

Susanna Chu & Ariel David Adesnik
4600 45th Street NW
Washington, DC 20016
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Re: Homeowners' Statement

Dear Board of Zoning Adjustment:

We are seeking approval of a special exception to the zoning regulations, pursuant to Title 11 DCMR Zoning Regulations, Subtitle D §§ 206 and 306, in order to construct a mudroom on the side of our home, along with a front porch. This statement describes (1) the project, (2) our communications with the ANC and neighboring homeowners regarding the project, and (3) why the project satisfies the requirements for a special exception.

Proposed Project & Requested Relief

Our home is located in the R-1-B zone. We are requesting relief from the rear yard and side yard setback requirements, Title 11 DCMR Zoning Regulations, Subtitle D §§ 206 and 306. The proposed addition (approximately 12 feet x 14 feet) will be adjacent to our front door. It is designed to accommodate a mudroom and ½ bathroom/powder room on the main level, and additional storage on the basement level. In addition, we are seeking to construct a front porch (approximately 4 feet x 22 feet) that would run across the addition and front door.

Our 1930s home currently has no powder room on the main level, making it a struggle for some of our parents and elderly relatives to go up and down stairs to use the restrooms on the second level and basement level. In addition, we have almost no storage space near the front entrance, resulting in pile ups of backpacks, shoes, etc.

We are working with Bill Feeney, an experienced architect who lives and works in this neighborhood. He developed architectural plans to meet our needs. Unfortunately, DCRA has informed us that, for zoning purposes, the front of our house is considered to be Brandywine Street—although our address is 45th Street and our front door faces 45th Street. Because of this, the proposed addition is technically being constructed in the “rear yard,” and the proposed porch is technically being constructed in the “side yard.”

We understand that section 306 requires a minimum distance between the house and the “rear” property line (i.e., the property line on the alley side of the house), of 25 feet. As designed, the addition would end approximately 16 feet from the alley side property line. Section 206 requires a minimum distance between the house and the “side” property line (i.e., 45th St.) of 8 feet, and, as designed, the porch would end approximately 5 feet from the 45th St. property line. Total lot occupancy would go from 24% to 32% with the addition.

We believe the relief requested is minor. Our home is on a corner lot, with the front door facing Brandywine Street. Thus, we were under the impression the project would be compliant with zoning regulations, in light of section 315.3. That provision states: “If a lot has more than one (1) street lot line, the owner of the lot may choose the street lot line that shall determine the application of any front setback requirement.” However, our understanding from DCRA is that the “front” of our house is on 45th St., resulting in the need to seek a special exception.

Communications with ANC and Neighboring Homeowners

We have circulated copies of our proposed plans and a letter to all neighbors within a 200 foot radius of our home, and have received 15 signed letters of support for the project (including from our nearest neighbors at 4505 Brandywine Street, 4601 45th Street, 4610 45th Street, and 4540 45th Street). We have discussed the project with many neighbors and do not anticipate objections.

We have been in communications with Advisory Neighborhood Chair Greg Ehrhardt (3E01), who has reviewed the plans. We were informed the ANC will schedule this matter for hearing after the BZA sets a hearing date and provides formal notice.

Special Exception Standard

The proposed small addition and front porch are in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations and will not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties. In particular, the proposed addition will not adversely impact neighboring properties’ light, air or privacy. The addition is on what we consider to be the “side” of the house, to the right of the entrance to our side-hall colonial home, adjacent to our current driveway off the alley that runs between 45th and 46th Streets. The proposed addition should enhance the appearance of the house, and contribute to overall property values.

For our family, this addition is important and will have a very positive impact on the safety and comfort of our parents and relatives when they visit, and our own convenience and storage needs on a day-to-day basis. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this matter, and look forward to discussing any questions or concerns you may have.

Best regards,

Susanna Chu & Ariel Adesnik
Owners