

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Stephen Cochran, Case Manager
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: April 28, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case 18994, 254 15th Street, S.E.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends approval of the following variance request:

- § 2101.1, Parking: (2 required; 0 proposed).

II. LOCATION, SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

Applicant	Ramin Mehdizadeh and Hun Ah Lee				
Address:	254 15 th St., S.E.	Legal Description:	Square 1073 Lot 22	Ward /ANC	6B
Lot Characteristics:	The flat rectangular interior lot comprises 1,733 square feet and has 16.5 feet of frontage on the east side of 15 th Street, S.E. The rear of the property confronts an approximately 5-foot wide alley / public walkway.				
Zoning:	C-2-A, permitting low-density commercial / mixed uses.				
Existing Development:	The two-story plus cellar, single-family rowhouse has a one-story front porch, an “L” open court on the south side and rear porches on both floors.				
Historic District:	None				
Adjacent Properties:	Rowhouses to the north (no parking access) and south (rear parking access).				
Neighborhood Character:	Although zoned C-2-A, the area is predominantly two-story single family rowhouses, with one older 3.5 story apartment building, two new four-story apartment buildings and local commercial uses on the ground floors of corner properties.				
Project	The applicant wishes to convert the rowhouse into a five-unit apartment building by demolishing the front and rear porches, adding two stories to the existing house and constructing a four-story plus cellar addition that would fill in the approximately 21 ft. by 4.2 foot court and extend the existing building by approximately 11 feet. The applicant states that, other than requiring parking relief, the proposed project would be by-right				

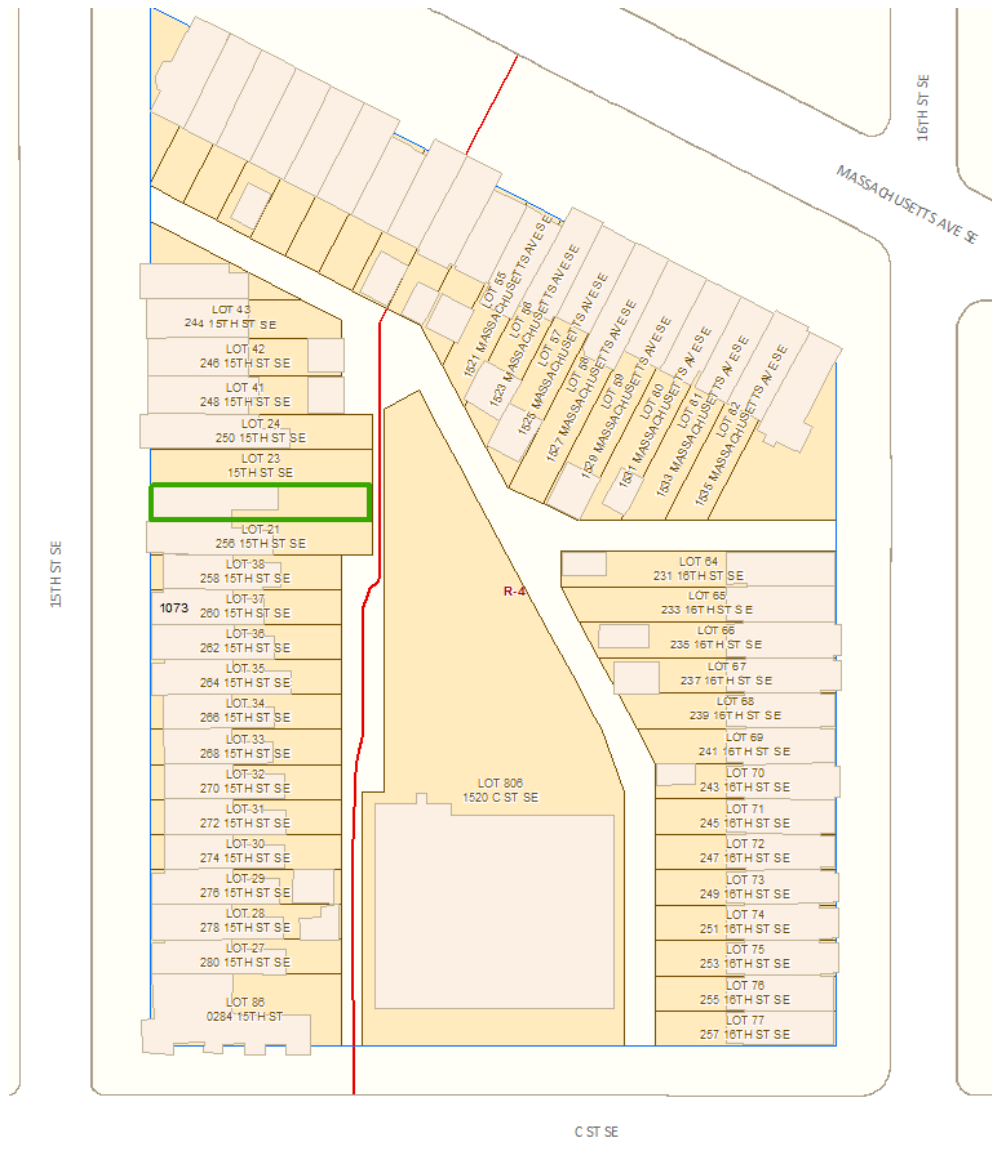


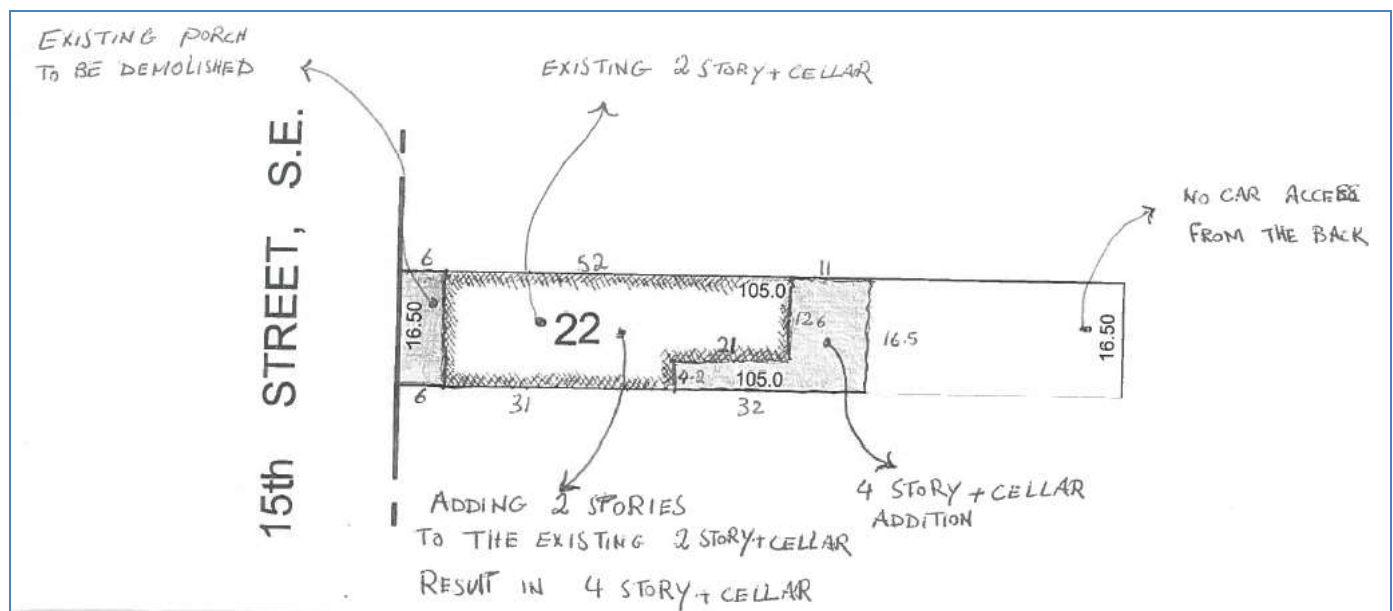
Figure 1. Site Location

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

Item	Reg.	Existing	Required/Permitted	Proposed	Relief
Lot Area	none	1733	n/a	Same	Not required
Lot Dimensions	None	16.5 ft. x approx. 103 ft.	n/a	same	Not required
Lot Occ.	772.1	Not provided	80%, residential.	Approx. 60%,	Not Required
FAR	771.2	Not provided	2.5 FAR	Approx. 2.4 FAR	Not required

Item	Reg.	Existing	Required/Permitted	Proposed	Relief
Height	770.1	Not provided 2 stories + cellar	50 ft. max.	4 stories + cellar Dimensions not provided.	Likely not required
Roof Structure	411.5	n/a	One structure, of one height ≤ 18'6"; ≥ 1:1 setback	Unknown. No architectural plans provided.	Cannot be determined
Vehicle Parking	2101.1	n/a	1 space per: 2 du's, but only 2 required for 5 units due to 1 parking credit	0	Requested, for 2 spaces
Loading	2202.1	n/a	Not required	0	Not required
Rear Yard	774.1	n/a	15'	Approx. 34 ft.	Not required
Side Yard	775.5	n/a	If provided, ≥ 8 ft.	None.	Not required
Open Ct.	776.1	4.2 ft. x 21 ft.	Not required	None	Not required

All of the above calculations, other than parking, are OP approximations based on the plat filed with the application and from District tax records. . As of April 23, 2015, no architectural plans had been filed and the second page of Zoning Self-Certification form 135 had not been completed.



IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS OF REQUESTED VARIANCE RELIEF

Parking (§ 2101.1)

1. Exceptional Condition or Situation of the Property Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

The 16.5 foot wide interior lot is already developed with a row house and has no vehicular access from the street in the front or from either side. The rear property line is adjacent to a public right of way less than six feet wide and affords no parking access. While such a situation is not unique in the neighborhood, it is exceptional. Within Square 1073 only the lot north-adjacent to the applicant's also lacks potential parking access from the front, sides or rear. There is, thus, a practical difficulty in providing any parking on the site.

2. No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

Granting the requested parking relief is not likely to result in a substantial detriment to the public good. Because the property is commercially zoned, residents will not be eligible for Residential Parking Permits. The property is five blocks from the Potomac Avenue Metro, six blocks from the Stadium-Armory station and within ½ block of major bus routes on Massachusetts Avenue. These conditions reduce the possibility of the requested relief substantially impacting the neighborhood's on-street parking supply.

3. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

Granting the requested relief is not likely to result in a substantial harm to the zoning regulations. It is not unreasonable for a property owner to expect that a C-2-A zoned site could be developed for multiple residential units and/or a mix of uses. Given the exceptional condition that leads to the practical difficulty in providing any parking on the site, granting relief would not be inconsistent with the intent of the variance regulations.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

There were no other District agency comments.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 6B voted to support the request for a parking variance on April 20, 2015.

There was one letter of opposition on file as of April 24, 2015.