



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Karen Thomas, Project Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: July 24, 2012
SUBJECT: BZA 18390: 435 R St., NW

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) **recommends approval** of the requested area variance relief from:

- § 2117.5 to permit a drive aisle width of **17.2 ft** where **20 ft. is** required; and
- § 2215 to allow 2 compact spaces on a lot where less than 25 spaces would be provided.

II. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	435 R Street NW
Legal Description	Square 508, Lots 52, 53 and 66 (Proposed to be combined, new lot number not currently provided)
Ward	Ward 2, ANC-2C
Zoning	C-2-A
Lot Characteristics	The consolidated 5,973 square-foot lot would be narrow and retain the rectangular shape of the individual lots. A 10-foot wide alley runs east-west at the rear.
Adjacent Properties	An apartment building is located to the west of the property and single-family row dwellings to the east in both the C-2-A and R-4 Districts.
Neighborhood Character	The property is within the Shaw neighborhood which is developed with a mixture of row dwellings, small apartment buildings, and small retail uses, many located within mixed-use buildings.
Historic Preservation	None





Aerial Photo and Zoning Map

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

Community Three LLC (the Applicant) proposes to construct a new residential building in the C-2-A district at 435 R Street NW. The existing Lots 52,53 and 66 would be subdivided to create a single lot of record, and the existing structure on Lot 66, previously used as a drycleaner establishment, would be demolished to accommodate a 4- story, 22-unit residential building with 11 off-street surface parking spaces at the rear.¹ The lot abuts a 10-foot wide alley at the rear, which would provide access to the required off-street parking spaces. The applicant has requested variance relief from the required 20 foot drive aisle width requirement of Section 2115.2 and from Section 2117.5 to permit 2 compact spaces for a parking area with less than 25 parking spaces. Eleven parking spaces would be provided and this would satisfy the required number of off-street parking spaces per § 2101.1.

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

DRIVE AISLE WIDTH AND COMPACT SPACES

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The lot’s narrow width creates a practical difficulty for the applicant in satisfying the area requirement for the drive aisle width and the legal size requirement of 9 x19 feet for all parking spaces. The combined lots would only be 56.7 feet wide and abuts a narrow 10-foot wide alley at its rear. This constraint directly impacts the ability of the site to accommodate the required area for the number of off-street parking spaces, including the dimensions to access those spaces.

Thus, in order to effectively meet the on-site parking needs of future residents, compact spaces and a reduced drive aisle width are proposed for all spaces proposed at grade.

¹ The applicant had originally proposed a slightly larger residential building of 24 units with 6 on-site parking spaces. At the community’s request, the applicant subsequently amended the plans by scaling back the development and reducing the number of units, in order to provide all required on-site spaces.

ii. **Detriment to the Public Good**

Neither of the variances requested would significantly impact the public good or impact privacy, light and air to abutting properties. There would be negligible impact on the on-street parking supply due to the development.

iii. **No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations**

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development of the property under the matter-or-right requirements for parking presents some difficulty which would limit the efficiency and feasibility of the development. The compact sizes for a maximum of two spaces and a minimally reduced drive aisle would allow the development to provide on-site parking in a manner that would not substantially harm the zone plan, satisfy the neighborhood's concerns regarding a reduced on-street parking supply and would not negatively impact the use of adjacent properties.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) will submit a report under separate cover. OP is not aware of comments from any other District agency.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The application was reviewed by the ANC 2C at its regularly held meeting on June 6, 2012. The ANC voted unanimously to recommend approval of the requested relief. The report is submitted under separate cover.

VII. CONCLUSION

OP is supportive of proposals to fill-in vacant gaps of the streetscape in the revitalizing Shaw neighborhood. Therefore, OP **recommends approval** of the requested variance relief discussed in the report to accommodate the residential development at 435 R Street NW, provided that DDOT does not object to the efficiency of the driveway as proposed.