

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, AICP, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: July 8, 2014

SUBJECT: BZA Case 18797, 626 A Street, S.E.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

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

- § 403, Lot Occupancy (maximum 60 percent permitted, 76.7 percent proposed);
- for the construction of a building addition enclosing a portion of the closed court only.

Relief from § 2001.3, Nonconforming Structures Devoted to Conforming Uses also appears to be required to allow for an enlargement or addition to the dwelling. This relief was not requested by the applicant.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	626 A Street, S.E.
Legal Description	Square 869, Lot 809
Ward	6
Lot Characteristics	Rectangular lot with rear alley access
Zoning	R-4 – row houses and flats
Existing Development	One-family row dwelling with an attached two-story carriage house, permitted in this zone.
Historic District	Capitol Hill
Adjacent Properties	Mixture of row houses, detached dwellings and small apartment buildings
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Moderate density residential

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

Proposal	The applicant proposes to enclose a portion of a nonconforming open court on the first and second floors at the rear of the dwelling, eliminating the nonconforming section of that court. The applicant also proposes to add a basement entrance at the front of the dwelling within public space and a roof structure atop the main portion of the dwelling, for which variance relief is not required. This application analyzes the court enclosure request only.
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IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R-4 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height § 400	40 foot max.	25.7 feet	25.7 feet ¹	None required
Lot Width § 401	18-foot min.	20.7 feet	20.7 feet	None required
Lot Area § 401	1,800 SF min.	2,647.4 SF	2,647.4 SF	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 402	None prescribed	--	--	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	60% max.	76.7%	76.7%	Required
Rear Yard § 404	20-foot min.	None	None	None required
Closed Court § 406				
-Width	5-foot min.	4.6 feet	15.4 feet	None required
-Area	50-foot min.	693.2 SF	617.5 SF	None required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Variance Relief from § 403, Lot Occupancy

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The subject property is the only one that is connected to a carriage house, resulting in no rear yard and a large closed court. Due to the narrow width of a portion of the existing closed court, this section of court contributes minimally to the court yard, but its enclosure would allow the applicants to modernize the interior of the row house to modern standards.

ii. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The proposed court enclosure addition would not be visible from the street, the existing two-story carriage house would block views from the public alley and the one-story connection between the carriage house and dwelling would buffer views from the west. Infilling an entire section of an existing closed court, the proposed

¹ Does not include the proposed addition to the roof top that are not a part of this application.

addition would block no windows and cause no shadows onto neighboring properties.

iii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The proposed building addition would have no effect on lot occupancy, as the section of the closed court proposed to be enclosed already counts toward lot occupancy due to its substandard width. As the remainder of this court conforms to the minimum width and area requirements of the R-4 zone, the proposed building addition would bring the subject property more into conformance with the Zoning Regulations than the existing situation. Therefore, there would be no substantial harm to the Zoning Regulations.

The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) had no comments on the enclosure of a portion of the closed court. HPO did comment that it had not reviewed either the proposed basement entrance or the roof-top structure.

VI. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

DDOT, in a memorandum dated June 25, 2014, had no objection to the application.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Adjacent neighbors:

- Three letters were submitted to the file in support of the application.
- One letter was submitted in support, provided the addition would not be visible from A Street.

ANC 6B is scheduled to review the subject application at its regularly scheduled meeting of July 8, 2014.

Attachment: Location Map

