

Communications with Neighbors and ANC

I. ANC 6B

Applicants presented to ANC 6B's Zoning and Planning Committee about their proposed addition and received the unanimous support of both the Committee and the full ANC 6B Commission. ANC 6B wrote a letter of support to the Board of Zoning Adjustment ("BZA"), which is enclosed.

II. Neighbors within 200 Feet

Applicants also reached out to neighbors about the proposed addition. Applicants sent a letter to all neighbors owning property within 200 feet of Applicants' house explaining that Applicants were planning to do a small, rear addition in order to update Applicants' kitchen and were applying for a variance and a special exception for certain zoning regulations. The letter provided Applicants' contact information and asked neighbors to reach out to them with any questions. Applicants received five letters of support from neighbors on Duddington Place, 2nd Street, and E Street, S.E., including one letter that initially opposed Applicants' proposal but then changed his mind and supported the project after Applicants explained the project in greater detail. A copy of the letters of support are also enclosed.

III. Adjacent Neighbors (154 and 158 Duddington)

Applicants also invited their immediately adjacent neighbors at 154 and 158 Duddington Place S.E. over to their home to review their plans in detail and answer any questions that they had. Applicants' neighbor at 158 Duddington Place, S.E., had no concerns and wrote a letter of support, which is enclosed. Applicants' neighbor at 154 Duddington Place, S.E., expressed two concerns during the initial meeting, which Applicants carefully considered and promptly addressed the next day via email. The neighbor's two main concerns were:

- First, the possibility of Applicants or a subsequent owner adding a second story to the addition later and the impact of that on the resale value of the neighbor's house. Applicants reassured the neighbor that Applicants have no plans to ever build a second story. This addition is simply to expand Applicants' kitchen, nothing more. Applicants also informed the neighbor that the addition would only be built to hold a single story and would not be able to physically sustain a second story. Applicants offered to have their architect draft a formal letter for him stating this so that he could have it for his files if anyone should ask about it later.
- Second, the neighbor wanted Applicants to retain the existing fence between their two properties. Applicants told him that, based on Applicants' survey, it looks like most of the fence is actually on his property and Applicants would not alter anything that is on his property. Any unintentional damage during construction would be repaired at Applicants' expense and to his satisfaction.

These were the only two concerns that he expressed to Applicants during their meeting. Applicants did not hear anything further from their neighbor until their ANC Representative reached out and informed them that the neighbor had written a letter expressing new concerns to the ANC that he had yet not brought up to Applicants. His new concerns related to a possible reduction in open space, restriction on light flow into at least one of the windows in his house, and the general open feel that

BZA Case No. 19933
156 Duddington Place, S.E.

currently exists. He also mentioned again his concern about the resale value of his home, and Applicants learned that he also mentioned the fear of setting a harmful precedent in the neighbor.

Applicants addressed their neighbor's concerns at the ANC Zoning and Planning Committee Meeting as follows:

- **Space** – The rear of Applicants' property is currently enclosed on all sides by a 6-7 foot tall fence. The existing fence clearly separates Applicants' property from 154 Duddington and does not lend an open feel between the two rear yards or doglegs. Applicants' proposed addition would only be a few feet higher than the existing fence, so it will have the same effect on the feel of the space as the existing fence does. Applicants understand how a second story addition could possibly make Applicants' neighbor's dogleg feel like a tunnel, but the single story addition will not have that effect. Applicants are also not extending the current rear line of Applicants' house any further toward the alley, so the neighbor would not be able to feel the addition in the usable space of his rear patio, which lines up to Applicants'.
- **Light** – Since the front of Applicants' and their neighbor's houses face south (which fortunately brings a lot of natural light into the front of the houses), the rear faces north, which means that Applicants and their adjacent neighbor only get indirect light in their doglegs. The photos show how both Applicants' and the neighbor's backyard currently have growth on the brick patios from the constant shade and lack of direct sunlight. Because there is only indirect light coming into both Applicants' and the neighbor's doglegs, the proposed single-story addition would not block any more light into the neighbor's dogleg than is already blocked by the existing structures that are on and around the two properties. The neighbor only has one window looking into his dogleg on the first story, and Applicants do not believe that he would be able to quantify any level of light change in that window due to the proposed addition because of the lack of direct sunlight in the dogleg.
- **Neighborhood at Large** – The proposed addition does not affect any of the neighbors at large. Applicants' house is built at grade, meaning that there are no steps leading down to their rear patio. Applicants' house is also at a lower elevation than the alley and Applicants' neighbors on E Street. Because of this, Applicants' first story is virtually invisible from the alley and their E Street neighbors' rear patios. The photo showing the view of Applicants' house from the rear patio shows how much of the first story the existing fence covers and demonstrates how the addition will not be able to be seen from the alley unless someone purposefully attempts to peer over Applicants' fence. Applicants' neighbor's addition at 120 Duddington is actually more visible than Applicants' would be because of the nature of Applicants' property and the fact that Applicants' fence along the alley is taller than the one at 120 Duddington.
- **Resale value** – Applicants disagreed that the addition would have any negative impact on their neighbor's resale for the reasons stated above. The light and openness of his property will remain the same. Applicants are not doing a second story, which was his main concern when Applicants met with him before. The real estate market in Applicants' area is incredibly strong right now, and any improvements to the neighborhood, like Applicants' proposed addition, only help to overall increase the value of Applicants' neighborhood. Moreover, others have already done similar structures in the back of their houses, and it has not impacted the resale value of properties in Applicants' neighborhood.

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156 Duddington Place, S.E.

- Setting Precedent – As stated above, others on Applicants’ block already have done similar additions or have various styles of homes originally built without doglegs. Applicants are not the first ones to do this. Applicants would also only be increasing their square footage by 58 square feet, not doing a huge addition. In addition, the Zoning Board recently stated that none of its decisions have precedential value. All cases are decided on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, Applicants’ case cannot be used as a precedent in any other cases.

Applicants’ ANC Representative noted that she asked their neighbor if Applicants could make any changes to their proposal that would satisfy him, and he responded that there was nothing Applicants could change and that he was against any change.

Applicants also received one letter of opposition from another neighbor on Duddington that they sent to the ANC expressing similar concerns to Applicants neighbor at 154 Duddington. Applicants promptly responded to and addressed each of their concerns via email and have not heard any more from them.

Neither of the two neighbors expressing opposition to the proposed addition attended any of the ANC 6B meetings. Applicants addressed all of their concerns at the ANC 6B Zoning and Planning Committee meeting and, as stated above, received unanimous approval from the Committee and full ANC.

IV. Neighbor at 118 Duddington (Adjacent to Similar Addition at 120 Duddington)

Finally, Applicants also reached out to their neighbor at 118 Duddington Place, S.E., whose property is currently adjacent to a very similar addition in the rear dogleg of 120 Duddington Place, S.E. The neighbor at 118 Duddington Place, S.E. stated that the addition made no difference to his property than a fence would and expressed no concerns about the existing addition at 120 or Applicants’ proposed addition.

A copy of all correspondence with neighbors has been enclosed with this application.

Letters of Support



Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Proposed Addition to 156 Duddington PI SE

1 message

jschreifer@gmail.com <jschreifer@gmail.com>

Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 3:08 AM

To: Josh Kuyers <jkuys9@gmail.com>, Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Cc: Matt <matt.oconnell@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern –

We have met with our next-door neighbors, Josh and Sarah Beth Kuyers, to discuss their proposed plans for a one-story to their home at [156 Duddington Place SE](#). We understand the addition will not exceed one story, will not be visible from the front of the house, and will not extend past their current exterior wall toward the alley. We do not oppose their plans.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions –

Jill Schreifer

[158 Duddington PI SE](#)

202.731.0098



Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Addition

Michael Mobilia <mmobilia@gmail.com>

Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 10:21 PM

Reply-To: mmobilia@gmail.com

To: Josh Kuyers <jkuys9@gmail.com>, Sarah Beth Smith <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Josh and Sarah Beth Kuyers -

We support your proposed addition to your house.

Michael Mobilia
Brooke Weidenbenner
[129 Duddington PI SE](#)



Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

remodel

Mark Begich <markbegich@gmail.com>
To: sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com

Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 3:29 PM

I have a home at 142 F street SE, I do not object with the renovation. Good luck.

Mark Begich

—
[Security, Opportunity, Compassion, Results](#)

[What we care about as Alaskans](#)

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Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Addition to your house

Marlene Carlson <marleneanncarlson@gmail.com>
To: sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com

Sun, Jan 6, 2019 at 11:48 AM

Dear Sarah and Josh:

My husband and I have no objection to your receiving a variance to zoning regulations in order to proceed with an addition to the rear of your house. We think it's probably more important for you to receive an approval from your immediate neighbors than from those of us who live several blocks away. But we hope you are successful in getting the variance.

mc

Marlene Carlson
[142 E Street SE](#)
[Washington, DC 20003](#)



Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Rear Addition to 156 Duddington

buckalva@aol.com <buckalva@aol.com>
To: sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com

Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:57 AM

Sarah Beth and Josh,

I have looked at your plans. I have no objection from a community viewpoint but I find, for you, that it is a horrible idea. First of all, you still have the problem of the rear door being accessed thru the kitchen. Next of all, you have eliminated the natural light in your dining room. In order to achieve that arrangement requires extreme structural changes. For example, a large steel beam to support the masonry wall of the second floor. I am sending this email to state that I will not object to what I consider your folly.

As to your references to other properties to justify your project. Be careful what you cite. For example, the rear garage at 511 2nd St was constructed before the present zoning laws were enacted in 1958. Those types of changes were why the zoning laws were passed. As to historic preservation, the house at the corner of 2nd and Duddington (the white stucco) is an example of why the historic preservation law was passed. Both examples are "grandfathered in" by law.

If you should want to discuss anything with me, please feel free to email me. Again, I appreciate that you are doing your project in a legal way instead of the illegal work that has been done as some of the garages.

For my personal reasons, I will not be able to attend any ANC meetings.

John Buckalew

Letter of Support from ANC 6B



January 22, 2019

921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20003-2141
6B@anc.dc.gov

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- SMD 08 Chander Jayaraman
- SMD 09 Kasie Clark
- SMD 10 Denise Krepp

Mr. Frederick Hill, Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200/210-S
Washington, DC 20001

VIA: Interactive Zoning Information System Filing

RE: BZA #19933: 156 Duddington Place, SE; Special exception to construct a one-story rear addition to an existing, attached principal dwelling unit

Dear Chairman Hill:

At a regularly scheduled, properly noticed, meeting on January 15, 2019, with a quorum present, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6B voted 9-0-0 in support of the above-referenced request.

The Commission recognizes the uniqueness of this particular block which contains very small historic houses with rear doglegs. We appreciate that the Applicant limited the size of the addition to only one story which is not easily visible from the rear alley and poses no privacy issues with the abutting neighbor.

Please find enclosed a completed copy of Form 129.

Please contact Commissioner Corey Holman, ANC 6B's Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Committee Chair, at 301-664-4132 or 6b06@anc.dc.gov if you have questions or need further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chander Jayaraman".

Chander Jayaraman
Chair, ANC 6B

Attachment

cc:

Applicant/Architect: Sarah Beth and Josh Kuyers
P&Z Chair: Corey Holman
SMD Commissioner: Jennifer Samolyk, 6B01



**BEFORE THE ZONING COMMISSION AND
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**



FORM 129 – ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION (ANC) REPORT

Before completing this form, please review the instructions on the reverse side.

Pursuant to §§ 3012.5 and 3115.1 of Title 11 DCMR Zoning Regulations, the written report of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) shall contain the following information:

IDENTIFICATION OF APPEAL, PETITION, OR APPLICATION:

Case No.:		Case Name:	
Address or Square/Lot(s) of Property:			
Relief Requested:			

ANC MEETING INFORMATION


Date of ANC Public Meeting:	D	D	/	M	M	/	Y	Y	Was proper notice given?:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Description of how notice was given:													
Number of members that constitutes a quorum:		Number of members present at the meeting:											

MATERIAL SUBSTANCE

The issues and concerns of the ANC about the appeal, petition, or application as related to the standards of the Zoning Regulations against which the appeal, petition, or application must be judged (*a separate sheet of paper may be used*):

The recommendation, if any, of the ANC as to the disposition of the appeal, petition, or application (*a separate sheet of paper may be used*):

AUTHORIZATION

ANC		Recorded vote on the motion to adopt the report (i.e. 4-1-1):	
Name of the person authorized by the ANC to present the report:			
Name of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson authorized to sign the report:			
Signature of Chairperson/ Vice-Chairperson:		Date:	

**ANY APPLICATION THAT IS FOUND TO BE INCOMPLETE MAY NOT BE ACCORDED "GREAT WEIGHT" PURSUANT TO
11 DCMR §§ 3012 AND 3115.**

INSTRUCTIONS

Pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 3012.6 and 3115.2, the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment shall give “*great weight*” to the written report of the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), as required by the Comprehensive Advisory Neighborhood Commissions Reform Amendment Act of 2000.

1. All ANC reports shall be made pursuant to this form. If additional space is necessary, use separate sheets of 8½" x 11" paper to complete the form.
2. Present this form and supporting documents to the Office of Zoning at 441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 200-S, Washington, D.C. 20001.
3. Submission deadlines are as follows:

For Zoning Commission:

- a. ANCs must file this form at least seven (7) calendar days in advance of the hearing, if they wish to participate in a contested case under § 3022.
- b. ANCs may file this form as long as the case record is open, if they wish to participate in a rulemaking case under § 3021.

For Board of Zoning Adjustment:

- a. ANCs must file this form at least seven (7) calendar days in advance of the hearing.



If you need a reasonable accommodation for a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Fair Housing Act, please complete a Form 155 - Request for Reasonable Accommodation.

District of Columbia Office of Zoning

441 4th Street, N.W. Ste. 200-S, Washington, D.C. 20001

(202) 727-6311 * (202) 727-6072 fax * www.dcoz.dc.gov * dcoz@dc.gov

Correspondence with Neighbor at 154 Duddington



Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

your proposed addition

Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com>
To: Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Thu, Jan 24, 2019 at 11:25 AM

Well. We do disagree. Much of the light that flows into my living room comes from the access to the sky which I can see very visibly over the top of the fence between our properties. Your addition will block my access to the sky by approximately 3 feet above the existing height of the fence. Unavoidably that obstruction will significantly reduce the flow of natural light into the window on the ground floor of my house. I very much hope it were not so, but it is.

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>
Date: Thursday, Jan 24, 2019, 11:16 AM
To: Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com>
Subject: Re: your proposed addition

We understand your concerns but disagree that the addition would affect the light entering the window in your dogleg. Since there is currently only indirect light entering that window, we could not block it with only a single story addition. If you did a shadow study on the proposed addition, there would be no measurable change in the amount of light on your property than what is currently there.

Thanks,
Sarah Beth

On Thu, Jan 24, 2019 at 10:49 AM Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com> wrote:

The light we get into our rear windows is indirect, but construction of your addition will create a narrow long tunnel that absolutely will restrict natural light into my living room. I wish it were not so. As I explained to you, I am very concerned about the reduction in my property value that your construction will cause. Sorry, but that's an unpleasant reality for me.

Rick

RICK BOUCHER
Partner
SIDLEY AUSTIN LLP
1501 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
+1 202 736 8290
rboucher@sidley.com
www.sidley.com

From: Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 24, 2019 9:24 AM
To: Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com>
Subject: Re: your proposed addition

Hi Rick,

I'm not sure of the exact height of the current fence, but I believe it is about 6-7 feet tall (I can confirm tonight). The addition will be about 10 feet tall, which would be about 3 feet higher than the fence. However, because the front of our houses face south, the rear faces north and only gets indirect light. Because of the fact that we only get indirect light in our rear doglegs (i.e., it is already in a shadow from the existing houses and fences), our addition would not block any more light into your dogleg than it currently has. We're happy to discuss further if you'd like.

Thanks,

Sarah Beth

On Thu, Jan 24, 2019 at 9:13 AM Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com> wrote:

Sara Beth,

I'm assessing the amount of natural light restriction I will experience if your addition is constructed. The window on my ground floor that overlooks the dogleg will be severely restricted. My living room will be very dark as a consequence.

I don't know the planned height of your addition. Will it be higher than the height of the fence that is on our boundary line?

Thanks for the additional information.

Rick

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rboucher@sidley.com
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From: Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 07, 2019 11:16 AM
To: Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com>
Cc: Josh Kuyers <jkuys9@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: your proposed addition

Hi Rick,

We wanted to reach out and follow up from our email on Thursday since we haven't heard back yet. We addressed the two concerns that you brought up when we met on Wednesday. Let us know if you have any other concerns or would like to discuss this further.

Also, you are probably already aware of this, but our neighbors at 120 Duddington have already done an addition that is almost exactly like what we are proposing. Attached is a photo from the alley.

Thanks,

Sarah Beth

On Thu, Jan 3, 2019 at 9:20 PM Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Rick,

Thanks again for coming over last night to discuss our proposed addition. We understand your two concerns and are hoping to resolve them and get your support for the project.

First, I spoke to our architect (my dad) about your concern with the possibility of adding a second story later and the impact of that on your resale value. My dad stated that the footings for the addition would only be able to carry the weight of a single story and would not physically be able to carry two stories. He offered to draft a formal letter for you stating that the addition would be structured for a single story only and would not be able to sustain a second story. You could then have this letter to show a future buyer of your home if they express any concerns about a future second story. We hope that this could be a sufficient alternative to your proposed agreement in which we and any future owners would agree to never build a second story.

In addition to the structural limitations, we believe that there are legal/zoning barriers to a second story, as we briefly discussed last night. It is our understanding that, if someone did want to add a second story, they would need to go through the same variance and special exception application process that we are currently going through because the second story would be a modification to the existing "non-conformity" of our house with the zoning regulations. Any further non-conformity (i.e., a second story on the addition) would need to be reviewed and approved by the zoning board. We have learned that you cannot be "grandfathered" into being able to build another non-conforming structure by having or getting approval for one; this is the reason why we have to go through this process right now even though all of the houses on Duddington are already in violation of certain zoning regulations. If anyone were to ever submit an application for a second story to the addition, you or a future owner of your house would be able to raise

concerns specifically about the second story during that application process. We could send you the citations for the relevant zoning regulations if you're interested.

Second, we understand your desire to keep the existing fence between our properties as-is. We are also hoping to keep it untouched. We looked back at the survey of our property that we obtained when buying our house two years ago. I can forward it to you in a separate email. It's a little unclear, but it looks like the fence starts on or pretty close to the property line between our two houses, as you mentioned, and then angles into your property slightly as it gets closer to the alley. Our project would not affect any part of the fence that is on your property. If we have to temporarily remove/alter any part of the fence that is on our property, we will make sure the contractor does so carefully and restores the fence to your satisfaction.

Let us know what you think. We're happy to get together again or talk over the phone if you'd like to discuss further.

Thanks!

Sarah Beth

On Wed, Jan 2, 2019 at 12:19 PM Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com> wrote:

Thanks. I'll drop by around 7:30 pm.

Rick

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Date: Wednesday, Jan 02, 2019, 12:02 PM

To: Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com>

Cc: Josh Kuyers <jkuys9@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: your proposed addition

Hi Rick,

Thanks for your email. Tonight would be great. Josh (cc'd) and I should be home by 7pm if sometime after that works for you? You're welcome to come over to our house so that we can show you our existing layout along with the plans.

Thanks!

Sarah Beth

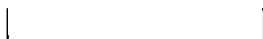
On Wed, Jan 2, 2019 at 11:25 AM Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com> wrote:

Sarah Beth,

I am interested in learning more about your proposed addition. I will be home this evening and early Thursday morning if either time is convenient for you.

Rick

RICK BOUCHER
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Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Survey

Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>
To: "Boucher, Rick" <rboucher@sidley.com>

Thu, Jan 24, 2019 at 9:27 AM

Of course, we are only planning to utilize the space that is on our property. Our more detailed plans for permitting and construction will note exactly where the property line is, and the addition will only go up to that line.

Thanks,
Sarah Beth

On Thu, Jan 24, 2019 at 9:24 AM Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com> wrote:

Sarah Beth,

Thanks for sending the survey. I did not notice it previously. It looks like the wall between our properties angles onto my property from about the start of the dogleg until it reaches the alley. I was not aware of the divergence of the fence from the property line previously. I assume that in your planning you have taken into account the fact that my property extends slightly beyond the fence from the start of the divergence until it reaches the alley.

Rick

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rboucher@sidley.com
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From: Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 03, 2019 9:22 PM
To: Boucher, Rick <rboucher@sidley.com>
Cc: Josh Kuyers <jkuys9@gmail.com>
Subject: Survey

Rick,

Attached is the survey of our property from when we bought our house.

Thanks!

Sarah Beth

This e-mail is sent by a law firm and may contain information that is privileged or confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please delete the e-mail and any attachments and notify us immediately.

Correspondence with Neighbor at 150 Duddington



Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Proposed Addition at 156 Duddington

1 message

Sarah Beth Kuyers <sarahbethsmith2@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 23, 2019 at 9:02 AM

To: 2can@mindspring.com

Cc: Josh Kuyers <jkuys9@gmail.com>

Dear Albert and Susan,

We received your letter last Tuesday night about the proposed addition to our house at 156 Duddington. Thank you for reaching out to us about your concerns. We do not want to upset anyone in the neighborhood with the proposal and designed our addition to have as minimal of an impact as possible. We would like to address and hopefully alleviate each of the concerns that you described in the letter.

First, we would like to tell you a little bit about ourselves, what we are planning to do, and why. We bought our house at 156 Duddington just over two years ago. We absolutely love this street and feel fortunate to live here. Both my husband and I grew up in old houses and love their charm and quirks, and we think that Duddington is one of the prettiest streets in DC. We do not want to interfere with the feeling and character of our street or neighborhood. We are planning to expand our family soon and are hoping to live in this house for a very long time and raise our children here.

For these reasons, we have been carefully considering how to make our house work best long-term for our family. We spend a considerable amount of time in the kitchen because we cook almost every meal at home. Our kitchen is about 14 feet long by 9 feet wide, which is a pretty good size for Capitol Hill homes, but our kitchen also contains a half bath and a laundry room, which severely constricts the space. To open up that space, relocate the laundry room, and make the kitchen more functional for everyday use, we are proposing to fill in the space of our dogleg right next to our kitchen and therefore add about 4 feet to the width of our kitchen. We carefully considered several other options for our kitchen and came to a decision that this design would work best for our family for the long-term.

A copy of our architectural plans and elevations are attached to this email. Our proposed addition is on the first floor only and does not extend the current rear line of our house; it will simply enclose our dogleg on the first floor only. The addition would be very small and only add about 58 square feet (4 feet by 14 feet) to our house.

In your letter, you expressed a concern about the proposed addition going against the Duddington tradition. As you may already be aware, several people on our street have already added small additions to the back of their homes to make these beautiful old homes better accommodate modern living. Attached is a photo of one example at 120 Duddington, which is actually very similar to what we are proposing. We are not proposing anything that would go beyond what has already been done to other houses on our block or anything that would impair the character of our street.

Your first concern is about the reduction in open space between the rear of our property and 154 Duddington. The rear of our property is currently enclosed on all sides by a tall fence. I've also attached a photo showing this. The existing fence clearly separates our property from 154 Duddington and does not lend an open feel between our two rear yards or doglegs. Our proposed addition will only be a few feet higher than the existing fence, so it will have the same effect on the feel of the space as the existing fence does. We understand how a second story addition could possibly make our neighbor's dogleg feel like a tunnel, but the single story addition will not have that effect. We are also not extending the current rear line of our house any further toward the alley, so you will not be able to feel the addition in the usable space of our neighbor's rear patio, which lines up to ours. Moreover, since the front of our houses face south (which fortunately brings a lot of natural light into the front of our houses), the rear faces north, which means that we only get indirect light in our doglegs. You can tell by the photo that our dogleg is actually very hard to keep clean from algae and moss because of the fact that we do not get any direct sunlight back there. Because there is only indirect light coming into our doglegs, the proposed single-story addition would not block any more light into our neighbor's dogleg than is already blocked by the existing structures that are on and around our two properties.

Your second concern relates to the increased footprint of our house and the urban density of our neighborhood. As I mentioned above, the proposed addition would only be about 58 square feet, which is very small. Our house currently occupies about 73% of our property; with the addition, it would occupy about 79%, which is not much different. Our understanding is that "urban density" refers to the number of people living in a given urban area. We are currently and will continue to use the house as a single family dwelling. We are not dividing our house into units for multiple families to reside; we are not even adding on any additional rooms to the house, only enlarging the kitchen. Therefore, our proposed addition will have no impact on the urban density of our neighborhood.

You also expressed a concern about our proposed addition being able to be seen by the rear of houses on the other side of alley. Our house is built at grade, meaning that there are no steps leading down to our rear patio. Our house is also at a lower elevation than the alley and our neighbors on E Street. Because of this, our first story is virtually invisible from the alley and our E Street neighbors' rear patios. I have also attached a photo of the view of the back of our house from the alley. There is a red dotted line drawn to show approximately where the top of the roof line of our proposed addition would be. The photo demonstrates how the addition will not be able to be seen from the alley unless someone purposefully attempts to peer over our fence. Our neighbor's addition at 120 Duddington is actually more visible than ours would be because of the nature of our property and the fact that our fence along the alley is taller than theirs.

Your third and final concern relates to us setting a precedent for others in our neighborhood. As I explained above, others on our block have done similar additions to their homes, so we are not the first ones to do this. In addition, the Zoning Board recently stated that none of its decisions have precedential value. All cases are decided on a case-by-base basis. Therefore, our case cannot be used as a precedent in any other cases.

We hope that this email helps resolve your concerns. We would be happy to talk with you further about our plans if you like to.

Thank you,
Sarah Beth and Josh Kuyers

4 attachments



Addition (120 Duddington).JPG
2461K

 **Architectural Drawings and Elevations.pdf**
506K

 **Photo of rear with red line of proposed addition (3).pdf**
1299K

 **Photo of rear from patio.pdf**
1158K