

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, AICP, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: November 27, 2012
SUBJECT: BZA Case 18453, 1728 14th Street, N.W.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following variance relief:

- § 2101.1, Parking (56 spaces required, 4 proposed);
- § 2201.1, Loading (two 30-foot berths required, one 30-foot berth proposed); and
- § 2201.1, Loading (one delivery space required, none proposed); and

OP recommends approval of the following special exception relief:

- § 411.5, Roof Structures (one height permitted, two proposed).

The applicant requested the maximum relief necessary to accommodate any of the three separate development scenarios, impacted by the uses which grant different bonus FAR densities under the ARTS Overlay. Relief is not requested that would allow bonus density without providing the associated required use.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1728 14 th Street, N.W.
Legal Description	Square 207, Lot 120
Ward	2
Lot Characteristics	Level rectangular lot with rear alley access
Zoning	C-3-A: Medium Bulk Major Business and Employment Center ARTS Overlay: Uptown Arts-Mixed Use Overlay District
Existing Development	Two-story non-contributing warehouse building
Historic District	Greater Fourteenth Street
Adjacent Properties	North: Three-story commercial building South: Two-story commercial building East: Across 14 th Street, two-story row houses West: Across public alley, row houses and apartment buildings
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Commercial district along the west side of 14 th Street, with apartment and row houses to the east and west



III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The applicant proposes to convert an existing two-story warehouse building into a four-story mixed use building, proposing three different development scenarios. Ground floor retail would be provided under each scenario, with the second floor to be developed as either retail or office space. Under each scenario the third and fourth floors would be developed with varying amounts of office space. The applicant has requested the maximum amount of relief necessary to permit the construction of any of the three scenarios, without having to return to the Board. The applicant proposes to secure tenants for the building prior to construction, which would affect the build out of the building and the amount of relief needed.

The following table briefly describes each scenario.

	Scenario One	Scenario Two	Scenario Three
Commercial GFA	6,506 SF	6,506 SF	13,595 SF
Office GFA	18,760 SF	22,260 SF	15,171 SF
TOTAL GFA	23,350 SF	28,766 SF	28,766 SF
Parking Required	39 spaces	45 spaces	56 spaces
Loading Required	1-30 berth 1-100 SF platform	2-30 berth 2-100 SF platforms 1-service delivery space	1-30 berth 1-100 SF platform
Roof Structure	two varying heights	two varying heights	two varying heights

Under each scenario tenant access to the roof above the fourth floor is proposed, with the need to provide both stairwell and elevator enclosures on the roof. The proposed stairwell would be 9.66 feet in height and the elevator enclosure would be 14.33 feet in height, a difference of 4.67 feet. The applicant requests special exception relief to permit a roof structure of two different heights.

Each scenario would be in conformance with the ARTS Overlay District.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

ARTS/C-3-A Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height § 1902.1	75 ft. max.	23 ft.	57 ft.	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 1904.1	2.5 non-residential, 4.50 total ¹	1.07	3.43 max.	None required
Rear Yard § 774	11.9 ft. min.	19.2 ft.	19.2 ft.	None required
Parking § 2101	56 spaces min.	4 spaces	4 spaces	Required
Loading § 2201	2-30 ft. berths 2-100 SF platforms 1 delivery space	1-30 ft. berth 1-100 SF platform No delivery space	1-30 ft. berth 1-100 SF platform No delivery space	Required Required Required

¹ Bonus GFA may be used pursuant to Chapter 19 of the Zoning Regulations to achieve a maximum FAR of 4.5.

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Variance Relief from § 2101.1, Parking

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The applicant proposes to retain the existing structure, which has no below grade parking or loading. Construction of parking and loading below the building is not possible due to the location of the existing steel columns and footings supporting the building, without the removal of the building. Even if the existing building were to be removed and a new one constructed in its place, a five-level below grade garage would be required in order to provide 56 parking spaces for a four-story building. Construction of such a garage would be highly inefficient and result in a practical difficulty.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The subject property is well-served by a variety of transportation options. It is located less than one-half mile from the U Street/Cardozo Metrorail station on the Green/Yellow Line and 14th Street is served by one Circulator and three Metrobus routes. The site has a transit score of 90 (Rider's Paradise) and a walk score of 98 (Walker's Paradise) from walkscore.com. Bikeshare and Zipcar facilities are located nearby, reducing the need for off-street parking and ensuring that the parking demand generated by this development would not be overwhelm the surrounding neighborhood. Most neighborhood streets are metered or have RPP restrictions, limiting the ability of employees to park on the street.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The site is well served by a variety of transportation options reducing dependence on the automobile and the need for off-street parking. It is well served by public transportation and other forms of transportation, including Zipcar and Bikeshare. A ten-space bicycle room would be provided and OP encourages the applicant to provide showers and changing facilities to further mitigate impacts.

b. Variance Relief from § 2201.1, Loading

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The existing building was constructed with one loading berth and platform. A below-grade garage cannot be constructed to accommodate additional loading facilities because of the configuration of the existing building, which the applicant proposes to retain. Provision of loading facilities within the building and on the first floor would only serve to eliminate ground floor retail or ground level parking in favor of loading facilities.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

A second loading berth and loading platform, and a service delivery space, are required for the proposed office space under one of the scenarios, and would be sufficient to serve more than twice as much office space as is proposed by the applicant, as defined by the Zoning Regulations. The maximum proposed amount of office space is only slightly over the minimum threshold for the provision for the requirement to provide loading facilities for office space. The loading space would be accessible to both the retail and office uses. A loading coordinator would schedule and coordinate loading and delivery operations. Therefore, sharing of the loading facility should not result in a detriment to the public good.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

One loading berth and one loading space would be sufficient to accommodate the uses of the building. The loading space and platform would be available to be shared within the building to satisfy the loading needs of the building.

c. Special Exception Relief pursuant to § 411.11, Roof Structures

i. Is the proposal in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?

The proposal to provide two roof structures of unequal height would allow the applicant to provide a screen wall at a height lower than the elevator override. The height of the screen wall could be increased to match the height of the elevator override, but this would serve to increase the visibility of the roof structure from the street and increase the appearance of bulk on the roof of this building without providing additional screening of rooftop structures.

ii. Would the proposal appear to tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property?

The lower height of the roof structure surrounding the mechanical equipment and the stairwell on the roof would not tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring property as its lower height would be less visible than if the height were to be increased to match that of the elevator override.

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), at its meeting of July 26, 2012, approved the general concept as compatible with the 14th Street Historic District. HPRB has not yet reviewed the roof structure proposal.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

No comments were received from other District agencies.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 2F reviewed the application at its regularly scheduled meeting of November 7, 2012.

Attachment: Location Map

