

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

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

**DATE:** April 5, 2019

**SUBJECT:** BZA #19980 – 2421 Shannon Place, SE – Special Exception relief to construct a new 5-unit multifamily building

**I. RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning (OP) can recommend **approval** of the following requested special exception once the outstanding items listed below have been resolved:

- U § 421 – Special exception review for all new multi-family projects.

The application should be revised to address the following outstanding items:

1. The areas for bicycle parking should be shown on the landscaping plan;
2. Application materials must be revised to show how trash for the building would be handled;
3. The plans should indicate all locations and fixture types for external lighting.

**II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

Applicant	HIP DC, LLC
Address	2421 Shannon Place, SE
Legal Description	Square 5788, Lot 821
Ward / ANC	8, 8A
Zone	RA-1, low density apartment zone (detached, semi-detached, rowhouse and multi-family permitted as a matter-of-right)
Historic District or Resource	None
Lot Characteristics and Existing Development	Irregularly-shaped lot, 25 feet wide at Shannon Place, and approx. 50 feet wide at the 20' rear alley. Property is relatively flat. Existing single family brick home.

Adjacent Properties and Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Single family home to the east; Church-owned property to the west; Savoy Elementary School on the south side of Shannon Place; I-295 to the north. Anacostia metro station further to the west across Howard Road, mostly single family homes to the east, and commercial and school uses along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue to the south.
Proposed Development	Construct a 5-unit apartment building, partially within the shell of a former single family home, and partially within a rear addition.

### III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND REQUESTED RELIEF

The site is zoned RA-1, a zone that requires special exception review for all new multifamily developments, subject to the criteria of Subtitle U § 421. The applicant has not requested any additional zoning relief.

Section	Requirement	Proposed	Relief
F § 201.4 Lot Area	As prescribed by the Board	4,712 sf	-
F § 201.4 Lot Width	As prescribed by the Board	~37.5' (avg.)	-
F § 302 and C § 1002.3 FAR	0.9 4,241 sf	0.83 3,907 sf	Conforming
F § 303 Height	40' and 3 stories	32' 3 stories	Conforming
F § 304 Lot Occupancy	40%	31.6%	Conforming
F § 305 Rear Yard	20'	27'4"	Conforming
F § 306 Side Yard	3 in. / ft. of height = 8' (based on 32' of height)	8' min. on east for new construction  ~6'4" on west side (continuation of existing, permitted per 306.6)	Conforming  Conforming
F § 307 GAR	0.4	0.4	Conforming
C §§ 701 and 702.1(a) Vehicle Parking	1 per 3 units in excess of 4 units; 50% for metro; = 0.166 spaces	4 spaces	Conforming
C § 802 Bicycle Parking	Long Term – none req'd for projects < 8 units	2 long term spaces (Sheet A03 of Exhibit 32)	Conforming*
	Short Term – none req'd for projects < 8 units	1 short term space (Sheet A03 of Exhibit 32)	Conforming*

Section	Requirement	Proposed	Relief
C § 901 Loading	None required for < 50 units	None	Conforming

\* The bicycle parking locations, shown on Sheet A03 of Exhibit 32, should be reflected on the landscape plan. Long term bicycle parking is generally required to be located indoors. Because the spaces are not required, OP does not object to their location outside, but defers to DDOT on the appropriateness of the parking locations.

#### IV. ANALYSIS

Section 421 requires special exception review for new multifamily residential developments in the RA-1 zone, subject to the following criteria.

##### 421 NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS (RA-1 and RA-6)

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 proposes a new multi-family development, a permitted use in the RA-1 zone.

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*

The Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) Master Facilities Plan, dated February 2019, presents the following utilization data for the relevant schools:

- Savoy Elementary – 62% utilization
- Kramer Middle – 32% utilization
- Anacostia High – 45% utilization

OP reached out to DCPS and DME, and should they provide OP with comments will provide those to the Board at the hearing. OP notes that the building would include one studio, three one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit, which should not result in a large increase in the school-aged population.

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

OP defers to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to comment on the adequacy of the public streets and transportation infrastructure. The application was referred to DDOT at Exhibit 18 and OP anticipates that DDOT will submit a report in this case. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) did not provide comments to the records, but Anacostia Park is located north of I-295, and the Barry Farm Recreation Center and playground are located approximately 0.4 miles to the west. The Anacostia Neighborhood Library is approximately one mile away.

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.*

## **Site Plan**

The applicant proposes a 5-unit multifamily building partially within a former single family dwelling, and also within a rear addition. Floors one and two would have two units each, and the fifth unit would be on the third floor. The existing lead walk would provide a secondary entrance to one unit, but a new walkway on the west side of the building would lead to a new main entrance on that side. Beyond the main entrance the walkway would continue to the rear parking area, which would have four vehicular parking spaces, more than the Regulations require, and sufficient given the site's proximity to transit. The site plan on Sheet A03 of Exhibit 32 indicates the locations for bicycle parking, also at the rear of the building. The bicycle spaces should be shown on the landscaping plan, which only shows landscaping in those areas.

## **Retaining Walls**

On the western side of the building, the walkway would ramp up to the main entrance and then back down to the rear parking area, and be bordered by a low block wall along the property line. According to Sheet A07 the block used in the project would match the brick color of the existing building. The landscape plan at Exhibit 29 shows a "block wall" along the eastern property line. Further information provided to OP by the applicant, however, indicates that the object in question is not really a "wall", but rather an existing 5"-high curb.

## **Building Form**

The front walls of the existing dwelling would remain in place, but the exterior wall of the new construction would be set back approximately seven feet from that brick façade, creating an internal open-air courtyard for the building. The courtyard would be usable by the first floor tenant, with balconies above for residents on the second and third floors. The rear of the building would step back from the first floor rear wall, reducing the mass of the building on upper floors.

That shape of the building, and because it would be well below the permitted height and lot occupancy, should mean that impacts to light and air on surrounding properties would be minimized.

### **Trash**

The application must be revised to show how trash for the building would be handled. Plans should show if there is any sort of internal trash room, and where any external dumpsters would be located. External dumpsters should be screened.

### **Materials and Lighting**

The plans call for different layers of materials on the exterior of the building, including block at the base, with a color to match the existing brick; bark cladding at the first floor; cork cladding at the second floor, and charred wood siding at the third floor and apparently around the main entrance. OP does not object to the proposed materials. At Sheet A03 the plans also indicate the type of external lighting to be used on the project. While actual illumination levels are not shown, the suggested lighting fixtures along the walkway and at the main entrance should provide enough light for safety while minimizing light spill onto the property to the west. It also seems likely that the locations of the existing front door, the new back door, the balconies and the rooftop deck would also have external lighting, and those fixtures should be indicated on the plans.

*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 application includes all information required by this subsection.

## **V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES**

As of this writing the record contains no comments from other District agencies.

## **VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

As of this writing the record contains no comments from the ANC or the neighborhood.

## **VII. ATTACHMENT**

1. Vicinity Map

### Attachment 1 Vicinity Map

