattern of fenestration (an existing window will be replaced with a new window). Lot occupancy increases modestly to 9.1%.

3. Application for Special Exception

A. Description of the Requested Relief

The Applicant requests special exception relief for the replacement and expansion of an existing rear addition. The existing rear addition has an established rear yard setback of 13.61 feet, which does not comply with the R-1A/FH Zone requirement of 25 feet. However, the proposed expansion does not extend this non-compliant setback any further—it maintains the existing rear setback line precisely. Therefore, the expansion does not worsen the zoning non-compliance; it preserves the existing condition while providing beneficial improvements to the property.

B. Compliance with Special Exception Review Standards

The proposed project satisfies the applicable standards for special exception relief.

i. Procedural Compliance (Subtitle X, Chapter 9)

The Applicant has submitted detailed architectural plans, site analysis, and comprehensive documentation supporting this application in accordance with all procedural requirements.

ii. Harmony with Zoning Intent (Subtitle D § 5201.1(f))

The R-1A/FH Zone is designed to maintain low-density, single-family residential development. The proposed kitchen addition achieves this by:

- Resulting in lot occupancy of only 9.1%, significantly below the 30% maximum allowed

- Maintaining the existing rear yard setback of 13.61 feet without extending further from the rear property line
- Preserving the existing building height at 25 feet, well below the 40-foot maximum
- Employing low-impact construction (pedestal footings) that minimizes grading and tree removal, consistent with Forest Hills Overlay environmental goals

iii. Light and Air (Subtitle D § 901.2(a))

The addition is a one-story replacement and widening of an existing structure. It maintains existing height and adds only minor lateral bulk through replacement rather than supplementation. No new, significant shadows or interruption to light and air flow to neighboring properties will result.

iv. Privacy and Use and Enjoyment (Subtitle D § 901.2(b))

The proposed window is a replacement of an existing window, creating no new sightlines. Privacy is protected by existing site conditions:

- Rear property line: Wood fence and abundant existing vegetation
- East neighbors: Wood fence and abundant existing vegetation and another house situated below Subject Property due to topography and further screening by substantial bamboo fence
- West neighbor: Abundant existing vegetation
- Street visibility: Minimal due to approximately 90-foot front setback

v. Character of the Neighborhood (Subtitle D § 901.2(c))

The replacement rear addition:

- Uses exterior siding materials matching the existing rear addition and second floor finish, creating visual continuity
- Maintains modest one-story scale consistent with neighborhood character
- Represents a typical single-family residential improvement
- Employs low-impact construction preserving existing trees
- Results in no tree removal

vi. Compliance with Forest Hills (FH) Overlay Criteria

The proposed construction demonstrates commitment to environmental preservation:

- **Preservation of Topography and Slopes:** Pedestal footings minimize grading and excavation, protecting natural topography and adjacent slopes. The construction area is already a paved patio, eliminating the need for grass or tree removal for foundation work, thereby preserving pervious surface areas.
- **Protection of Trees:** The low-impact construction approach (pedestal footings on a paved area) maintains the Critical Root Zones of any nearby specified trees, ensuring the preservation of the mature tree canopy. The required Tree Protection Plan will confirm that this low-impact method is superior to traditional trench foundations for preserving the environment.
- **Ground Coverage:** The proposed 0.4% increase in lot occupancy is negligible and ensures that the Subject Property maintains the open, park-like setting intended by the FH Overlay.

4. Conclusion

The proposed replacement and expansion of the existing rear addition is a minor modification that meets a practical need (kitchen expansion) while maintaining the property's non-conforming rear setback without increasing the degree of non-conformity.

The foregoing analysis demonstrates compliance with the applicable Special Exception Review Standards pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9, including the Review Standards of Subtitle D § 901.1, § 901.2(a), § 901.2(b) and § 901.2(c).

The Applicant respectfully requests approval of this special exception relief.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Barber".

Mary Barber