



**1521 Varnum Street, NW
Multi-Family Residential
Development**

Zoning Peer Review Report

Submitted to:
John Stokes, Owner
1519 Varnum Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011

Prepared by:
**Workshop for High Performance
Architecture PLLC**
3025 Daniel Lane, NW
Washington, DC 20015

September 14, 2015 (Updated)

Workshop for High Performance Architecture PLLC [or WHiP Architecture] is a single-member, limited liability company providing professional architectural, planning and interior design services. Founded in 2013 by Patrick Williams, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C, WHiP Architecture fully embraces the Integrated Design Approach and Integrated Team Process methodologies for designing and building which assures the most responsive, accurate and cost effective project outcomes.

This Zoning and Building Code Peer Review was conducted by **Patrick Williams**, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C, Principal & Owner, who is a Registered Architect in the District of Columbia.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Workshop for High Performance Architecture PLLC [WHiP Architecture] has completed an independent peer review of the Zoning compliance analysis for the multi-family residential development called **Westend Development** and located at **1521 Varnum Street, NW**, as described in the updated Permit Set drawings with a Revision 2, dated April 2015. These drawings were provided by our client, John Stokes, the owner of the adjoining residence at 1519 Varnum Street, NW. The proposed 1521 Varnum Street, NW multi-family residential development is located on the north side of the 1500 block of Varnum Street, NW and shares a property wall separation with 1519 Varnum Street NW, in Washington, DC 20011.

The purpose of this Peer Review is to evaluate the Zoning compliance of these updated Permit Set drawings for the proposed 1521 Varnum Street, NW multi-family residential development, on behalf of John Stokes, the owner of the adjoining residence at 1519 Varnum Street, NW, who has made an appeal to the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA).

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The existing residential building on the property located at 1519 Varnum Street NW, Washington, DC 20011 is a two-story, single family row house with basement. The proposed multi-family residential development would be created by demolishing all of this existing residential building, except the front elevation abutting Varnum Street, NW, the western exterior wall and the existing party wall shared with the adjoining residence at 1519 Varnum Street, NW.

As currently proposed, the Project would contain 7 residential units, each two-bedroom and 1,298 s.f. Gross Floor Area. Each residential unit occupies a complete floor level. On-site parking totaling 4 spaces would be provided at grade level at the rear of the property, abutting a 15-foot wide public alley.

3.0 PEER REVIEW SCOPE STATEMENT

John Stokes has retained Workshop for High Performance Architecture (WHiP Architecture) to conduct a zoning review of this updated Permit Set drawings associated with building permit **B1506179**, which was issued on **June 25, 2015** for the Project. The current Zoning regulations that have purview over the 1521 Varnum Street, NW multi-family residential development project are as follows:

- **Zoning Ordinance:** DC Zoning Regulation (DCMR 11)

The following Peer Review Report provides our conclusions in **Section 4.0 Summary of Peer Review Findings**, as well as our analysis of the zoning requirements in **Section 5.0 Appendix**.

4.0 SUMMARY OF PEER REVIEW FINDINGS

Workshop for High Performance Architecture (WHiP Architecture) provides the following as its summary of the findings of the Zoning Peer Review, identifying the items that are of non-compliance and/or deficiency from the zoning ordinance analysis information previously provided by Rich Markus Architects on the Project drawings for Westend Development at 1521 Varnum Street, NW.

4.1 Zoning Ordinance Non-Compliance/Deficiency Items:

DC ZONING REGULATION (DCMR 11):

PEER REVIEW NOTE #1: The below grade level is erroneously referred to as a "Cellar" in the General Notes/Zoning Code Analysis on Sheet A000. Based on dimensions derived from Sheet A204, the below grade level ceiling is more than four feet above the "adjacent finished grade", which is in fact the new grade level at the base of the window well along the western side of the building. Therefore, the below grade level is a Basement (as defined in DCMR 11-199). A Basement is considered a story when calculating the Height of Buildings or Structures (as indicated in DCMR 11-400), which means the Third Floor is non-compliant.

- **Reference: DCMR 11-199 Definitions**
 - **Basement** - that portion of a story partly below grade, the ceiling of which is four feet (4 ft.) or more above the adjacent finished grade.
 - **Story** - For the purpose of determining the maximum number of permitted stories, the term "story" shall not include Cellars
- **Reference: DCMR 11-400 Height of Buildings or Structures** – The height of buildings or structures shall not exceed 40 Feet or 3 Stories.

PEER REVIEW NOTE #2: The revised Third Floor Plan wall configuration to provide a building setback from the existing chimney at the adjoining 1519 Varnum Street, NW property, creates a Court (Closed). Sheet A202 indicates that the width of the Court is 10 feet 4 inches, which is less than the 15 feet minimum width requirement. Also, calculations derived from dimensions provided on Sheet A202 reveal an area of 242.75 square feet, which is less than the minimum area requirement of 350 square feet (See Diagram No. 1 in Section 5.0 Appendix of this report)

- **Reference: DCMR 11-199 Definitions**
 - **Court, closed** - a court surrounded on all sides by the exterior walls of a building, or by exterior walls of a building and side or rear lot lines, or by alley lines where the alley is less than ten feet (10 ft.) in width.

- **Reference: DCMR 11-406 Courts** – *Where a Court (Closed) is provided in an R-4 Residence District for developments other than one family dwellings, the Minimum Width shall be 4 inches per foot of height of court, but not less 15 feet and the Minimum Area shall be twice the square of the required width of Court dimension based on the height of court, but not less than 350 sq. ft.*

Peer Reviewer:

Patrick Williams, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP BD+C,
District of Columbia Architect License #ARC 101164

5.0 APPENDIX

5.1 Zoning Requirements Analysis

The 1521 Varnum Street, NW multi-family residential development property is zoned within the District of Columbia's **R-4 Residence zoning district**. The R-4 Residence District Zoning requirements permit matter-of-right development of single-family residential uses (including detached, semi-detached, row dwellings, and flats), churches and public schools with a minimum lot width of 18 feet, a minimum lot area of 1,800 square feet and a maximum lot occupancy of 60% for row dwellings, churches and flats, a minimum lot width of 30 feet and a minimum lot area of 3,000 square feet for semi-detached structures, a minimum lot width of 40 feet and a minimum lot area of 4,000 square feet and 40% lot occupancy for all other structures (20% lot occupancy for public recreation and community centers); and a maximum height of three (3) stories/forty (40) feet (60 feet for churches and schools and 45 feet for public recreation and community centers). Conversions of existing buildings to apartments are permitted for lots with a minimum lot area of 900 square feet per dwelling unit. Rear yard requirement is twenty (20) feet.

Data	Requirement	DCMR 11	Compliant?
Maximum Building Height	40 feet; 3 Stories	400.1	No
Roof Penthouse Setback	Exterior walls located at least equal to height above the roof	400.7 (b)	Yes
Minimum Lot Area	900 square feet per dwelling unit	401.3	Yes
Floor Area Ratio	None Prescribed	402	
Maximum Lot Occupancy	60% of gross lot area	403.2	Yes
Minimum Setbacks:			
Front Yard	None Prescribed		
Rear Yard	20 feet	404.1	Yes
Side Yard	None Prescribed	405	
Court, closed	Minimum Width not less 15 feet; Minimum Area not less than 350 sq. ft.	406	No
Pervious Surface	Areas are to be accurately delineated	412.6	Yes

DCMR 11-400: Heights of Buildings or Structures

The maximum height of buildings or structures shall not exceed 40 Feet or 3 Stories.

ANALYSIS NOTE: Based on dimensions derived from Sheet A204, the below grade level ceiling is 5 feet 7.5 inches above the "adjacent finished grade", which is in fact the new grade level at the base of the window well along the western side of the building. A basement is considered a story. If the lower level is classified as a basement, then the Third Floor is non-compliant and would not be permitted without board of zoning adjustment approval.

DCMR 11-406: Courts

Where a Court (Closed) is provided in an R-4 Residence District for developments other than one family dwellings, the Minimum Width shall be 4 inches per foot of height of court, but not less 15 feet and the Minimum Area shall be twice the square of the required width of Court dimension based on the height of court, but not less than 350 square feet.

ANALYSIS NOTE: The revised Third Floor Plan wall configuration to provide a building setback from the existing chimney at the adjoining 1519 Varnum Street, NW property, creates a Court (Closed). Sheet A202 indicates that the width of the Court is 10 feet 4 inches, which is less than the 15 feet minimum width requirement. Also, calculations derived from dimensions provided on Sheet A202 reveal an area of 242.75 square feet, which is less than the minimum area requirement of 350 square feet (See Diagram No. 1 in Section 5.0 Appendix of this report).

5.2 Diagrams

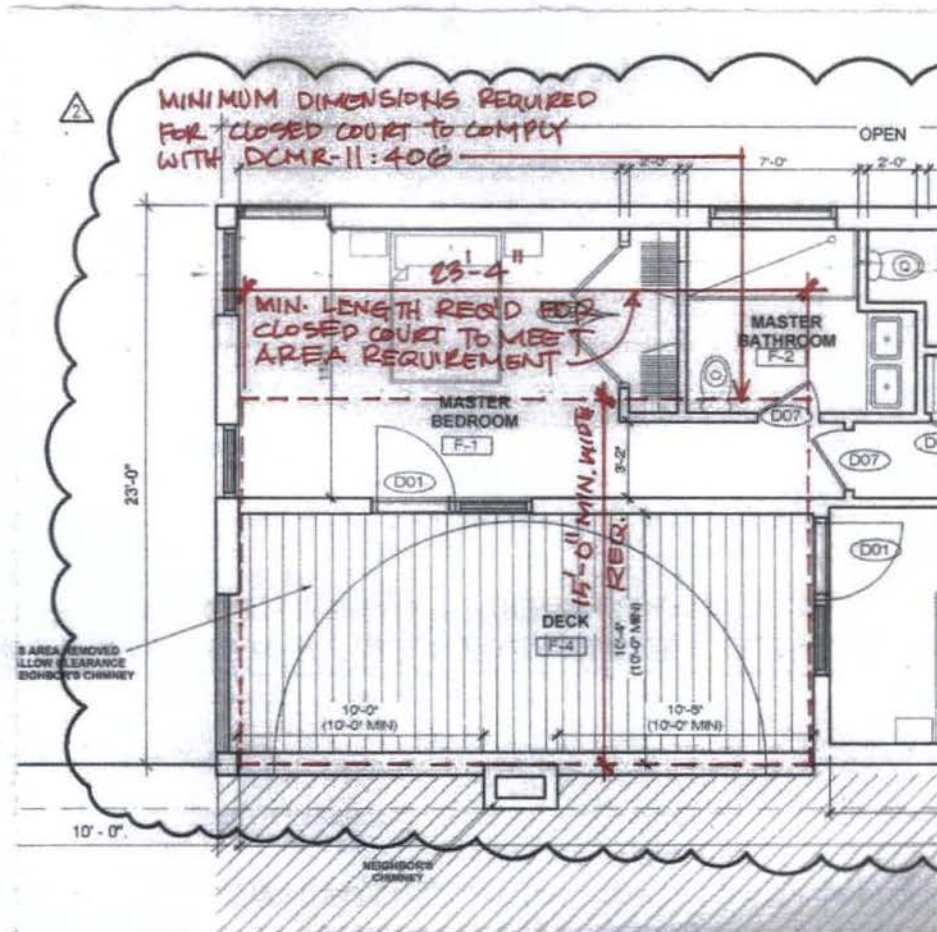


Diagram No. 1 – Partial Proposed Third Floor Plan (Sheet A202):
Dimensional and Area Requirements indicating non-compliance of the Court (Closed)

5.3 Photographs



Photo No. 1: Front Elevation of 1521 Varnum Street, NW
(Adjoining 1519 Varnum Street, NW property is to the right)



Photo No. 2: Rear Elevation of 1521 Varnum Street, NW
(Adjoining 1519 Varnum Street, NW property is to the left)

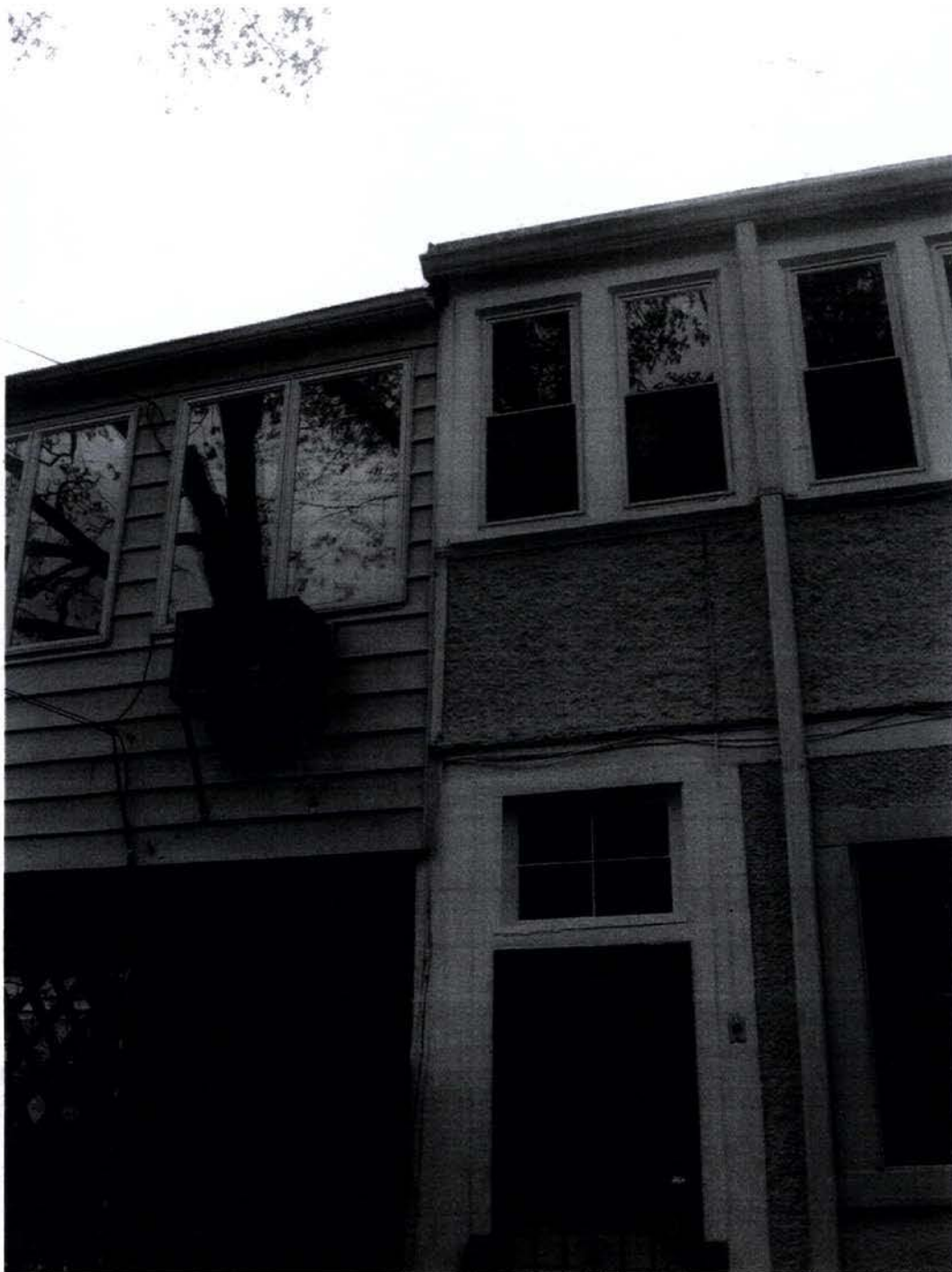


Photo No. 3: Party Wall at Rear Elevation
(Between at 1521 Varnum Street, NW and 1519 Varnum Street, NW)



Photo No. 4: Roof Parapet between at 1521 Varnum Street, NW and 1519 Varnum Street, NW



Photo No. 5: Roof Parapet between at 1521 Varnum Street, NW and 1519 Varnum Street, NW

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