

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

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

DATE: September 16, 2016

SUBJECT: BZA #19332 – 446 N Street, NW – Variance relief to permit the construction of a detached garage

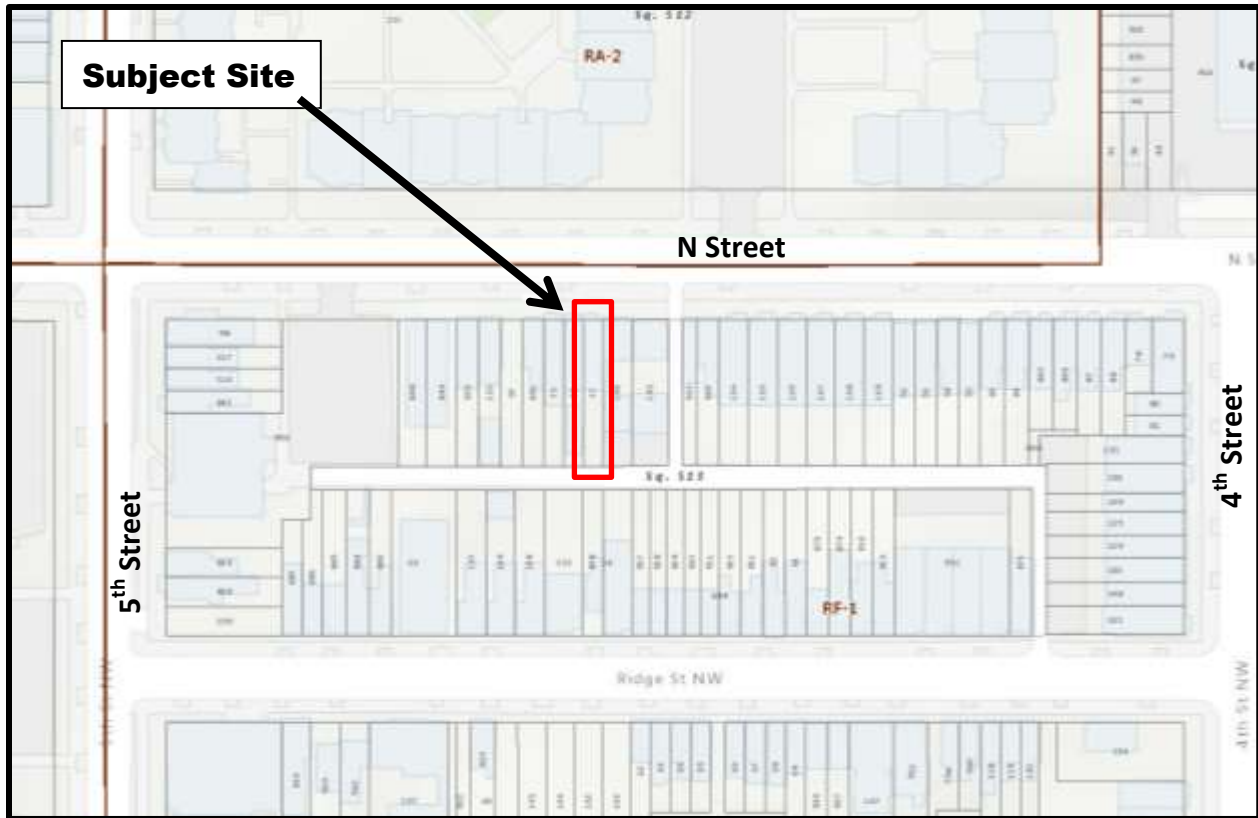
I. RECOMMENDATION

With regard to this proposal to construct a detached garage, the Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following relief:

- E § 304 Lot Occupancy (48.6% existing, 60% maximum, 70% permitted by special exception, 72.5% proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	446 4 th Street, NW
Legal Description	Square 513, Lot 77
Zoning	RF-1
Ward and ANC	6, 6E
Historic District	Mt. Vernon Square Historic District
Lot Characteristics and Existing Development	Existing two-story rowhouse on a rectangular lot; Area between the house and the alley is currently vacant; Lot dimensions are 13.5' x 100.67'. 16' alley at the rear.
Adjacent Properties and Neighborhood Character	The adjacent property to the west has a similar rowhouse as well as a detached garage. The properties to the east, constructed relatively recently, have detached-like structures that appear to have connections to the main structure. The subject square is a mix of historic rowhouses and newer rowhouses, with a few small apartment buildings, a church and a corner store. Some rowhouses have detached garages and many have rear parking pads with or without roll-up doors. The neighborhood is primarily a mix of rowhouses and apartments.



III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION IN BRIEF

The applicant proposes to construct a detached garage at the rear of their property. The garage would be 13.5' x 24' in area, and just under 15' in height. The 324 square foot garage would add to the lot occupancy of the 661 square foot house, for a total footprint on the property of 985 square feet.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND REQUESTED RELIEF

The subject site is zoned RF-1. The application would require relief as noted in the table below.

Item	Requirement	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Area	None	1,359 sf	No change	Conforming
Lot Width	None	13.5'	No change	Conforming
Height E § 5002	20', 2 stories	n/a	14'10", 1 story	Conforming
Lot Occupancy E § 304	60% 70% (§ 5201)	48.6% 661 sf	72.5% 985 sf	Requested

Item	Requirement	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Occupancy, Accessory Bld. E § 5003	450 sf., max	n/a	324 sf	Conforming
Rear Yard, Accessory Bld. E § 5004	12' from CL	n/a	12'	Conforming
Side Yard, Accessory Bld. E § 5005	None required	n/a	None	Conforming

V. ANALYSIS

In order to be granted a variance, the applicant must demonstrate that the application meets the three-part test of Subtitle X § 1000.

1. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The subject property is impacted by exceptional conditions that result in a practical difficulty in meeting the lot occupancy regulation. The lot is very narrow compared to most rowhouse lots in the District. At 13.5' wide, it is well below the standard RF-1 width requirement of 18', and also below the 16 and 15 foot widths often seen in historic rowhouses. In terms of lot area, the subject lot is appreciably smaller than the average size of rowhouse lots in this square of 1,597 square feet. These factors combine to create a difficulty for the owner in meeting typical modern standards for vehicle storage and simply storage of household goods. The narrow house limits the available living and storage space within the main structure.

2. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The requested relief could be granted without detriment to the public good. The new structure would not cause significant shadow on adjacent properties, or greatly impact airflow, as it would be constructed at least partially in between two accessory or accessory-type structures. Additionally, the proposed garage would be less than 15 feet and one story tall, less than the 20 feet and two stories that would be permitted as a matter of right. Visually, therefore, the proposed garage would be less conspicuous than an accessory structure could be. The proposal would improve the appearance of the rear of the property, would not be inconsistent with other garages or garage doors in the alley, and improve upon the several roll-up doors seen along the alley frontage.

3. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

Granting the requested relief would not impair the intent of the Regulations. The proposed footprint for the garage would be just slightly larger than what would be permitted by special exception. And that extra area would allow additional storage space in the accessory structure,

improving the overall livability of the property. The Regulations intend to make the city livable for households of various sizes, including families, and families often need additional storage space. The Regulations also intend to protect nearby properties, but as stated above, the proposed construction would not impact properties adjacent to the site.

VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The subject site is within the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District, and the principal structure is a contributing structure in the district. Because of the nature of the project, it can be reviewed at the staff level. HP staff will formally review the historic application when it is submitted.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of this writing OP has received no comments from the community. The applicant has submitted a statement to the record indicating that the neighbor to the west has no objections to the request.