

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, AICP, Case Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: February 10, 2017

SUBJECT: BZA Case 19436 (930-960 Randolph Street, N.W.) for a variance to increase the number of apartment units and a special exception from required parking

I. BACKGROUND

The three existing buildings were constructed as apartment houses in 1935 and 1936 with a total of 75 dwelling units and no off-street parking spaces, prior to the adoption of the 1958 Zoning Regulations. Basements within each of the buildings allowed for generous amounts of space for utilities, laundry facilities and mechanical equipment. All of the apartments in the three buildings have since been converted to affordable units at 60 percent AMI. No off-street parking was ever constructed.

II. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following area variance:

- E § 201.4 (900 square feet/dwelling unit required, 312 square feet/ dwelling unit existing, 273 square feet/ dwelling unit proposed);

OP recommends **approval** of the following special exceptions:

- E § 701.5, Parking Requirements (seven required, none existing; none proposed); and
- E § 705, Parking Requirements for an Expansion within an Existing Building.

III. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	930-960 Randolph Street, N.W.
Applicants	CCA Randolph Street, L.P. and Petworth Station LP
Legal Description	Square 2905, Lot 812
Ward, ANC	Ward 4, ANC 4C06
Zone	RF-1
Lot Characteristics	Large rectangular lot with side and rear alley access
Existing Development	Three three-and-a-half story multi-family buildings with no off-street parking

Adjacent Properties	North: Across Randolph Street, two-story four-unit apartment buildings South and East: Four to seven story mixed use building with ground floor retail with on-site garage from the alley West: Across the public alley, two-and-a-half story row houses
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Surrounding area is predominantly developed with small and large apartment buildings and row houses
Proposed Development	The applicant proposes to add thirteen new apartment units affordable at 60 percent AMI, five of which would be reserved as accessible units pursuant to Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). No building additions would be necessary for the new units as they can be accommodated within the existing structures

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

Zone: RF-1	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height E § 303	35-foot. max.	34 feet	34 feet	None Required
Lot Width E § 201.1	40 feet	240 feet	240 feet	None Required
Lot Area E § 201.1	4,000 sq.ft. min.	23,988 sq. ft.	23,988 sq. ft.	None Required
Lot Occupancy E § 304.1	60% max.	66.2%	66.2%	None Required
Rear Yard E § 306.1	20-foot min.	4 feet	4 feet	None Required
Side Yard E § 307.3	None if none provided	None	None	None Required
Open Court E § 203.1	15.5 ft. x 62 ft., 9 in. min.	2.5 in x 1.5 ft.	2.5 in x 1.5 ft.	None Required
Parking C § 701.5	1 per 2 units or 7 new spaces	None	None	Required
Density E§ 201.4	1/ d.u.900 SF of lot area	1 d.u./320 SF	1 d.u./273 SF	Required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

- a. **Variance Relief from E § 201.4, Density-Lot Dimensions: An apartment house in an RF-1, RF-2, or RF-3 zone, whether existing before May 12, 1958, or converted pursuant to the 1958 Regulations, or pursuant to Subtitle U §§ 301.2 or 320.2, may not be renovated or expanded so as to increase the number of dwelling units unless there are nine hundred square feet (900 sq. ft.) of lot area for each dwelling unit, both existing and new.**

- i. **Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty**

Large areas of the building originally designated as common building facilities, such as laundry rooms and utility/building services are in excess of that which is necessary to

perform their functions. It is an exceptional situation that the buildings were constructed as apartment buildings with unused interior space, resulting in the underutilization of these buildings.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The additional units would not be visible from the exterior of the buildings as no façade changes or building additions are proposed. Access to the new units would be from either the existing building entrances facing Randolph Street or from existing doorways at the rears of the buildings accessible from the rear alley. Conversely, the new units would provide for additional affordable units within the neighborhood, including five units designed to UFAS standards, which have the potential to benefit the community as a whole.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The thirteen new apartment units, although not in conformance with the requirement that 900 square feet of lot area be provided for each dwelling unit, would permit these three purpose-built apartment buildings to continue to function as apartment buildings with no change in use. The additional units would not result in an increase in either lot occupancy or FAR, but rather allow for the existing structures to continue serving the community as they have for over eighty years.

b. Special Exception Relief pursuant to C § 701.5 and § 705, Parking Requirements

i. 703.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant a full or partial reduction in number of required parking spaces, subject to the general special exception requirements of Subtitle X, and the applicant's demonstration of at least one (1) of the following:

(a) Due to the physical constraints of the property, the required parking spaces cannot be provided either on the lot or within six hundred feet (600 ft.) of the lot in accordance with Subtitle C § 701.8;

All properties within 600 feet of the site are otherwise developed and not suitable for the provision of off-site parking to serve this site.

(b) The use or structure is particularly well served by mass transit, shared vehicle, or bicycle facilities;

The site is well served by multiple forms of transportation other than the private automobile. The Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metrorail station and six bus lines serving Georgia Avenue are all located within 0.2 miles of the site. A bicycle room within the building for use by all residents capable of storing 25 bikes is proposed. Within one-quarter mile of the site is a Capital Bikeshare station. Four car-share locations are located within one-quarter mile of the property.

(c) Land use or transportation characteristics of the neighborhood minimize the need for required parking spaces;

The subject property has a Walk Score of 94, defined as an area where “daily errands do not require a car,”¹ minimizing the need for off-street parking.

(d) Amount of traffic congestion existing or which the parking for the building or structure would reasonably be expected to create in the neighborhood;

Not applicable.

(e) The nature of the use or structure or the number of residents, employees, guests, customers, or clients who would reasonably be expected to use the proposed building or structure at one time would generate demand for less parking than the minimum parking standards;

Not applicable.

(g) Quantity of existing public, commercial, or private parking, other than on-street parking, on the property or in the neighborhood, that can reasonably be expected to be available when the building or structure is in use;

Not applicable.

(h) The property does not have access to an open public alley, resulting in the only means by which a motor vehicle could access the lot is from an improved public street and either:

(1) A curb cut permit for the property has been denied by the District Department of Transportation; or

(2) Any driveway that could access an improved public street from the property would violate any regulation of this chapter, of the parking provisions of any other subtitle in the Zoning Regulations, or of Chapters 6 or 11 of Title 24 DCMR; Subtitle C-40.

Although the property has access to public alleys, the site is fully developed without off-street parking.

(j) The presence of healthy and mature canopy trees on or directly adjacent to the property; or

Not applicable.

(j) The nature or location of a historic resource precludes the provision of parking spaces; or providing the required parking would result in significant architectural or structural difficulty in maintaining the integrity and appearance of the historic resource.

Not applicable. The subject property is not an historic resource.

¹ www.walkscore.com

703.3 Any reduction in the required number of parking spaces shall be only for the amount that the applicant is physically unable to provide, and shall be proportionate to the reduction in parking demand demonstrated by the applicant.

The request is to reduce the number of required parking spaces from seven to zero, as the applicant is unable to provide any off-street parking for either the existing or the proposed dwelling units.

703.4 Any request for a reduction in the minimum required parking shall include a transportation demand management plan approved by the District Department of Transportation, the implementation of which shall be a condition of the Board of Zoning Adjustment's approval.

The applicant submitted a Transportation Demand Management plan dated January 23, 2017 for review by DDOT, necessary for the Board to consider this application.

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

The granting of the requested special exception to reduce parking would enable the applicant to utilize existing unused space within the buildings to increase the amount of affordable housing within the neighborhood at 60 percent AMI, including the provision of five UFAS units to better serve those in need of such units.

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

The addition of thirteen additional units within the existing building and without the need for external modifications to the building should not adversely affect the use of neighboring property. The applicant proposes to add a bicycle room within the building capable of storing up to twenty-five bicycles for long term use by all residents of the buildings and is also proposing the addition of three U-racks for bicycles, one each at the building entrances along Randolph Street as recommended by DDOT.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

DDOT, in a report dated February 3, 2017, indicated that it had no objection to the application, provided the applicant installed at least one inverted U-rack at each of the three building entrances on Randolph Street.

No comments were received from other District agencies.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

No comments were received from ANC 4C.

Attachment: Location Map

