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MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, AICP, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: March 27, 2012
SUBJECT: BZA Case 18334 – 4601 Western Avenue, N.W.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

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

- § 403.2, Lot Occupancy (40 percent permitted, 45 percent existing, 66 percent proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	4601 Western Avenue, N.W.
Legal Description	Square 1488, Lot 810
Ward	3
Lot Characteristics	Rectangular corner lot with no alley access
Zoning	R-1-B – high-density one-family detached dwellings
Existing Development	One-family detached dwelling
Adjacent Properties	One-family detached dwellings
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Low density residential

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The applicant requests an area variance to increase the lot occupancy from 40 to 66 percent to allow for a two-story plus basement building addition onto the rear of a one-family detached dwelling constructed in 1950. The addition would continue the existing five-foot wide side yard on the northeast side of the property, permitted for pre-1958 dwellings pursuant to § 405.8 of the Zoning Regulations. A new one-car garage would be provided within the basement level of the addition to replace the garage within the basement of the existing structure, accessible from the existing driveway and curb cut on Brandywine Street.

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IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and REQUESTED RELIEF

R-1-B Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height § 400	40 ft. & 3 stories max.	<26 feet & 2 stories	<26 feet & 2 stories	None required
Lot Width § 401	50 ft. min.	60.87 ft.	60.87 ft.	None required
Lot Area § 401	5,000 SF min.	1,849 SF	1,849 SF	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 401	None prescribed	--	--	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	40% max.	45%	66%	Relief required
Side Yard § 405	5 ft. min.	5 ft.	5 ft.	None required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Variance Relief from § 403.2, Lot Occupancy

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The triangular shape of the lot, its small size and its corner location all combine to result in an exceptional situation resulting in a practical difficulty. The subject property, consisting of 1,849 square feet, is smaller than all of the lots surrounding it and less than the minimum 5,000 square feet required in the R-1-B. The triangular shape of the lot results in a dwelling almost triangular in shape, and not the more rectangular design typical of other houses in the neighborhood. The corner location of this triangularly shaped property also results in a large amount of public space adjacent to lot, an unusual situation.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

Increasing the lot occupancy to 66 percent would not result in substantial detriment to the public good. Located at the corner of Western Avenue and Brandywine Street, the lot is surrounded on two of its three sides by generous amounts of public space (41 feet on Western Avenue and 30 feet on Brandywine), giving the impression of open space to the lot that the maximum lot occupancy requirement is meant to provide.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The granting of a variance to lot occupancy would not result in substantial harm to the Zoning Regulations. It would allow for the expansion of a one-family detached dwelling similar to those within the surrounding neighborhood without resulting in the impression of decreased open space due to the unique siting of the lot at the corner of Western Avenue and Brandywine Street.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

No comments were received from other District agencies.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

No comments were received from ANC 3E.

No other community comments were received.

Attachment:

Location map

