

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Brandice Elliott, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: February 18, 2014
SUBJECT: BZA Case 18713, 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

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

Area Variance (pursuant to § 3103.2):

- § 2115, Size of Parking Spaces (no compact spaces in a garage with less than 25 spaces permitted, 8 compact spaces proposed); and

Special Exception (pursuant to § 3104.1):

- § 411, Roof Structures (uniform height required, multiple heights proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E.
Legal Description	Square 1077, Lot 809
Ward	6, 6B
Lot Characteristics	The diamond-shaped corner lot is 10,323 square feet in area, with no alley access. The frontage along Pennsylvania Avenue is 71.75 feet, and the frontage along 15 th Street is 88.75 feet in length. The north property line is 126.27 feet in length, while the eastern property line is 135.36 feet in length. The lot is wider at the two street frontages, with the side lot lines forming an acute angle at the rear of the property.
Zoning	C-2-A – low and medium density residential with employment centers, shopping centers and medium-bulk mixed use centers.
Existing Development	Vacant single story building, previously occupied by a fast food restaurant, not permitted in this zone.
Historic District	Not Applicable
Adjacent Properties	Adjacent properties along Pennsylvania Avenue are three story row dwellings with ground floor garages.



Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood along 15 th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue are generally developed as row dwellings. Several row dwellings along Pennsylvania Avenue include ground floor retail and restaurants.
------------------------------------	---

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The applicant proposes to construct a 48.5 foot high four story apartment building, totaling approximately 30,000 square feet of gross floor area and a floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.0. The proposed FAR is the maximum permitted in the C-2-A District with the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) bonus. The building would consist of 42 units and 21 below grade parking spaces, which would be accessible from 15th Street. The lobby entrance would be located at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street. The ground floor units oriented toward the east property line would have access to the rear yard that has been provided at the northeast corner of the property.

Below grade parking would provide the number of spaces required by the regulations. However, eight of the proposed parking spaces would be compact in size, exceeding the number of compact parking spaces permitted when the parking garage has fewer than 25 parking spaces. The applicant has requested variance relief to allow the compact parking spaces.

A portion of the roof would accommodate a green roof tray system, while 750 square feet of the roof terrace would be open to tenants as a building amenity. The applicant has requested special exception relief for a proposed roof enclosure that would vary in height to accommodate the mechanical equipment, stairs and elevator shaft accordingly, ranging from ten feet to 15'-7" in height.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

C-3-A Zone	Regulation	Proposed	Relief
Height § 400	50 ft. max.	48.5 ft.	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 402	3.0 (with IZ Bonus)	3.0	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	75% max.	75%	None required
Rear Yard § 404	15 ft. min.	27.3 ft. average	None required
Roof Structures § 411	Uniform Height	Multiple Heights	Relief required
Parking Spaces § 2115	0 compact parking in a garage with less than 25 spaces	8 compact parking spaces in a garage with less than 25 spaces	Relief required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Variance Relief from § 2115, Size of Parking Spaces

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The applicant is requesting variance relief from the requirements to provide compact parking spaces in a garage with fewer than 25 parking spaces. A total of 21 parking spaces would be provided in the below grade garage, with eight of those being compact spaces, which is equivalent to forty percent of the parking that would be provided for this development. The Zoning Regulations permit forty percent of the parking in a parking garage with 25 or more spaces to be designated as compact parking spaces.

The combination of a small lot and irregular shape create a unique condition, which does not provide sufficient area to provide 21 standard parking spaces. The small size of the site creates a practical difficulty relative to the required widths and lengths of ramps, aisles, and parking spaces, thereby reducing the area that would normally be devoted to standard 9'x19' parking spaces. The required number of parking spaces have been provided in the proposed plan. Should the compact spaces be increased to regular dimensions, the drive aisle would be reduced, and there would be a loss of parking spaces.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The proposed relief would not result in a substantial detriment to the public good. All of the required 21 parking spaces for this development would be provided. The inclusion of eight compact spaces would allow for the increased efficiency of on-site parking and would help alleviate the demand for parking in the neighborhood. In addition, the site is well-served by public transportation, including the Potomac Avenue Metro Station, located approximately two blocks west of the site, and several bus lines.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The proposed off-street parking spaces and their compact sizes would increase the efficiency of on-site parking by allowing the development to provide all required parking spaces, thereby reducing the impact of the development on adjacent properties.

b. Special Exception Relief pursuant to § 411, Equal Height of Roof Structures

i. Is the proposal in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?

The request proposes to provide one roof enclosure that would contain mechanical equipment, two stair wells and an elevator shaft. The height of the enclosure would vary between ten feet in height for the equipment and stair wells, and 15'-7" for the elevator overrun, as required by the manufacturer. The structure is intended to read as one cohesive unit, as the same materials would be applied to both structures.

The Zoning Regulations would require the roof structure to be of a single height, which would increase its profile and visibility from Pennsylvania Avenue. The roof structure is set back 16'-9½" from the front of the building, which is a greater setback than required by the Zoning Regulations, reducing its visibility from the public right-of-way. As a result, the proposal is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps.

ii. Would the proposal appear to tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property?

The roof enclosure would not tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring properties. The varying height of the structure reduces the impact to neighboring properties by ensuring that most of it is not taller than necessary for the screening of equipment and stair wells. Only the elevator overrun is taller than ten feet, and it is sufficiently setback from the building edge. A matter-of-right roof structure with a uniform height of 15'-7" would have greater impact than what has been proposed.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of the writing of this report, comments from other District agencies had not been received. DDOT will be filing a report under separate cover.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

At its regularly scheduled meeting of February 11, 2014, ANC 6 unanimously voted to recommend approval of this request.

Attachment: Location Map

Location Map

