

July 7, 2022

Chairman and Members of the Board:

This is a passionate plea to favorably consider our application for open space and setback variances for a garage at our home on S. Royal St. Staff notes in their report that a garage would not negatively impact our neighbors.

We keenly desire adding a garage on our existing parking pad for convenience and as part of our aging in place strategy as it offers an at-grade accessible weatherproof structure for a range of purposes. We seek to build a garage large enough to pack and unpack a car in all weather, protected from the corrosive elements such as acid rain and deposits from trees and birds, and where we can keep the car clean and vacuumed, as well as store bicycles, gardening tools and supplies, and other seasonal outdoor equipment, and for a workbench we use for both car and household repairs.

We have almost enough open space to build a reasonable sized garage on our rear parking pad. We use our deck as open space exactly as the City envisioned the purpose of open space: a recreational space to enjoy nature, light and air. We enjoy being surrounded by trees, albeit at 4' 3/4" above grade, in the most used open space on our property, and appearing as open space to our neighbors. The open space rules place an extra burden on our house, built with an English basement and a main level above grade, that precludes an accessible main level open space without stairs, and unfairly ignores the open space quality the deck provides.

The City in 2008 recognized the value of garages to homeowners and encouraged their construction on rear property lines to avoid wasting backyard space. The only place we can build a garage would be at the rear property lines. While the Staff report says "a garage is not a necessary structure," in our case, the quaint and thoughtfully designed garage would improve our neighbors views as it would clean up the cluttered parking enclosure in addition to providing the functions we desire.

We submit this narrative to add texture to the formal application, and underscore how much we would appreciate being able to best use our property.

Susan M Alexander

J Christopher Durr

Lawrence and Gail Landgraff  
620 South Pitt Street  
Alexandria, Va. 22314

July 9, 2022

Alexandria Board of Zoning Appeals  
City Council Chambers, City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: BZA #2022-00013  
619 South Royal Street  
Alexandria, Va.

To the Members of Board of Zoning Appeals:

We write in opposition to the Request, BZA #2022-00013, for a Variance to construct a garage, and thereby eliminating the back yard set backs lines, and reducing the required open space for the property identified above.

We respectfully ask that Request be denied for the following reasons:

1. Alexandria City Staff recommends denial of both requests because they do not meet the variance definition and standards;
2. The applicants have created the open space conditions on their property from which they now seek relief; and
3. Of the three property owners, who have agreed to the applicants' Request, one of the joint owners at 624 S. Pitt Street has been dead for more than one year (See Washington Post obituary on July 4, 2021, citing a date of death on June 4, 2021.) and the property was conveyed to new owners on March 7, 2022. (See Alexandria City Property Records.)

The City Staff denial recommendations should be followed. City Staff are the experts in this matter.

The applicants acquired the property at 619 South Royal Street in September 1993, a little more than a year after the City's adoption of the Zoning Ordinances on June 24, 1992. The applicants admit that 1992 Zoning ordinances applied to the property when it was acquired, and they admit to a knowledge of those Zoning Ordinances. After acquisition, the applicants built a deck off on the back of the property, which had the effect of reducing the open space required by the Zoning Ordinances for the property. Now, the applicants seek a variance from the open space requirements for their property, when by their free decision to build the deck, they have created the conditions by which there is no longer any or enough open space to build the proposed garage. In short, they are not entitled to relief from conditions they have freely created.

In addition, the scope and size of the proposed garage are far out of proportion to an ordinary one car garage. What is being proposed is more like a small gymnasium or warehouse. It is 5 ft wider than the standard interstate traffic lane; longer, 22.5 ft, than any conventional car of today, and higher, 14ft, than a basketball goal, backboard included-all dimensions far beyond those of an ordinary one car garage.

For all of these reasons, we respectfully ask that the City Staff's recommendation be upheld. Thank you.

Very Respectfully,

Handwritten signatures of Lawrence and Gail Landgraff in blue ink. The signature of Lawrence is on the left and Gail's is on the right.

Lawrence and Gail Landgraff  
703 864-3696  
703 598-8672

Hand delivery to: Duncan Blair, Esq.

## Samantha Lockwood

---

**From:** Rachel M Drescher  
**Sent:** Monday, July 11, 2022 12:12 PM  
**To:** Samantha Lockwood  
**Cc:** Nancy Williams; Mary Christesen; Tony LaColla  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL]Proposed construction of a garage, rear yard of 619 South Royal Street

Please see the below email for 619 S Royal Street:

---

**From:** Glenda Walden <gcwalden1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 11, 2022 12:09 PM  
**To:** Rachel M Drescher <rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Proposed construction of a garage, rear yard of 619 South Royal Street

You don't often get email from [gcwalden1@gmail.com](mailto:gcwalden1@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

To the Board of Zoning Appeals, City of Alexandria:

My name is Mary Ann Miller and I have lived at 621 South Royal Street since 1978. I wish to address the proposed construction of a garage in the rear yard of 619 South Royal Street.

1. On the survey submitted by Ms. Alexander/Dr. Durr, they have indicated removal of an existing wall along the alley. The wall does not belong to them; it belongs to me. It sits approximately one foot inside my property line. This comports with the survey. My wall terminates in a brick post which is approximately one-half on my property and one-half on Mr. Durr's. I will not give permission for the wall or the post to be removed or damaged.

2. The size and features of the proposed structure are not appropriate to the existing space and location. The structure is more than is necessary to house a car. It runs entirely across the rear lot line, making it approximately four feet wider than the house. The structure is nineteen feet, almost two stories high, facing Royal Street.

The 619 residence's front door and several windows look directly into my back yard. The proposed structure also places a door and two windows approximately parallel to my rear lot line. This means that the houses at 617 and 621 will look at the face of another building from their rear properties. The introduction of the door and windows, as well as the size and height of the structure will diminish the privacy and sense of open space for the surrounding properties.

3. It is not clear from the drawings exactly where the structure's drainage is to be deposited, except into the alley. I will not give permission for the drainpipe closest to Royal Street to spill onto my property.

I believe one reason for the original requirement for open space was to allow room for drainage from properties to be confined to the properties and not dispersed elsewhere. The drainage from the structure's roof and spillway is entirely directed to the alley. In addition, there is already erosion in the alley easement which does not support allowing the variance of the rear lot line requirement.

This building is not a reasonable request to satisfy a need. The 600 block of South Royal Street is unusual in having three lanes of parking. The structure will substantially alter the use and configuration of open space for the surrounding area and, therefore, does not merit approval of the variances.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Mary Ann Miller  
621 South Royal Street

Alexandria, VA 22314-4141

Typed by G. C. Walden

---

**DISCLAIMER:** This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.  
**DO NOT CLICK** any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

## Samantha Lockwood

---

**From:** Rachel M Drescher  
**Sent:** Monday, July 11, 2022 12:34 PM  
**To:** Samantha Lockwood  
**Cc:** Mary Christesen; Nancy Williams; Tony LaColla  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL]BZA Case #2022-00013

Please see the below email regarding 619 S Royal St:

---

**From:** Gail Rothrock <gcrothrock@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 11, 2022 12:27 PM  
**To:** Rachel M Drescher <rachel.drescher@alexandriava.gov>  
**Cc:** Mary Christesen <Mary.Christesen@alexandriava.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]BZA Case #2022-00013

Dear Ms. Drescher,

Please convey this email to the members of the Board of Zoning Appeals for tonight's case.

Dear BZA Members,

I write in opposition to this application for Variances to construct a garage in the required rear yard and to reduce the required open space.

Your staff's report provides a thorough analysis of the definition and standards, and demonstrates that there is no basis to approve this application. It is important that the BZA uphold the standards and support the proper interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



Gail C. Rothrock  
209 Duke Street  
[gcrothrock@gmail.com](mailto:gcrothrock@gmail.com)  
703-350-6292

---

**DISCLAIMER:** This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.  
**DO NOT CLICK** any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.