

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Elisa Vitale, Case Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: May 5, 2017
SUBJECT: BZA Case 19400 (2495 Alabama Avenue SE) for special exception to allow construction of a thirty-unit apartment house.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **denial** of the following special exception:

- Subtitle U § 421, New Residential Developments (RA-1).

OP is very supportive of proposals for appropriately designed and sited infill development consistent with the zoning. While this proposal appears to be generally consistent with zoning, questions regarding side yard conformity remain, and the application is sufficiently incomplete that a recommendation of approval is not possible at this time. Should the required information be provided and the issues identified in this report and the reports of other agencies be adequately addressed, OP may be able to reconsider this recommendation.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	2495 Alabama Avenue SE
Applicant	William Cleveland, Architect, on behalf of Alabama Avenue, LLC, Owner
Legal Description	Square 5730, Lots 913, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23
Ward / ANC	8, 8B
Zone	RA-1
Lot Characteristics	Large irregularly shaped lot abutting an unbuilt 20-foot public alley to the rear.
Existing Development	The remnants of an apartment house, consisting of the building foundation and portions of the front, side, and rear facades remain on the subject property.
Adjacent Properties	To the north is a surface parking lot owned by and serving Allen Chapel AME Church, which is across Alabama Avenue to the west of the subject property. To the east are unimproved lots owned by The Way of the Cross Church of Christ. To the south is a small apartment house. To the west is Alabama Avenue SE.

Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood is comprised of a number of religious institutions, as well as small and medium apartment houses.
Proposed Development	The Applicant is proposing to construct a new four-story apartment house containing 30 units.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND RELIEF REQUESTED¹

RA-1 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Area (sq. ft.) F § 201.4	As specified by BZA	18,830 sq. ft.	18,830 sq. ft.	None
Lot Width (ft.) F § 201.4	As specified by BZA	N/A	N/A	None
Height (ft.) F § 303	40 ft./3 stories	N/A	32 ft.	None
FAR F § 302	0.9	N/A	0.9	None
Lot Occupancy F § 304	40%	N/A	32%	None
Rear Yard (ft.) F § 305	20 ft.	N/A	40 ft.	None
Side Yard (ft.) F § 306	1 side yard shall be provided unless the building contains 3 or more dwelling units/floor, in which case 2 side yards shall be provided, each with the minimum distance equal to 3"/ft. height but not less than 8 ft.	N/A	2 at 8 ft. according to the application	None requested , the applicant has been asked to confirm this and request relief if needed
Courts F § 202	Open - 4"/ft. of height, but not less than 10' Closed - 4"/ft. of height, but not less than 15' Twice the square of the required width of court dimension but not less than 350 sq. ft. min.	N/A	N/A	None
Parking C § 701	1 space/3 dwelling units 10 spaces	N/A	13 space	None

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Special Exception Relief pursuant to U § 421, New Residential Developments (RA-1)

421.1 In the RA-1 and RA-6 zones, all new residential developments, except those comprising all one-family detached and semi-detached dwellings, shall be

¹ Information provided by Applicant.

reviewed by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as special exceptions under Subtitle X, in accordance with the standards and requirements in this section.

The Applicant is proposing the construction of a new 30-unit apartment house.

421.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the relevant District of Columbia agencies for comment and recommendation as to the adequacy of the following:

- (a) Existing and planned area schools to accommodate the numbers of students that can be expected to reside in the project; and*
- (b) Public streets, recreation, and other services to accommodate the residents that can be expected to reside in the project.*

The application was referred to District Agencies for comment by the BZA. For additional discussion of comments received, see Section V below.

The Applicant states that the proposed 30-unit apartment house should contribute no more than eight additional students to the existing and planned area schools.

421.3 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the Office of Planning for comment and recommendation on the site plan, arrangement of buildings and structures, and provisions of light, air, parking, recreation, landscaping, and grading as they relate to the surrounding neighborhood, and the relationship of the proposed project to public plans and projects.

OP reviewed the site and floor plans submitted and notes the inconsistencies between the survey and site plan. OP and DDOT also advised the Applicant that they should consider revising the site access to take advantage of the existing paper alley at the rear of the property.

The application did not include landscaping and grading plans so OP was not able to review those items.

421.4 In addition to other filing requirements, the developer shall submit to the Board of Zoning Adjustment with the application a site plan and set of typical floor plans and elevations, grading plan (existing and final), landscaping plan, and plans for all new rights-of-way and easements.

The Applicant submitted a site plan, elevations, and floor plans, but had not submitted a grading plan (existing or final), landscaping plan, or plans for all new rights-of-way and easements at the time this report was drafted.

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

While OP supports infill development and believes an apartment house would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map, the Applicant has not provided sufficient information to allow OP to undertake a complete review or to recommend approval of the subject application at this time.

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

The Applicant has not requested side yard relief, but it appears that it may be encroaching on the required side yard adjacent to the property to the south. DDOT has requested that the Applicant modify the proposed access for the project, to include alley improvements, but the Applicant has not provided revised plans reflecting these revisions and improvements. It is difficult to determine whether the proposal would adversely affect the adjoining properties until these issues are resolved.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

DDOT, in an email to OP dated December 8, 2016, stated that DDOT would not be supportive of the access point as it is currently proposed on Alabama Ave SE. Access to the property for the 30 residential units must be from the future public alley. DDOT would look for the public alley to be constructed as part of this project (only the portion from Alabama Ave SE around the back of the gravel parking lot to the future access point).

No other comments were received from District agencies.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The Applicant presented the project to ANC 8B on November 15, 2016; however, a quorum was not present and the ANC did not take a position on the project. The Applicant stated that the ANC expressed concerns about affordability.

No other community comments were received.

Attachment: Location Map

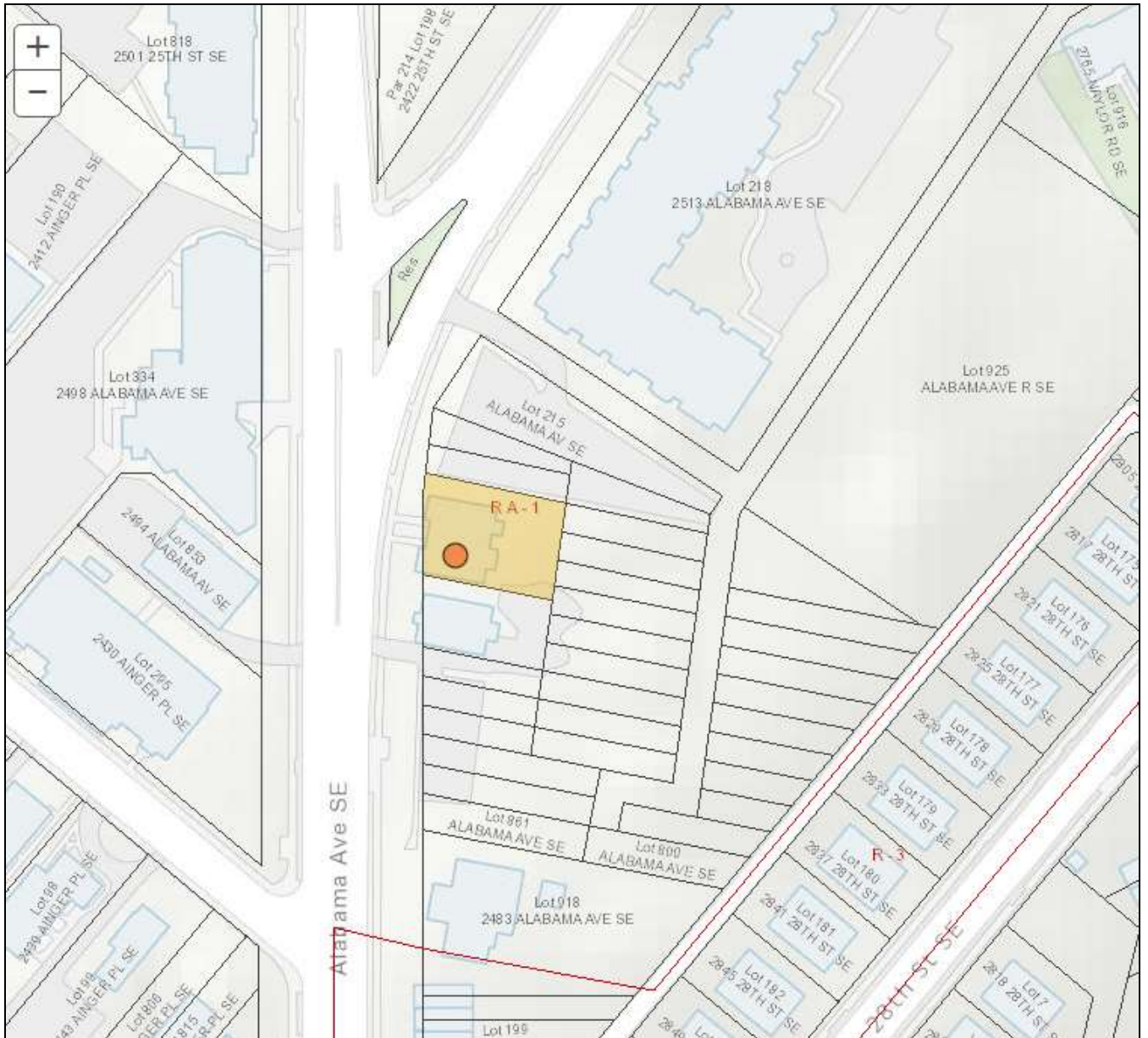


Figure 1: Location Map