

Docket Item #6
BZA CASE # 2005-0006

Board of Zoning Appeals
March 10, 2005

ADDRESS: 15 EAST BRADDOCK ROAD
ZONE: R-2-5, RESIDENTIAL
APPLICANT: JOSEPH MCGRAIL, OWNER, BY ROBERT LARSON, ARCHITECT

ISSUE: Special exception to expand and enclose and existing screened porch in the required front yard facing East Spring Street.

CODE SECTION	SUBJECT	CODE REQMT	APPLICANT PROPOSES	REQUESTED EXCEPTION
3-506(A)(1)	Front Yard (East Spring)	25.00 ft	16.00 ft	9.00 ft

(insert sketch here)

STAFF CONCLUSION:

The staff **recommends approval** of the requested special exception because the request meets the criteria for a special exception.

If the Board decides to approve the special exception, it should contain the conditions under the department comments. The special exception must also be recorded with the deed of the property in the City’s Land Records Office.

I. Issue

The applicant proposes to enclose and enlarge an existing covered screen porch located on the south building wall that faces East Spring Street for the house at 15 East Braddock Road. The expanded screen porch addition is to accommodate a new bathroom and is located in the required front yard facing East Spring Street.

The applicant could enclose the existing screen porch without triggering a special exception. Because the screen porch will be enclosed and expanded, although in line with the footprint of the existing screen porch, is slightly longer facing East Spring Street, the expanded wall area facing East Spring Street triggers a special exception.

II. Background

The subject property, a corner lot, is two lots of record with 110.98 feet of frontage facing East Spring Street, 141.99 feet of frontage facing East Braddock Road, and a lot area totaling 9,359 square feet.



The subject property is currently occupied by a two-story stone and frame single-family dwelling with side screen porch located 16.00 feet from the front property line facing East Spring Street, 23.50 feet from the front property line facing East Braddock Road and 27.10 feet from the west side yard property line in compliance with the R-2-5 zone requirements. A driveway apron is located off East Spring Street 9.00 feet from the west side property line. Real Estate Assessment records indicate the house was built in 1930.

Section 12-202(A) of the zoning ordinance states that no noncomplying structure may be physically enlarged or expanded unless such enlargement or expansion complies with the regulations for the zone in which it is located. The subject building does not meet R-2-5 zone regulations as to the front yard setback facing East Spring Street and East Braddock Road and the proposed one-story addition expansion facing East Spring Street also will not meet the front yard setback regulation.

III. Description

The existing side screen porch located along 14.00 feet of the east wall of the existing house measures 10.00 feet by 14.00 feet and is built on a concrete foundation. The proposed one-story addition will be built in line with the west wall of the existing screen porch and not extend any closer to the front property line facing East Spring Street.

The proposed expanded porch addition will accommodate a bathroom measuring 7.00 feet by 10.00 feet facing East Spring Street and totals approximately 70 square feet. The height of the new addition will be in line with the existing screen porch. The new addition’s overall height from grade to the top of the flat roof facing East Spring Street is approximately 11.50 feet. The existing converted screen porch and new addition will continue to be located 16.00 feet from the front property line facing East Spring Street. A variance of 9.00 feet from the front setback requirement facing East Spring Street is requested.

A comparison between the existing screen porch and proposed one-story addition is as follows:

	<u>Ht to Top of Roof</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Total Sq Ft</u>
Converted Screen Porch	11.50 ft	10.00 ft	14.00 ft	140 sq ft
Bathroom Add.	11.50 ft	10.00 ft	7.00 ft	70 sq ft
	same	same	+ 7.00 ft	+ 70 sq ft

Upon completion of the work, the proposed renovations will continue to comply with the floor area requirements. (Refer to floor area calculations.)

The applicant indicates the proposed renovation will provide needed year round interior space and present a more pleasing appearance from the street. The addition’s exterior will be clad with siding and provide a roof top deck. The applicants also indicate the screen porch conversion and modest expansion is similar to other additions in the neighborhood.

There have been no previous variances or special exceptions granted for this property.

IV. Master Plan/Zoning: The subject property is zoned R-2-5 and has been so zoned since adoption of the Third Revised Zoning Map in 1951, and is identified in the Potomac West Small Area Plan for residential land use.

V. Requested Special Exception:

Section 3-506(A)(1), Front Yard

The R-2-5 zone requires a minimum front yard setback of 25.00 feet. The existing house with an expanded enclosed porch addition will not increase its noncomplying front setback facing East Spring Street. The existing building and porch addition will continue to be located 16.00 feet from the front property line facing East Spring Street.

VI. Noncomplying structure

The existing building at 15 East Braddock Road is a noncomplying structure with respect to the following:

<u>Front Yard</u>	<u>Required</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Noncompliance</u>
E. Braddock Rd	25.00 ft	23.50 ft	1.50 ft
E. Spring Street	25.00 ft	16.00 ft	9.00 ft

VII. Staff analysis under criteria of section 11-1302

This case asks the Board of Zoning Appeals to rule on whether a proposed one-story addition located within the required front yard facing East Spring Street meets the standards adopted for a special exception for additions.

Special Exception Standards

The rules for additions built on noncomplying structures reflect Council's decision that property owners should be able to seek relief for modest improvements to their existing homes when the proposal involves the expansion of only one noncomplying wall projecting into a required yard. In such cases, an applicant no longer needs to file a variance and argue a legal hardship. Under the recently adopted rules, the Board must determine whether the improvement affects neighboring homes, whether the improvement is similar in character to other buildings within the immediate neighborhood and, finally, whether it represents the only reasonable location on the lot to build the proposed addition. The specific standards are:

1. Whether approval of the special exception will be detrimental to the public welfare, to the neighborhood or to the adjacent properties.
2. Whether approval of the special exception will impair an adequate supply of light and air to the adjacent property, or cause or substantially increase traffic congestion or increase the danger of fire or the spread of fire, or endanger the public safety.
3. Whether approval of the special exception will alter the essential character of the area or the zone.

4. Whether the proposal will be compatible with the development in the surrounding neighborhood.
5. Whether the proposed development represents the only reasonable means and location on the lot to accommodate the proposed structure given the natural constraints of the lot or the existing development of the lot.

In this particular case the proposed slightly enclose and enlarge an existing screen porch will be built in line with the existing main building wall and that is now located 16.00 feet from the front property line facing East Spring Street. No other relief is requested. This request to extend one noncomplying wall meets the standards for a special exception application.

VIII. Neighborhood Impact

The subject property, although a corner lot, does have unusual lot characteristics. The lot is larger than the minimum required for an R-2-5 zoned corner lot (9,359 square feet compared to the zone requirement of 6,500 square feet) and the property's two front property lines are angled to the prevailing lot configurations along Braddock Road. In addition, the subject property is unique in that it is the only single-family property of seven residential lots on a block bordered by Commonwealth Avenue and East Braddock Road. The neighboring properties are platted as semi-detached dwellings behind the subject house to the front property line s facing East Spring Street than the subject property line and in compliance with the R-2-5 zone regulation of 25.00 feet.

IX. Light and Air

Expansion of a one-story bathroom addition to a converted screen porch as year round sunroom now located within the required front yard facing East Spring Street will not reduce light and air enjoyed by the neighboring property at 12 East Spring Street. In fact, construction of the proposed addition does not appear to cause any harm to any neighboring homes. The neighboring most affected building is located nearly 40.00 feet from the subject dwelling's west building wall. The proposed expanded and converted screen porch is similar to other side additions in the neighborhood.

X. Location of Improvements

The proposed bathroom addition will be in line with the existing screen porch footprint which currently projects into the required front yard facing East Spring Street. By removing the screen porch of the house, with a new windows or adding railing on the roof to permit a second floor porch, will not radically change the building's architecture from the street and side property lines nor will it result in bringing the building any closer to the front side yard than it is now situated. The new addition will continue to comply with the west side property line. The proposed improvement will make the subject property similar to homes on other corner lots with side yard additions in the immediate neighborhood.

XI. Staff Conclusion

The proposed addition is modest and will remain in line with the footprint of the existing side screen porch. The proposed project is compatible with other homes with side yard additions in the neighborhood. The proposed addition will not project any closer than it now does to the street. Although the addition proposed is for minimal square footage, the applicants have made a case for a special exception, which is a prerequisite for granting a special exception.

Staff recommends **approval** of the special exception request.

STAFF: Hal Phipps, Division Chief
Peter Leiberg, Zoning Manager

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

* The applicant is advised that if the variance or special exception is approved the following additional comments apply.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- C-1 Change in point of attachment or removal of existing overhead utility service, will require undergrounding or variance.

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-2 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-3 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully detail the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

Recreation (Arborist):

- F-1 No trees are affected by this plan.

Historic Alexandria (Archaeology):

- F-1 There is low potential for this project to disturb significant archaeological resources. No archaeological action is required.

Other Requirements Brought to the Applicant's Attention:

- C-1 A wall check survey plat shall be submitted to Planning and Zoning when the building footprint is in place, pursuant to Alexandria City Code section 8-1-12.