



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director Development Review & Historical Preservation
DATE: June 7, 2011
SUBJECT: **BZA Case 18223** – 1757 Seaton Street NW

I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) **cannot support** the variances requested from § 403.1 to increase the allowable lot occupancy from 60% to 95%, and from § 404.1 to reduce the required rear yard setback from 15 feet to 5 feet for a proposed carport addition on the subject property. The application did not adequately address the variance tests.

II. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	1757 Seaton Street NW
Legal Description:	Square 0150 Lot 0807
Ward:	1C
Lot Characteristics:	A rectangular interior lot with an area of 950 square feet (0.02 acre) and frontages along Seaton Street NW and an alley 10 feet wide.
Existing Development:	A one-family three-story row dwelling with fences along both sides of the rear yard and a roll-up gate along the alley (refer to Figures 1 and 2).
Zoning:	<i>R-5-B</i> – one-family row dwellings are allowed as a matter of right.
Historic District:	Strivers' Section Historic District
Adjacent Properties:	Other three-story row dwellings to the east and west along Seaton Street, and two-story row dwellings to south across the street in the <i>R-5-B</i> district; and a two-story commercial building to the north across the abutting alley in an <i>RC/C-2-A</i> district.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	Predominantly moderate density residential uses.

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

Applicant: Toni Grobstein (the owner of record) and Otis Marechaux

Proposal: To construct a carport addition to the existing dwelling in the rear yard that would be approximately 16 x 18 feet. The existing fences and roll-up gate along the alley would remain. The application stated that a carport is desired to keep the elements off vehicles parked in the rear yard.

Relief and Zoning: The maximum lot occupancy allowed under § 403.1 for a row dwelling is 60% in the R-5-B district and the minimum required rear yard setback is 15 feet. The existing development on the subject property conforms to these zoning standards. The proposed carport addition would increase the current lot occupancy from 59% to 95% and reduce the rear yard setback from 15 feet to 5 feet. The applicant requested variance relief from the referenced standards.

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Compliance with §3103.2

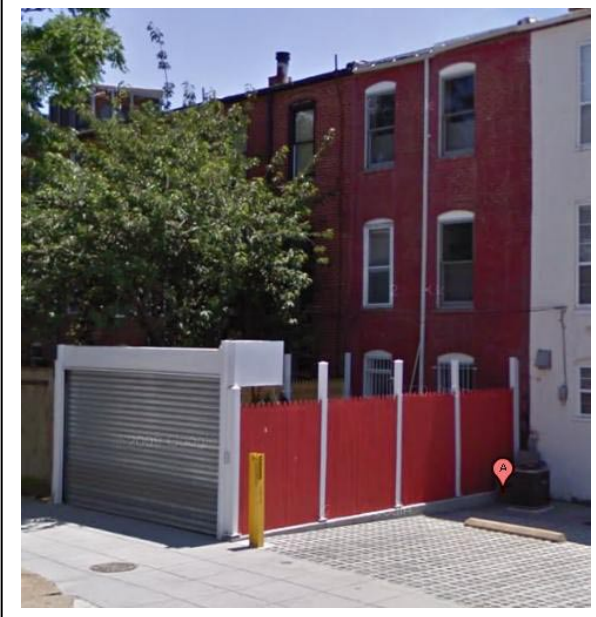
- **Unique conditions or circumstances:** The lot is small but of typical size for this square. It is 950 square feet in size and 30 of the 54 lots on the square (56%) are less than 1,000 square feet. The lot width is approximately 15.8 feet and 35 lots on the square (nearly 65%) are 16 feet wide or less. It also appears relatively flat. The applicant did not note any other conditions associated with this property that create a unique circumstance.
- **Exceptional or practical difficulty:** As there is no identified unique circumstance, there can be no resulting practical difficulty. The property is largely developed with the existing dwelling to the extent allowed under the Zoning Regulations, as are the neighboring lots.
- **Detriment to the Public Good:** Reducing the required rear yard setback and increasing the allowable lot occupancy as proposed for the addition would not likely have a negative impact on the available light or air to, or enjoyment of neighboring properties. However, approval of the requested relief would impair the intent of the Zoning Regulations.

The occupancy limit is intended to contribute towards the maintenance of the neighborhood character by prescribing the development intensity of permitted structures. Since the subject lot has been developed to the prescribed intensity, increasing the lot occupancy another 35%, to the proposed 95%, and building into the conforming rear yard setback would

Figure 1



Figure 2



be contrary to the referenced intent.

Based on this analysis, granting this request would be counter to the intent of the Zoning Regulations. OP therefore does not support approval of the requested zoning relief.

V. AGENCY COMMENTS

The Historic Preservation Office advised that this proposal would require Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) review because the carport addition as proposed would be visible from Florida Avenue NW.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

On May 4, 2011, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 1C voted to support this application. The submission also included correspondence in support of this request from owners of the neighboring property to the east and the two adjacent properties across the alley.

Arthur Jackson, Case Manager
JS/afj