



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment **2012 FEB 21 PM 3:27**

FROM: Maxine Brown-Roberts, Project Manager *JS*
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review *fr*

DATE: February 21, 2012

SUBJECT: BZA No. 18317 – 3146 16th Street, NW

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **APPROVAL** of the variances requested by Bozzuto Homes, Inc., pursuant to § 3101 of Title 11 DCMR. The requested variances are as follows:

- Rear yard, § 404.1 (Ground Floor: 26.3 feet required, 6 feet proposed)
(Upper Floors: 26.3 feet required, 15 feet proposed)
- Open Court Width § 406.1 (Northern - 10.7 feet required, 4.5 feet proposed)
(Southern - 10.7 feet required, 6 feet proposed).

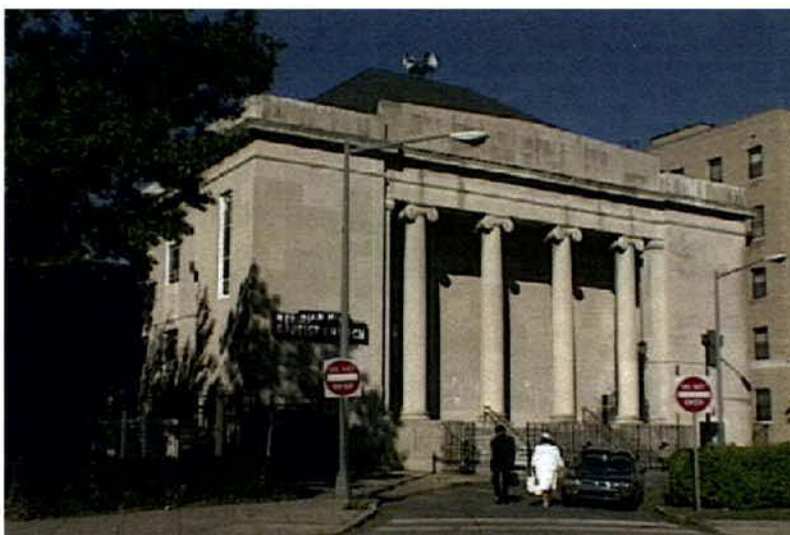
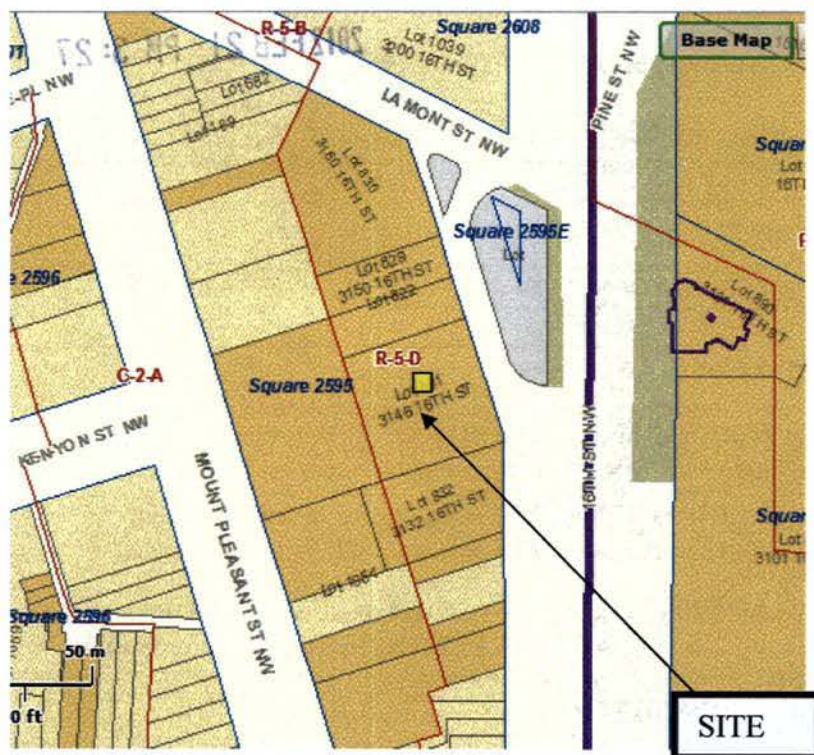
II. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	3146 16 th Street, NW
Legal Description:	Square 3595, Lot 831
Ward/ANC:	1/ANC-1D
Lot Characteristics:	The nearly square lot has an area of 14,714 square feet and fronts on 16 th Street, NW.
Existing Development:	The property is developed with a 3-story building that formerly housed the Meridian Hill Baptist Church.
Zoning:	R-5-D – designed for relatively high height and medium-high density developments.
Adjacent Properties:	North, South and West: apartment buildings East: triangle open space area
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	The neighborhood is characterized by mixture of residential uses in 2-3-story rowhouses, 4-8 story apartment buildings, neighborhood retail uses and institutional uses. Properties to the east, north and south are in the R-5-D zone while properties to the west are in the C-2-A zone.
Historic District	Mount Pleasant Historic District, the existing structure is a contributing building and subject to HPRB review.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18317
EXHIBIT NO. 28

Board of Zoning Adjustment



Vicinity Map and Building Elevation

III. APPLICATION

The subject property is developed with the former Meridian Hill Baptist Church which was extensively damaged by a fire in 2008. The applicant proposes to demolish the damaged rear portion of the building and convert the remainder of the structure to residential use, and construct a new addition to the rear and the southern sides of the building. The building would have a total of 57 residential units and a below grade parking garage with 32 spaces.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

R-5-D Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed ¹	Relief
Height (ft) § 400	90 ft max.	61 7 ft.	76 4 ft	None required
Lot Width (ft) § 401	N/A	120 ft	120 ft	None required
Lot Area (sq ft) § 401	N/A	14,714 sq ft.	14,714 sq. ft.	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 402	4.2, including IZ bonus		4 2	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	75% max	55%.	75%	None required
Rear Yard (ft) § 404	26 3 ft min	5 ft	6 ft at ground level 15 ft. on upper levels	Required
Side Yard (ft) § 405	N/A	4.5 ft. on north 33 6 ft on south	N/A	None required
Open Court § 406	10.7 ft	none	4 5 ft on north 6 0 ft on south	6 2 ft on north 4 7 ft on south

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

The requested variance relief must satisfy the criteria for an area variance. An analysis of the proposal against the relevant variance criteria is provided below

1. Is the property unique due to:

- Exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape at the time of original zoning regulation adoption,*
- Exceptional topographical conditions or*
- Other extraordinary or exceptional situation.*

The property is unique in that it is developed with a contributing building within a historic district so cannot be demolished, but which was severely damaged by a fire. Adaptive reuse of the existing structure does not appear to be a viable option, but any new development must reflect the conditions of the existing structure on the site

2. Does the uniqueness, in combination with the zoning regulations, result in exceptional and undue hardship upon the owner?

Redevelopment of the site , and conversion of the church to residential use present challenges related to the introduction of windows for light, air and stairs and elevators for access that were not required for a church. In order to preserve the historic character of the church structure along the street, the visibility of the addition should not negatively impact the 16th Street facade. Thus, the building height is restricted to below that permitted by the R-5-D District, with the massing pushed towards the rear (west) and side (south) of the property

Rear Yard

The existing building has a rear yard of between 0 and 5 feet. The new addition requires a 26.3 feet rear yard setback. The Applicant proposes a 6 feet rear yard on the southern-most portion of the building, increasing to 15 feet on the remainder of the building

¹ Information provided by applicant

To better reflect the historic character of the existing structure, the addition is proposed to extend towards the rear of the property. The width of the area to the rear of the site between the historic building (after demolition) and the rear property line is approximately 55 feet. If the 26.5 foot setback combined with the required 5.7 foot width of the single loaded corridor were to be provided, the depth of the residential floor plate for the units would be the size of the units would be reduced to about 22 feet, much more narrow than is typically expected in the market. This would also likely result in a need for much longer units, to maintain a reasonable unit size, resulting in a drop in the number of units. Therefore, incorporating a portion of the historic building and the addition makes it practically difficult to comply with the rear yard requirement.

Open Court Width

Open courts in the R-5-D District are required to have a minimum width of not less than 10 feet. Relief is required for an open court along the northern property line which has a width of 4.5 feet, but is required to have a width of 10.7 feet. Because this court is between the northern property line and the historic building, its expansion to be conforming would require demolition of a portion of the building. This is not possible and therefore creates a practical difficulty.

The southern court is located along the southern property line and has a width of 6 feet where the requirement is 10.7 feet. The area between the building and the southern property line is fairly narrow resulting in units on this side of the historic building being fairly long and narrow. Increasing the court width would reduce the width of the units, thus creating units of unusual sizes. Increasing the court width would also require a decrease in the width of the garage ramp from 16 feet to 11.6 feet, which would adversely impact the functionality of the garage ramp. Therefore, it is practically difficult to meet the open court width requirement.

3. *Would granting the variance result in a substantial detriment to the public good or will it substantially impair the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zone plan?*

The proposal would substantially increase the rear yard setback from what currently exists, the northern open court would retain an existing condition, and the southern open court would allow adequate light and air into the building without impacting the driveway width. The relief would not appear to negatively impact buildings on adjacent properties, but would facilitate the rehabilitation of the site. As such, the requested relief would not negatively impact the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zone plan or result in substantial detriment to the public good.

VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Meridian Hill Baptist Church is a contributing building within the Mount Pleasant Historic District. At its July 28, 2011 and December 15, 2011 meetings, the Historic Preservation Review Board gave concept approval to the design and massing of the addition with the condition that the applicant continues to work on other design issues. The Applicant continues to work with the staff of the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) on design issues, it is not anticipated that any further design refinement would impact the requested areas of relief or result in new relief from zoning regulations.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The property is within ANC-1D. At its January 17, 2012 meeting, the ANC voted in support of the requested variances.