

Owner / Applicant

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Statement of Existing / Intended Use

The property located at 13 15th St SE is currently owned by Karen Sayre and is used as an owner-occupied two-unit flat. The intended use shall continue as an owner-occupied two-unit flat. The owner is requesting a special exception to construct a third floor addition to the second floor unit, which she intends to occupy.

Summary of Relief Being Sought

In order to accommodate a third story addition, the Owner / Applicant seeks a special exception as set forth in Section 223 (Zoning Relief for Additions to One-Family Dwellings or Flats (R-1) and for New or Enlarged Accessory Structures. As per Section 223, the Board of Zoning Adjustment is authorized to grant a special exception from Section 2001.3 related to the issue of maximum lot occupancy. The maximum lot coverage, as set forth in Section 403, for a rowhouse in an R-4 district is 60%. The current lot occupancy is 68%, including both the existing structure and non-conforming open court. The proposed third story will not increase the lot occupancy. Additionally, the existing lot was created prior to the minimum lot width and areas (Section 401), and the Applicant is seeking relief for a non-conforming lot.

Background

The property is located at 13 15th Street SE, Lot 47 of Square 1058. It is currently zoned R-4, and is within ANC 6B. The property is not within an historic district. The lot is rectangular in shape; it measures 16' wide and is 72.00' deep and is 1,152 sf. The east property line fronts on 15th St SE, a 90' right of way and the west property line fronts on 10' public alley. The north lot line borders Lot 46 (11 15th St SE) and the south lot line borders Lot 48 (15 15th St SE). Both adjacent lots have been improved with single-family row houses.

The property has been improved with a two-story row house, with a lot occupancy of 712 sf / 62%. An existing light well is considered a non-conforming open court; it is 68 sf / 6%. Together, the existing structure and nonconforming open court have a total lot occupancy of 68%. The existing row house was built in 1935 and contains 1,387 sf of living area. Currently the structure contains two units, one on the ground floor and one on the second floor. The most recent Certificate of Occupancy for both units is number 55664.

The Applicant seeks to construct a third floor addition to enlarge the living area of the second floor unit which she intends to occupy. The addition is approximately 16' wide and 30' deep and would align with the existing 15th street façade to the east and the west façade facing into the existing light well. The existing lot occupancy of 68% will not increase. The height of the addition is 35', less than the 40' maximum height limit.

The property is also constrained by a 10' public alley, which has the effect of creating one of the smaller lots on the square. It also does not have a basement, a common feature of other row houses in the neighborhood.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18462

EXHIBIT NO. 3

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
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EXHIBIT NO.3

Minimum Lot Width and Area

The existing lot has a width of 16' and a lot area of 1,152 sf. It is bound by private property to the north and south. There is no opportunity to expand the property to create a lot that complies with the minimum lot width.

Lot Occupancy

The existing structure has a non-conforming lot occupancy of 68%. As per Section 403.2, the maximum lot occupancy is 60%. As per Section 223, the Board of Zoning Adjustment is authorized to grant a special exception of an additional 10%, for a total lot occupancy of 70%. The proposed third floor addition will not cause an increase in the degree of non-conformance.

Conclusion

The burden of proof for special exception is two-fold, and the Applicant must demonstrate the following:

1. How the proposed special exception will be consistent with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map

The R-4 zone permits flats of up to 3 stories as a matter of right, therefore the Applicants request for an additional story is consistent with Zoning Regulations and surrounding properties.

2. How allowing the use will not adversely affect the use of the neighboring property – ie. traffic, noise, lighting, etc.

The existing use of property as a two-unit flat will remain unchanged. No additional traffic or noise will be generated as a result of granting this special exception. The design and massing of the third floor addition has been carefully considered to minimize the natural light impact to the adjacent properties.

Additionally, special exceptions granted under section 223 are required to meet the following criteria:

1. Not unduly affect light and air available to neighboring properties

As our shadow studies show, the impact of an additional story on the Applicant's property will have minimal impact on light and air for both properties to the north and south. The property across the street is a three-story school, currently known as the Center City Public Charter School, and will not be affected.

2. Not compromise the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties

Adjacent properties will enjoy the same degree of use and privacy as they currently have now. The Applicant has met with both adjacent neighbors and has obtained letters of support for the Project.

3. Not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale and pattern of houses along the subject street frontage

Several properties along the 15th Street SE are three stories high including 1447 East Capitol Street and 7 15th Street SE. The design of the façade recalls the proportions of the projecting bay window on the ground floor. An additional sun shade has also been designed to reference the structural elements supporting the ground floor projection roof. The cladding material will be dark metal standing seam roofing panel to articulate the new addition from the existing two story unit.