

**APPLICATION FOR USE VARIANCE
UNIVERSALIST NATIONAL MEMORIAL CHURCH (SQUARE 0177 LOT 802)
FORM 120 STATEMENT #1
STATEMENT OF EXISTING AND INTENDED USES**

The Universalist National Memorial Church was built in 1930. The subject space, a downstairs auditorium and associated support spaces, lavatories, etc., was part of the original design. The original auditorium includes a dedicated film projection booth at one end and a raised proscenium stage with theatrical lighting dimmers, theater curtains and other stage equipment at the other end. Use of this space by the church for church activities, which may include performances of various types and showing films to church members, is already permitted under the present Certificate of Occupancy.

The difference in the intended use is that a professional theater company, working closely with the church, proposes to make this its primary performance space. While the theater works with the church to make this shared space usable for both church and theater programs, the theater's programming is not primarily church related. The church sees the theater's programming as part of its outreach effort to provide access for community events and to engage the larger community in the life of the church. The types of uses proposed by the theater are not fundamentally different from those already permitted to the church. The difference is that the theater is incorporated as a non-profit performing arts company with performances open to the general public, separate from the church.

As a separate entity, the theater is required to obtain a separate C of O for its activities in the church auditorium.

It is important to note that the theater's use of the auditorium space is on a non-exclusive basis. By agreement with the church, the theater has designed its staging and seating equipment to be completely demountable. At times when the church requires use of the space for its own events, the theater equipment can be removed and placed in storage. So the auditorium continues as a multipurpose space, used by the theater, the church and a variety of different organizations. Food For All, a DC based food bank, uses the space weekly as a distribution point for boxes of food it delivers to poor and homebound DC residents. Non-profit organizations of various types use the space on a regular basis for meetings and fundraisers. The church makes the auditorium available to wedding parties for receptions following weddings in the sanctuary upstairs. The proposed zoning variance contemplates the continuance of these uses alongside use by the theater.

Uses proposed by the theater include:

In-house uses, not open to the general public:

- staff meetings
- actor auditions
- rehearsals
- play readings for invited theater professionals
- developmental workshops

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Admission is not charged for these events. Attendance is generally five to 20 people.

Uses open to the general public include:

- full performances of stage plays
- dance performances including both live and recorded music
- musical concerts
- staged readings and workshop performances of plays
- fundraisers and charity events
- lectures

For scheduled performances where admission is charged, prices currently range from \$5 to \$25. For staged readings and workshop performances open to the public, there is no admission charge but donations are requested. Fundraisers and charity events may sell tickets or seek donations, or both. The anticipated maximum size for audiences at performance events is 75. The maximum for charity and fundraising events is the maximum allowed by the Fire Marshall – 225.