

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, AICP, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: April 6, 2018
SUBJECT: BZA Case 19733 (3341-3353 23rd Street, 2270-2276 Savannah Street, S.E.)

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

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

- U § 421, New Residential Development in the RA-1 zone

OP has recommended to the applicant that the design be modified as follows:

1. Use more durable material than fiber cement cladding; and
2. Alter the window design where groups of four equally-sized windows are proposed by reducing to three, with the center window wider than the other two.

The application appears to also result in a requirement for mitigation of excess parking, pursuant to C § 707.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	3341-3353 23 rd Street, 2270-2276 Savannah Street, S.E.
Applicant	Terrace Manor Redevelopment LP
Legal Description	Square 5994, Lots 3, 4 and 5 (proposed for consolidation)
Ward, ANC	Ward 8, ANC 8E
Zone	RA-1
Lot Characteristics	Irregularly shaped sloping lot with no alley access
Existing Development	Garden apartment complex consisting of 11 buildings with 61 units total, and surface parking from two curb cuts. All existing improvements to be demolished.
Adjacent Properties	North: Playground South: Across Savannah Street, a shopping center East: Across 23 rd Street, Suitland Parkway West: Garden apartments
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Moderate density residential

Proposed Development	Four-story apartment building with 120 units and 77 parking spaces in a garage. All units would be affordable with a maximum blended median family income of sixty percent. Over fifty percent of the units would be either two or three-bedroom units.
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III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED¹

Zone: RA-1	Regulation	Proposed	Relief
Apartment Use U § 421	By Special Exception	Apartment building	Sp. Ex Requested
Height F § 303	40 feet and 3 stories max.	36.5 feet and 3 stories	None Required
Lot Width F § 201.4	As prescribed by BZA	398.8 feet	None Required
Lot Area F § 301.4	1,800 square-foot min.	100,262 square feet	None Required
Floor Area Ratio F § 302	0.9 max 1.08 max. with IZ	1.08	None Required
Lot Occupancy F § 304	40% max.	37.2%	None Required
Rear Yard F § 305	20-foot min.	33.7 feet	None Required
Side Yard F § 306	8-foot min.	25.5 feet	None Required
Green Area Ratio F § 307	0.4 min	0.555	None Required
Court, Open F § 202	4"/ft. of ht. but not < 10 feet	39.2 feet	None Required
Court, Closed F § 202	4"/ft. of ht. but not < 15 feet	15 feet	None Required
Parking C § 701	1 per 6 units or 22	77	None Required ²

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Special Exception Relief pursuant to U § 421, New Residential Developments

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

The application is for the development of an apartment building in the RA-1 zone and therefore subject to the provisions of this section.

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**

¹ All existing improvements are proposed to be removed and the three existing lots consolidated into one lot.

² Subtitle C § 707 requires mitigation for parking significantly in excess (more than twice) the required parking.

DCPS (District of Columbia Public Schools), in an email to OP, indicated no substantial concerns with the proposed development.

(b) Public streets, recreation, and other services to accommodate the residents that can be expected to reside in the project.

The site is well served by public transportation. It is located 0.5 miles from the Southern Avenue Metrorail station and served by six Metrobus lines.

DDOT, in an email to OP dated April 2, 2018, expressed concern over the loading design, but finds it acceptable.

Although OP did not receive comments from DPR, the site is less than one-half mile from the Douglas Community Center, and within walking distance of District and Federal parkland.

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 finds the layout of the site and the provision of light, air, and recreation as they relate to the neighborhood acceptable. The building would be in the shape of a “J”, fronting on both 23rd Street and Savannah Street. Pedestrian access would be from 23rd Street and vehicular and loading access from Savannah Street. To the north and adjacent to the subject property is a playground that was constructed by the applicant on an adjoining property that would be available for use by resident children. This playground is also located to the east of a YMCA facility that would provide additional recreational opportunities to the residents.

A 26,242 square-foot green roof is proposed for the project, contributing to a total GAR of 0.555, greater than the minimum requirement of 0.40. Sheet 19 of the applicant’s submission, dated March 28, 2018, indicates that the applicant proposes to preserve many of the trees on the site, including five between 6 and 12 inches DBH (diameter at breast height), and one between 18 and 24 inches DBH.

Design of the access to the parking garage, though, is awkward. It requires the access driveway to be parallel to the Savannah Street façade on the subject property. This is due to the provision of parking on the lower level, served from the same curb cut as the loading which is on the main level, as the site has no alley access and DDOT prefers to limit the number of curb cuts to no more than one. Direct access from the street to the parking garage would require the relocation of the loading facilities to the parking garage from the terrace level. However, due to additional floor to ceiling height requirements for the loading facilities within the basement, there would be a loss of four one-bedroom and two two-bedroom units on the terrace level from this one-hundred percent affordable building. In addition, it would make loading and trash pickup more difficult. As such, although not optimal, the proposed solution is acceptable, especially as the ramp down to the parking would be screened from the adjacent units within the building and from Savannah Street with shrubbery, softening the view.

Façade materials are generally acceptable. However, fiber cement cladding proposed for use over a large surface area, as shown on Sheet 17, does not wear well. OP suggests the applicant replace this material with one that is more durable. OP also recommends the applicant alter the window design where groups of four equally-sized windows are proposed with three, allowing the center window to be wider. This would break down the repetition of massing and allow it to read as a composition.

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, typical floor plans and elevations, existing and final grading plans, typical floor plans and elevations, a landscaping plan. No new rights-of-way or easements are proposed.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

DCPS, in an email to OP dated April 2, 2018 indicated that it did not have significant concerns with the application. No comments were received from other District agencies.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of the date of submitting this report, no comments from ANC 8E had been entered into the record.

Location Map

