



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Matt Jesick, Case Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: March 8, 2016

SUBJECT: BZA #19212 – 1000 Lamont Street, NW

I. RECOMMENDATION

With regard to this proposal to construct a flat on a vacant lot, the Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the requested variance relief:

- § 2101 Parking (1 space required, 0 proposed).

OP notes that the following relief, while not requested, may be required. OP has alerted the applicant and they are examining the matter in more detail. Because the application contains no information on these potential areas of relief, OP cannot provide an analysis of them, but OP typically would not support height variance relief for new construction.

- § 400 Height (40' maximum, 41'7" proposed)*;
- § 411.5 Penthouse (stair penthouse permitted only by special exception);
- § 411.18(c) Penthouse Setback (one-to-one setback required, zero proposed).

* Because the applicant filed for a building permit over a year ago, the subject building can still be evaluated using the previous 40' height rule.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1000 Lamont Street, NW
Legal Description	Square 2845, Lot 129
Zoning	R-4
Ward and ANC	1, 1A
Historic District	None
Lot Characteristics and Existing Development	15' wide, 750 square foot rectangular lot; Vacant – evidence of previous rowhouse in this location.
Adjacent Properties and Neighborhood Character	The adjacent properties to the west and south are rowhouses. The subject square is exclusively rowhouse structures, but the surrounding neighborhood is a mix of rowhouses, apartment buildings, commercial and light industrial.



III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION IN BRIEF

The applicant proposes to construct a four level flat on a vacant lot. It is unclear based on the information provided if the lowest level is a basement or a cellar.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND REQUESTED RELIEF

The subject site is zoned R-4. The application would require relief as noted in the table below.

Item	Requirement	Existing / Proposed	Relief
§ 400 Height (measured per § 400.17)	40', 3 stories	41'7", 3 stories*	Required (Variance)
§ 401 Lot Area	1,800 sf	750 sf	Existing Non-conforming
§ 401 Lot Width	18'	15'	Existing Non-conforming
§ 403 Lot Occupancy	60%	60% 450 sf	Conforming
§ 404 Rear Yard	20'	20'	Conforming
§ 405 Side Yard	None required	None	Conforming

Item	Requirement	Existing / Proposed	Relief
§ 2101 Parking	Flat: 1 per 2 units	None	Requested (Variance)
§ 411.5 Penthouses	No penthouse permitted in this zone except by special exception	Stair tower proposed	Required (Sp. Ex.)
§ 411.18(c) Penthouse Setback	1-to-1 setback from edge of building	Zero setback from side and rear building walls	Required (Sp. Ex.)

* The applicant has verbally confirmed with OP that, although not shown on the plans, the ceiling of the lowest level would be less than 4 feet above grade and would therefore be considered a cellar, and not a fourth story.

V. ANALYSIS

Parking Variance

1. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The subject property has no alley access; While there is an alley in the square, the alley does not abut this property or several other properties along Lamont Street. The property is at the corner of Lamont Street and Sherman Avenue, and it is unlikely that the Public Space Committee would permit a curb cut on either of those streets, and certainly not so close to the intersection. The lot, therefore, has no opportunity to provide onsite parking.

2. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The requested relief could be granted without detriment to the public good. Not requiring a curb cut to a parking space, even if permitted, would maintain the pedestrian-friendly environment of this block, would allow a more gracious visual streetscape, and maintain existing on-street parking spaces. The neighborhood is also served by transit and is walkable to the Columbia Heights and Georgia Avenue metro stations. The 63 bus runs on Sherman Avenue, and the 70, 79, 64 and H series buses all serve the immediate neighborhood. There are also bike share stations nearby. This extensive transit service and walkability means residents are less likely to need cars.

3. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

Granting the requested relief would not impair the integrity of the Regulations. While the Regulations generally intend to provide on-site parking for any given use, doing so in this case would necessitate a curb cut on either Lamont or Sherman, which could eliminate one or two parking spaces from the street and result in no net parking gain for the neighborhood.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of this writing OP has received no comments from the community.