

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, AICP, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: December 2, 2014
SUBJECT: BZA Case 18875, 713-735 Lamont Street, N.W.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following for Lot 875, 735 Lamont Street, N.W. (Building B):

- § 2201, Loading (55-foot loading berth required, 30-foot berth and serviced delivery space proposed).

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following for Lot 879, 713 Lamont Street, N.W. (Building C):

- § 774, Rear Yard
 - 15 feet from alley center line required for the first 20 feet of building height required, 14 feet proposed; and
 - 20 feet from rear lot line for the remainder of the building height, 8.5 feet proposed;
- § 2201, Loading (55-foot loading berth required, 30-foot berth and serviced delivery space proposed);
- § 1330.1(c), Special exception review required for enlargement of an existing building by fifty percent or more on a lot in excess of 12,000 square feet within the Georgia Avenue Overlay; and
- § 411.11, to permit three penthouses not of equal height.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	713-735 Lamont Street, N.W.
Legal Description	Square 2893, Lots 875 and 879
Ward	1A
Lot Characteristics	Two mid-block rectangular lots with rear alley access
Zoning	C-2-A: Medium density commercial district GA: Georgia Avenue Neighborhood Commercial Overlay District
Existing Development	Commercial laundry facility
Adjacent Properties	North: Across the public alley, row houses and a Salvation Army facility South: Across Lamont Street, row houses East: Lamont Lofts West: Row houses
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Moderate density residential with commercial and higher density uses along Georgia Avenue.

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

Proposal	<p>The applicant proposes the adaptive reuse of a commercial laundry facility, creating three apartment buildings. Each building would be on its own record lot. Relief is requested for buildings B and C only. Building A is noted for reference only.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building A would be new 8-unit apartment building with surface parking in the rear, in conformance with the Zoning Regulations and therefore not a part of this application.• Building B is an existing four-story structure that would be reduced in size to create two closed courts and converted to 76 apartment units.• Building C is a one-story building that would be substantially demolished, retaining only the front façade. A new five-story rear addition would be built to create 141 dwelling units and one level of below grade parking. <p>Prior to the application of permits the applicant will record the tax lots into record lots, and adjust the lot lines as necessary to accommodate the proposed development.</p>
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IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

Building A: No relief required

Building B:

GA/C-2-A Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height § 770	50-foot max.	53 feet	53 feet	None required
Lot Width	None prescribed	150 feet	150 feet	None required
Lot Area	None prescribed	20,729 SF	20,729 SF	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 771	2.5	3.8	3.32	None required
Lot Occupancy § 1328.3	70% max.	95%	83%	None required
Rear Yard § 774	7.5 feet for 1 st 20 feet; 15-foot min above	6.5 feet	6.5 feet	None required
Side Yard § 775	None required	4.5 feet	None	None required
Closed Court § 776	4 in./ ft. of bldg. ht. or 18.67-foot width	None	19 feet, 11 inches	None required
	350 SF min. area	None	755 SF	None required
Parking § 2101	None ¹	None	None	None required
Loading § 2201	55-foot berth and 200 SF platform	--	30-ft berth and 200 SF platform	Required
	20-foot service delivery space	--	20-foot service delivery space	None required

Building C:

GA/C-2-A Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height § 770	50-foot max.	< 50 feet	50 feet	None required
Lot Width	None prescribed	295 feet	295 feet	None required
Lot Area	None prescribed	42,684 SF	42,684 SF	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 771	3.0 ²	0.95	2.86	None required
Lot Occupancy § 1328.3	75% ³	95%	70%	None required
Rear Yard § 774	7.5 feet for 1 st 20 feet	--	None for ramp, 6 feet, 10 inches for remainder of bldg.	Required
	15-ft. min above 20 ft. of bldg. ht.	--	6 feet, 10 inches	Required

¹ No off-street parking is required due to credits from the previous use.

² FAR increases from 2.5 to 3.0 per Inclusionary Zoning.

³ Lot occupancy increases from 70 to 75 percent per Inclusionary Zoning.

GA/C-2-A Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Side Yard § 775	8 feet, 4 inches	4 feet, 11 in.	9.5 feet	None required
Court Width § 776	4 in./ ft. of bldg. ht. or 17.67 feet	None	19.34 feet	None required
Roof Structures § 411	One of equal height	--	3 of unequal height	Required
Parking § 2101	71` spaces	--	90 spaces	None required
Loading § 2201	55-foot berth and 200 SF platform	--	30-foot berth and 200 SF platform	Required
	20-foot service delivery space	--	20-foot service delivery space	None required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Building B

Variance Relief from § 2201, Loading

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The applicant proposes to retain and adaptively reuse the existing building, constructed prior to the adoption of the Zoning Regulations in 1926 for industrial use without loading facilities. Due to the existing ceiling heights the building cannot accommodate the height of 55-foot trucks without the removal of a portion of the second floor. The widths of the alleys in the square and the paving width of Lamont Street would make it difficult to maneuver the larger trucks into and through the square. The applicant is unable to widen the alley due to the location of the building, or widen the pavement width of Lamont Street, a public street.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The proposed building would contain generally efficiencies and one bedroom units, which could be accommodated by the smaller trucks on-site, for which the applicant’s transportation expert anticipates that most trucks accessing the site would be 24 feet in length or shorter.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

Smaller trucks would be adequate to accommodate the off-street loading needs of the proposed use and the Loading Statement submitted by the applicant’s transportation expert concluded that smaller loading berths would satisfy the loading needs of the building.

Building C

a. Variance Relief from § 774, Rear Yard

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The applicant proposes to construct a five-story apartment building with one level of below-grade parking behind the existing one-and-a-half story façade. To retain the

front façade, the footprint of the new building would be shifted toward the rear of the lot. The below-grade parking of the new structure would be designed with double-loaded aisles and vehicular access directly from the public alley. The building above would also be designed with a double-loaded residential corridor for efficiency. To accommodate the vehicular ramp down to the parking garage and to avoid the placement of the structural columns within the ramp, the applicant is proposing to shift the rear wall of the building toward the rear lot line, reducing the depth of the rear yard. The application indicates that it would be a practical difficulty to cantilever the building over the ramp due to structural reasons. Not including the parking access ramp, the first floor of the building would provide a rear yard of almost 14.5 feet from the center line of the alley.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

Although the rear yard would be reduced, the depth proposed would be similar to the existing rear yard of the existing adjacent building to the west that the applicant proposes to retain. The creation of the court yards between the row house and apartment portions of the building would shift the outdoor and open space aspects of the building toward the center of the lot, away from the rear yards of the row houses fronting on Morton Street, and shifting any outdoor activities associated with this new building away from their properties.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

Two court yards would be located within the center of the site, and provide outdoor activity areas and open space for the lot and the residents of the building.

b. Variance Relief from § 2201, Loading

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The alleys and the pavement are the same for this building as they are for Building A, making it difficult to maneuver larger trucks into and through the square. The applicant is unable to widen either pavement width of Lamont Street or widen the alley due to the location of the Building A.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

Similar to the situation for Building B, Building C would also generally contain efficiencies and one bedroom units, which could be accommodated by smaller trucks, for which the applicant's transportation expert anticipates that most trucks accessing the site would be 24 feet in length or shorter.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

Smaller trucks would be adequate to accommodate the off-street loading needs of the proposed use. The Loading Statement submitted by the applicant's transportation expert concluded that smaller loading berths would 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 applicant proposes to provide three roof structures; one for the elevator override and two for stair access. Provision of three penthouses would allow the applicant to provide the stair wells at height lower than the elevator override. The height of the stairwells could be increased to match the height of the elevator override, and one uniform wall could be constructed around all three penthouses, but this would only serve to increase the visibility of the penthouses and increase the appearance of bulk on the roof of the building.

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

Although the applicant could connect the three roof structures within one 17.5-foot high wall, the result would be one larger and more visible roof structure. Separating them into three structures and limiting the height to the minimum necessary would minimize the appearance and bulk of the roof structures, while providing the necessary access to the roof. The lower ten-foot height of the stair wells would be less visible than if one 17.5-foot high roof structure was provided.

d. Special Exception Relief pursuant to § 1330.1(c), Expansion of Buildings on Lots in Excess of 12,000 Square Feet

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

The subject application proposes the adaptive reuse of now vacant industrial buildings to residential use, on property almost totally surrounded by residential use. Consistent with recommendations contained within the *Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metro Station Area and Corridor Plan*, the proposed buildings would increase the number of dwellings in the neighborhood, in support of improved commercial uses along Georgia Avenue.

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

The proposed development would provide new residential units along a side street west of Georgia Avenue, consistent with the existing residential uses to the south, along Lamont Street and to the north, on Morton Street. It would also be consistent with the previously converted Lamont Lofts building adjacent to the subject property to the east, which was also converted to residential use. The applicant also proposes to retain the street facades of the existing structures, as supported by the ANC.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

No comments were received from other District agencies.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 1A, at its regularly scheduled meeting of November 12, 2014, voted to support the application.

Attachment: Location Map

