

Docket Item #2
BZA CASE #2007-0010

Board of Zoning Appeals
June 14, 2007

ADDRESS: 712 WEST BRADDOCK ROAD
ZONE: R-8, RESIDENTIAL
APPLICANT: MURRAY AND MARGARET BONITT, OWNERS

ISSUE: Special exception to construct a one-story addition that connects the existing building and a detached garage in the required south side yard setback.

CODE SECTION	SUBJECT	CODE REQMT	APPLICANT PROPOSES	REQUESTED EXCEPTION
3-406(A)(2)	Side Yard (South)	9.37 feet	5.00 feet	4.37 feet

* Based on a building height of 18.75 feet to the midpoint of the gable roof.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION OF JUNE 14, 2007: On a motion to approve by Mr. Lantzy, seconded by Mr. Goodale, the special exception was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Reason: The application met the criteria for a special exception as outlined in the staff report.

Speakers:

Duncan Blair, attorney representing Murray and Margaret Bonitt, owners, made the presentation.

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

If the Board decides to grant a special exception, it should contain the conditions under the department comments. Special exceptions must also be recorded with the deed of the property in the City's Land Records Office prior to the release of a building permit.

(insert sketch here)

I. Issue

The applicants propose to construct a one-story addition that connects the house and an existing detached one-story garage at 712 West Braddock Road. The one-story connecting addition will extend the noncomplying south building wall of the house although be slightly recessed behind the plane of the main south wall of the existing dwelling to the current location of the existing south wall of the one-story garage.

II. Background

The subject property, a corner lot, is one lot of record with 65.00 feet of frontage on West Braddock Road, 198.51 feet of frontage facing Timber Branch Drive and totals 12,220 square feet. The subject property is complying for a corner lot zoned R-8 residential. A complying corner lot is 9,000 square feet.

A two and one-half story brick and frame dwelling with a detached one-story garage is located 14.60 feet from the north front property line facing Timber Branch Drive, 99.10 feet from the front property line facing West Braddock Road and 2.50 feet from the south side property line. An existing detached brick garage is located 43.00 feet from the front property line facing Timber Branch Drive, 2.00 feet from the south side property line and 1.00 feet from the west side property line. Real estate assessment records indicate the house was built in 1930.

III. Discussion

The proposed one-story addition will be built 30.80 feet from the front property line facing Timber Branch Drive, 5.00 feet from the south side property line and recessed behind the rear south wall of the existing dwelling and extend 37.90 feet in length creating a physical link between the existing dwelling and the existing brick one-car garage. Since the proposed building is extending one noncomplying wall (in this case the existing dwelling is located in the required south side yard), the project is eligible to apply for a special exception.

The one-story addition measures 29.20 feet (at its widest point) by 37.90 feet and totals approximately 995 square feet. The addition is approximately 20.00 feet from grade to top of the roof and 18.75 feet in height to the midpoint of the gable roof facing the south side property line. The new addition will accommodate additional living space and the garage will continue to be used for storage and parking of two vehicles.

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

There have been no special exceptions or variances previously granted for the subject property.

IV. Master Plan/Zoning

The subject property is zoned R-8, residential, and has been so zoned since adoption of the Third Revised Zoning Map in 1951 and identified in the North Ridge/Rosemont Small Area Plan for residential land use.

4. Requested Special Exception

Section 3-406(A)(2), SideYard

The R-8 zoning regulations state that each use must provide a side yard of a minimum of 8.00 feet or the height of the building whichever is greater. The proposed one-story addition will be 18.75 feet in height to the midpoint of the gable roof thereby requiring a side yard setback of 9.37 feet from the south side property line. The proposed addition will be located 5.00 feet from the south side property line. The applicants request a special exception of 4.37 feet.

VI. Noncomplying Structure

The existing building at 712 West Braddock Road is a noncomplying structure with respect to the following:

	Existing	Required	Noncompliance
Side Yard (South)	2.50 ft	8.00 ft	5.50 ft

VII. Special Exceptions Standards

To grant a special exception, the Board of Zoning Appeals must find that the strict application of the zoning ordinance creates an unreasonable burden on the use and enjoyment of the property. Section 11-1304 of the zoning ordinance lists standards that an applicant must address and the Board must affirm in order to grant a special exception of the zoning regulations.

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.

VIII. Staff Conclusion

The subject lot is a large corner lot similar to other single-family interior and corner lots along this stretch of West Braddock Road. The proposed one-story addition is modest in scale fitting in nicely between the existing house and one-story garage. The applicants have maintained the addition's window symmetry and roof style as well as alignment with the existing house to read as one structure. When viewed from the street the house will not appear large or does it overwhelm the block face character. From Timber Branch Drive the new addition will not radically change the architectural character of the house as compared to the other homes on the block.

Excess building mass and overbuilding on a property can have detrimental impact on neighboring homes and a neighborhood in general. In this case the staff believes, given the large lot size and its characteristics and the applicants' creative desire to build between the main house and garage rather than add another story or possibly larger side yard addition facing the neighbor to the south was a good decision. The applicants have shown their neighbor the plans for the addition. Aerial photographs indicate the neighbors' home on the south is located nearly 20.00 feet from the subject building. The proposed addition does not appear to negatively impact the neighboring home to the south nor viewed from Timber Branch Dive. The applicants are modestly enlarging their house by adding approximately 995 square feet on a 12,220 square feet lot. On balance, the staff feels that the limited amount of building area proposed and the effort to build within the footprint rather than add a larger rear addition combine to support the application.

Staff believes that the applicants' property meets the test for a special exception, because the proximity of the building improvements to the shared south side property line will afford the adjoining property continued light and air. The proposed design when viewed from the street does not unduly exacerbate existing conditions on the lot nor impact the neighborhood architectural character.

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

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS

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

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

Transportation and Environmental Services:

- R1 At the time of application for a building permit the applicant shall provide, to the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, the information described below on a copy of the house location plat:
In order to determine the area of disturbance in the absence of a grading plan, the disturbed area will be determined by adding 10' to the perimeter of the building (or addition) footprint and calculating the area within the increased perimeter. In addition a 10' wide access path from the edge of the disturbed area to the street or driveway must be included in the disturbed area calculation. Dumpsters, soil stockpiles and material storage areas must all be within the limits of disturbance as well.
The annotated house location plat must meet the following criteria:
- No reduced, enlarged or faxed copies will be accepted.
 - The footprint area of the proposed improvements must be drawn to scale.
 - The additional 10' perimeter, construction access and other areas as described above must be shown to scale.
 - The overall dimensions of the proposed improvements must be shown.
 - The actual square footage of the disturbed area must be shown.
- R2 The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 8-1-22 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R3 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R4 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R5 An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)

- R6 No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)

Code Enforcement:

- C-1 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.
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.
- C-5 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.

Recreation (Arborist):

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

Historic Alexandria (Archaeology):

- F-1 Although there are no known sites on this property, there is a possibility for the discovery of evidence of activities relating to the Union Army during the Civil War. To insure that information about the City's past is not lost as a result of the project, the following actions are recommended:
 - R-1 Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that an inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
 - R-2 Call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) immediately if any buried historic structural remains (wall foundations, cisterns, wells, privies, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease

in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site to record the finds.

- R-3 The applicant must not allow metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-4 The requirements stated in R-1, R-2, and R-3 above, must be included in the General Notes of all site plans, as well as on all site plan sheets that include ground disturbing actions. Additional statements may be required to be included on the Final Site Plans by Alexandria Archaeology.

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.