

September 24th, 2018

To: The Ann Arbor Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Laura King-Moore, 1304 Edgewood Ave., Ann Arbor, MI

Re: 517 Berkley variance request, ZBA18-022

I am writing in support of the variance requested by our neighbors the Douglas's. My husband and I are 34 years residents of the Allmendinger Heights neighborhood and greatly appreciate neighbors who invest in making our neighborhood a better place, like the Douglas family.

We believe that covered front porches are highly desirable both from both an aesthetic and community standpoint and that the front porch proposed will improve our neighborhood and the city at large. The Douglas home will be more attractive with a covered front porch of the scale proposed and will be more functional as proposed. Front porches (especially covered front porches) help foster neighborhood interactions and neighborliness. In fact these architectural features are a staple of some of the oldest and most desirable neighborhoods in the city, such as The Old West Side.

The proposed front porch is entirely proportional and appropriate. It fits within the 25 foot required front setback in our zoning district. It should be noted that the homes in our neighborhood were built before the current zoning and if the current zoning had been in place at the time the homes on Berkley were built they likely would have been built closer to the street to garner larger back yards. In effect the neighbors that built their homes further back created a hardship for the Douglas's.

The neighborhood at large, "the public", will benefit from the improved appearance of the home and the sense of community that front porches

engender. The community benefits from this proposal as well as the homeowners.

The architect's design of the porch is superior to one that could be built within the increased "averaged" front setback. Had the current owners built the home from scratch then the entire structure could have been made to fit within the limits established by the zoning ordinance but the builders of the original home built it without consideration for a front porch and the benefits to the community thereof. The Douglas family is doing the best with the conditions they inherited.

The variance being requested is minimal and the minimum necessary to create a beautiful and functional front porch which enhances our neighborhood. The requested variance does not provide more habitable space or the ability for greater financial gain. The proposed front porch is no closer to the front lot line than the attached garage of their most adjacent neighbor to the west (521 Berkley). Many other neighbors on Berkley have front porches (not to mention the larger Allmendinger Hts. neighborhood) – including the home most adjacent to the east (515 Berkley) and 512 Berkley across the street. To deny the requested variance would be to deny the Douglas's (and the neighborhood) of the benefits of a covered front porch (as the cost to move the entire structure backward on the site is too much of a deterrent).

There will be no negative impacts from granting the requested variance. In fact the proposed front porch is a far better public and neighborhood benefit than the increased front setback imposed by the setback averaging section of the ordinance.

In summary, please grant the requested variance. Thank you for your consideration in this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'L M K', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Laura King-Moore