

Docket Item #4
BZA CASE #2008-0043

Board of Zoning Appeals
February 12, 2009

ADDRESS: 311 EAST OXFORD AVENUE
ZONE: R-2-5, RESIDENTIAL
APPLICANT: BROOKS AND MEGAN BROWN, OWNERS

ISSUE: Special exception to construct a covered open wrap around front porch in the required front yard and a special exception to construct a second story addition and a two-story addition in the required east side yard.

CODE SECTION	SUBJECT	CODE REQMT	APPLICANT PROPOSES	REQUESTED EXCEPTION
7-1002(A)	Front Yard	31.40 feet**	20.80 feet	10.60 feet
3-506(A)(2)	Side Yard (East)	7.00 feet*	6.40 feet	.60 feet

*Based on a building height of height 19.50 feet measured to the eave of the roof facing the east side yard.

**Based on the average setback of the blockface on the south side of East Oxford Avenue between Dewitt Avenue and the turn where East Oxford Avenue becomes East Mount Ida Avenue.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION OF FEBRUARY 12, 2009: On a motion to approve by Mr. Goodale, seconded by Ms. Lewis the special exceptions were approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

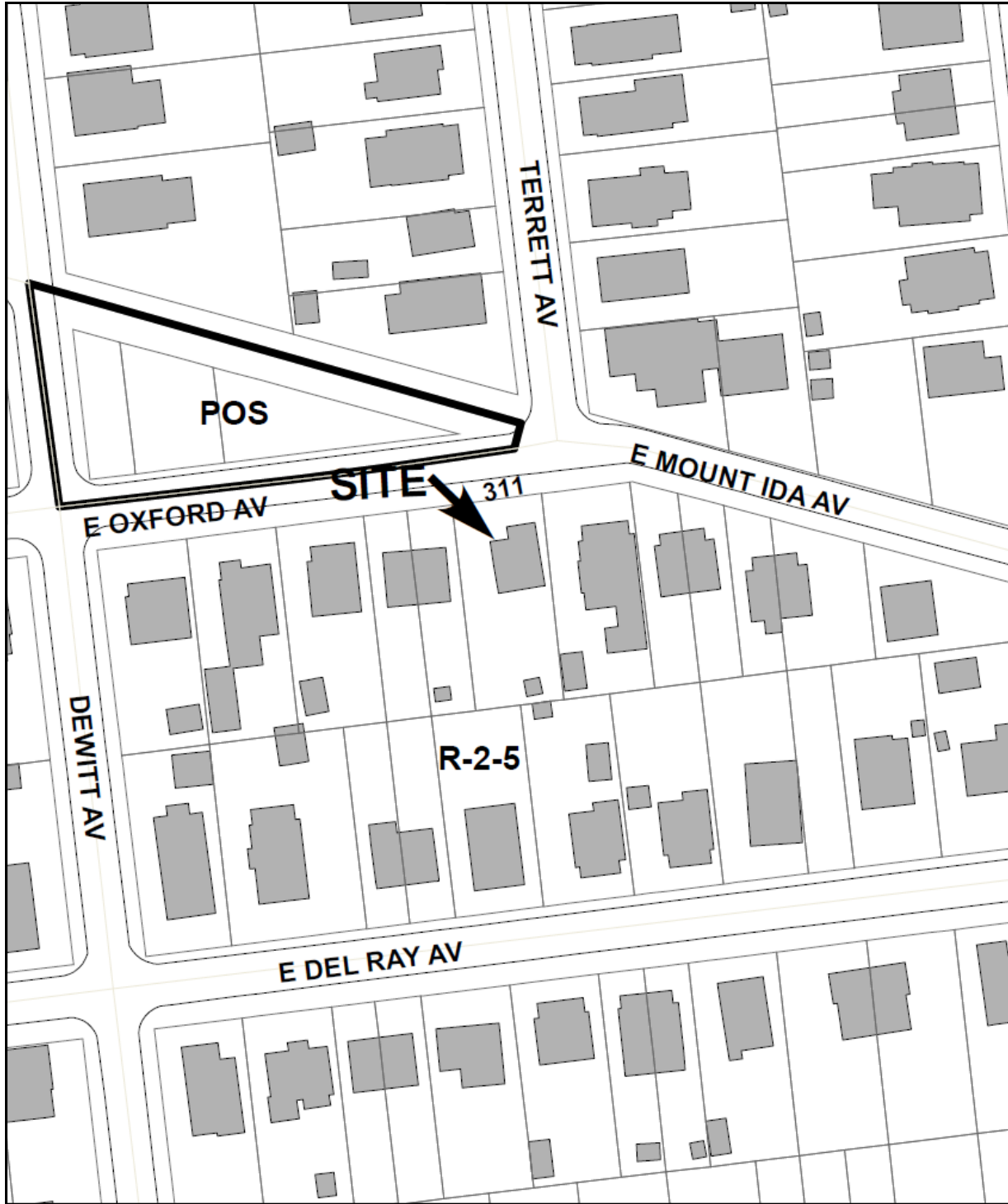
Reason: The application met the criteria as outline in the staff report.

Speakers:

Neil Elms, architect, made the presentation.

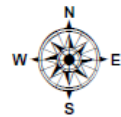
Staff **recommends approval** of the special exceptions because the requests meet the criteria for a special exception with the condition that the applicants select materials based on homes in the Craftsman style to ensure the house continues to blend into the neighborhood and architectural styles of existing homes.

If the Board decides to grant the requested special exceptions it must comply with the code requirements under the department comments and the applicant must submit the following prior to the release of a Certificate of Occupancy: (1) a survey plat prepared by a licensed surveyor confirming building footprint, setbacks, and building height compliance from average preconstruction grade and (2) certification of floor area from a licensed architect or engineer. The special exceptions must also be recorded with the deed of the property in the City's Land Records Office prior to the release of the building permit.



BZA CASE #2008-0043

2/12/2009



I. Issue

The applicants propose to 1) reconstruct and extend an existing open front porch, 2) construct a second story addition, 3) a two-story rear addition which wraps around west side building wall and 4) a rear screened porch at 311 East Oxford Avenue.

II. Background

The subject property is two lots of record with 50.00 feet of frontage facing East Oxford Avenue and a depth of 115.00 feet. The property contains 5,750 square feet of lot area and complies with the minimum lot area, width and frontage required in the R-2-5 zone. The lot is currently developed with a single family dwelling located 20.80 feet from the front property line, 6.40 feet from the east side property line, 18.55 feet from the west side property line and 51.60 feet from the rear property line. The freestanding, 1-1/2 story, stucco bungalow at 311 East Oxford Street is identified as a contributing resource within the National Register District of Town of Potomac. According to the National Register nomination, this house was constructed in 1937.

III. Description

The applicants propose to renovate their home in the following ways:

- 1) Reconstruct and extend the existing open front porch across the front building wall and wrap around the west front corner of the existing dwelling 20.30 feet from the front property line. The reconstructed open front porch and portion extending across the front building wall will continue to be 6.00 in depth. The wrap around portion of the open porch will measure 8.20 feet at it's deepest and wraps around to meet the proposed two-story addition on the west side of the existing dwelling. The wrap around portion of the porch is located 11.30 feet from the west side property line in compliance with the minimum R-2-5 zone side yard setback requirement. The reconstructed portion of the porch (with a modest change in the roof style) continues to be located 6.40 feet from the east side property. The roof form is being changed from a gable to a hip roof, which lowers the overall height of the porch roof. Therefore, the reconstructed portion of the porch does not require a special exception or variance to continue to be located on the same footprint ad facing the required east side yard. Based on the average setback of the blockface on the south side of East Oxford Avenue between Dewitt Avenue and the turn where East Oxford Avenue becomes East Mount Ida Avenue the required front setback is 31.40 feet from the front property line. The applicant requests special exception to expand the open front porch in the required front yard.
- 2) Construct a second-story addition and two-story rear addition. The second story addition will be constructed above the existing footprint of the house, which will then be expanded by the construction of a two-story addition to the rear and west of the existing dwelling. The two-story addition facing the west side property line will measure 22.66 feet to the midpoint of the gabled roof facing the west side yard and will be located 11.30 feet from the west side property line. The second story addition and rear two-story addition will be located in line with the existing east side wall 6.90 feet from the east side property line and will measure 19.50 feet to the roof eave

facing the east side property line. The applicants request a special exception to construct the two story addition and the rear second-story addition in the required east side yard.

- 3) Construct a rear one-story screened porch. The screened porch will measure 5.50 feet by 15.00 feet and is 12.66 feet in height to the eave of the hip roof. The screened porch will be located 17.50 feet from the east side property line, 21.50 feet from the west side property line and 40.50 feet from the rear property line. It does not require a variance or special exception.

The Board of Architectural Review staff state the 1-1/2 story front-gable house has been altered with a substantial two-story rear addition. As this addition extends significantly beyond the original massing's ridgeline, it has somewhat compromised the integrity of this historic resource.

The proposed alterations will further compromise the home's historic character. The new addition will be enveloping the original structure and altering features to the extent that the original historic bungalow form will not be discernable.

The proposed second-story addition and footprint expansion to this existing one-story home will not adversely impact this neighborhood's development pattern. The proposed second-story will be proportionally compatible with its neighbors. The west side yard reduction will not disrupt the patterns of open space between each home.

It is unclear if the Applicant is proposing to use exterior materials which are compatible with the historic houses in this National Register District. Staff suggests the selection of materials be based on the neighborhood's housing stock, specifically those houses within the Craftsman style. A study will uncover this architectural style's details including elements such as true-stucco, painted-wood divided-light windows with wide-width wood trimwork, wood inset-picket balustrades flanked by battered or oversized wood columns, projecting eaves with brackets, wood tongue and groove porch floors.

If historically appropriate materials are not selected, but contemporary synthetic building materials are used, the historic district could be adversely impacted, as this house will become a focal point on the street, instead of blending into the neighborhood and retaining the focus on the historic structures.

Upon completion of the work the property will continue to comply with the allowable floor area.

There have been no variances or special exceptions previously granted for the subject 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 identified in the Potomac West Small Area Plan for residential land use.

V. Requested Special Exception

7-1002(A) Front Yard:

The applicants request a special exception of 10.60 feet from the required 31.40 feet (based on the average setback of the blockface on the south side of East Oxford Avenue between Dewitt Avenue and the turn where East Oxford Avenue becomes East Mount Ida Avenue) to reconstruct and expand the existing open front porch.

3-506(A)(2) Side Yard (East):

The applicants request a special exception of .60 feet from the required 7.00 feet based on a building height of 19.50 feet measured to the eave of the roof of the proposed second story addition and two-story addition facing the east side yard.

VI. Noncomplying Structure

The existing building at 311 East Oxford Avenue is a noncomplying structure with respect to the following:

<u>Regulation</u>	<u>Required</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Noncompliance</u>
Front Yard	31.40 feet*	20.30 feet	11.10 feet
Side (East)	7.00 feet	6.40 feet	.60 feet

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 that the Board believes exists and thus warrants granting 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 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

An inspection of the immediate neighborhood revealed that many homes appear to have been built closer to the side property lines than the zoning regulations currently permit. Many of these homes have similar second story and rear additions. The proposed additions appear to complement the architecture of the existing dwelling and the architecture within the Town of Potomac.

Staff believes the proposed porch is compatible with the existing building architecture, neighboring properties and the neighborhood character. The proposed porch will be more open than the existing porch which has a tall concrete base rather than the railings open railings which are proposed.

The proposed renovations are unlikely to negatively impact adjacent properties. Staff **recommends approval** of the requested special exceptions with the condition to use architecturally appropriate materials.

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:

F-1 An approved grading plan may be required at the time of building permit application. Insufficient information has been provided to make that determination at this time.

In summary, City Code Section 8-1-22(d) requires that a grading plan be submitted to and approved by T&ES prior to the issuance of building permits for improvements involving:

- the construction of a new home;
- construction of an addition to an existing home where either
 - the addition exceeds the area of the existing building footprint by 100% or more; or
 - the construction of the addition results in less than 50% of the existing first floor exterior walls, in their entirety, remaining;
- changes to existing grade elevation of 1-foot or greater;
- changes to existing drainage patterns;
- land disturbance of 2,500 square feet or greater.

Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 838-4318. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link. **<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>**

R-1 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)

R-2 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)

R-3 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)

R-4 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)

R-5 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)

- R-6 Compliance with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for storm water quality control is required for any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)

Code Administration:

- C-1 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-2 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-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-5 Additions and alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Additions and alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-7 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.
- C-8 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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Recreation (Arborist):

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

Historic Alexandria (Archaeology):

C-1 There is low potential for significant archaeological resources to be disturbed by this project. 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.