

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, AICP, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: November 10, 2014
SUBJECT: BZA Case 18790, 2724 11th Street, N.W.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

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

- § 401.3, Minimum Lot Dimensions to allow the addition of multi-family units to an existing building (900 square feet per unit required; 370 square feet proposed); and
- § 2101.1, Off-Street Parking (two spaces required, none proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Address | 2724 11 th Street, N.W. |
| Legal Description | Square 2859, Lot 89 |
| Ward | 1 |
| Lot Characteristics | Rectangular corner lot with side alley access |
| Zoning | R-42 – row houses, flats and conversions |
| Existing Development | Two and one-half twenty-five unit apartment building constructed in 1923 |
| Adjacent Properties | North: Across Girard Street, public school South: Across the public alley, two storefronts East: Across 11 th Street, row dwellings West: Row houses |
| Surrounding Neighborhood Character | Moderate density residential |

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

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| Proposal | Renovate an existing apartment building and convert the basement into dwelling units to increase the total number of apartment units from 25 to 33. |
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IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

| R-4 Zone | Regulation | Existing | Proposed | Relief |
|--|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Lot Width § 401 | None | 142.6 feet | 142.6 feet | None required |
| Lot Area § 401 | -- | 12,209 SF | 12,209 SF | Existing |
| Number of Units per 900 SF of Lot Area | 13 | 25 | 33 | Required |
| Lot Area per Unit | 900 SF | 488 SF | 370 SF | |
| Parking § 2101 | 3 spaces | None | None | Required |

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Variance Relief from § 401.3, Minimum Lot Dimensions

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The subject property was constructed with twenty-five units in 1923 with two floors and a basement prior to the adoption of the Zoning Regulations. The building is currently in a state of disrepair, the basement is unnecessarily underutilized, and the addition of eight additional units would provide the income necessary to pay for the needed repairs.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

No building additions are proposed. All improvements would take place within the existing footprint with no increase in building height or lot occupancy, or reduction of yards. Conversely, the maintenance and preservation of the exterior of the building would improve its appearance and the safety of the structure.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

Use of the building would continue to be a multi-family residential structure. It would continue to be an apartment building within the same footprint, with no building additions either up or out. The only difference would be the addition of eight dwelling units into the existing structure. While § 401.11 requires that there be 900 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit, the requested variance is to reduce the lot area per unit from one per 488 square feet to one per 370 square feet so as to allow for better utilization of the existing space and upgrading of the building.

b. Variance Relief from § 2101, Off-Street Parking

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The subject property was developed over ninety years ago with no off-street parking. Although served by a public alley on the south side of the lot, the existing building is constructed to that lot line, prohibiting vehicular access to the lot from the alley. Although the three off-street parking spaces could be physically located on the north side of the lot, these spaces would require the addition of a curb cut and variance relief to permit parking between a building and a street line, necessitating additional area variances that DDOT would not support.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The subject property is located 0.4 miles from the Columbia Heights Metrorail station, and has a TransitScore of 80, or excellent transit, a walkscore of 87 and bikescore of 84¹, minimizing the need for off-street parking at this location.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The granting of this variance would eliminate the requirement to provide off-street parking on a lot that cannot adequately accommodate it. Provision of this parking would also require the construction of a curb cut, effectively eliminating on-street parking so as to be able to provide off-street parking, and locate parking between a building facade and a street line in violation of the provisions of Section 2116.4 of the Zoning Regulations.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The District Department of Transportation, in a memorandum dated July 1, 2014, had no objection to the application.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 1B, at its regularly scheduled meeting of October 2, 2014, voted to support the application.

One letter was submitted to the file in opposition to the application.

¹ Walkscore.com

Attachment: Location Map

