



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: October 11, 2011

SUBJECT: BZA Case 18262 – 1729 H Street NW

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the variance relief from the parking requirement pursuant § 2101 for the proposed hotel use at 1729 H Street NW, where 15 on-site parking spaces would be required and no spaces would be provided.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1729 H Street NW
Legal Description	Square 127, Lot 854
Ward/ANC	2/ ANC 2B
Lot Characteristics	Flat rectangular lot abutting a narrow alley system at the rear
Zoning	C-4 District – Central Business District.
Existing Development	Ten-story office building, with basement, permitted in this zone.
Historic District	N/A
Adjacent Properties	To the east – Large office building; To the west – Historic resource across an abutting ten-foot wide public alley; Across H Street – office buildings and a residential condominium building.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Large office buildings characteristic of the downtown core, comprising ground floor retail and office uses.

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The applicant, Palmetto Hospitality of Washington DC II, LLC, on behalf of Kiplinger Washington Editors Inc., wishes to renovate an existing office building for conversion to hotel use with up to 116 rooms. No exterior alterations to the building are proposed but renovations would include interior alterations. The existing structure built in 1949 does not provide on-site parking spaces for the existing office use, nor is any required for the existing use. No restaurant use is proposed. Two small meeting rooms would be located on the lower level (as shown on page A 3.01 of submitted plans) and are expected to be used for small meetings by guests and staff and are not intended as a conference center.



IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

C-4 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed ¹	Relief
Lot Area (sq.ft.)	None prescribed	6,671 sq.ft.	6,671 sq.ft.	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 771	8.5	Not provided	Not provided	None required
Lot Occupancy § 772	100 % max.	94 %.	94 %	None required
Parking § 2101 Office	No requirement for a structure on a lot less than 10,000 sf.	None	None	None required
Hotel	1per8 sleeping rooms = 15 spaces	None	None	Relief required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS**a. Variance Relief from § 2101 – On-Site Parking****i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty**

There is no parking requirement for office use in the C-4 district for structures on a lot which is less than 10,000 square feet in area. The existing structure built around 1949 occupies approximately 94% of the lot and has never provided on-site parking for its office use. While the permitted hotel use would require 15 spaces, given the site's lot occupancy and small lot area, the applicant would have a practical difficulty in providing surface parking at the rear, as there is no available on-site area to provide such parking. Further, the provision of below-grade parking, within the existing structure would be subject to several constraints, and would be impractical even if it could be engineered on such a small lot.

Therefore, the site's exceptional situation, including its existing condition whereby no spaces currently exist and its small lot size create a practical difficulty for the applicant in satisfying the on-site parking requirement for the proposed hotel use.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

No substantial detriment to the public good is anticipated as the building is located in the downtown core where mass transit, bus and taxis are easily accessed. The property is located within walking distance of two metro lines and the stops for several cross-town bus routes and the Circulator Bus along H St, I Street, K Street and 17th Street. The lack of on-site parking is not anticipated to cause undue demand for on-street parking, as hotel guests would primarily arrive by taxi or Metro rail. Visitors who may arrive by car would be able to access either available on-street parking or several of the parking garages in the proposed hotel's vicinity.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The Zoning Regulations would not be substantially harmed if relief is granted from the on-site parking requirement for the proposed hotel use. The regulations anticipated that many structures within the downtown core developed prior to the existing regulations did not provide on-site parking. While many buildings in the downtown core have been demolished and rebuilt with below-grade parking, only the subject property's interior would be renovated. As previously stated, the available transit facilities within walking distance of the hotel and nearby public garages would reduce some of the on-street parking demand that may be created by some visitors and employees of the new hotel.

¹ Information provided by applicant.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

OP is not aware of comments from any other District agency.

VII. DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) issued a report to the Board under separate cover. DDOT's report dated October 4, 2011 recommends that the applicant implements Transportation Demand Measures (TDM) to reduce automobile trips, including distribution of information on the Capital Bikeshare program, Metrobus and rail, and the DC Circulator to hotel guests. The distribution of Metro Smart-Trip cards to employees is also recommended to encourage mass-transit use.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 2B voted unanimously to approve the requested relief at its regularly held meeting on July 13, 2011. (Exhibit 23 of the record)

Aerial of 1729 H Street NW



Proposed Hotel – 1729 H Street NW

● Metro Stations



Metro Bus