

June 30, 2015

By IZIS

Lloyd Jordan, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 19011 of Gabriel, LLC; 129 Varnum Street, NW; Square 3321, Lots 10 and 11; Request to Amend to Include Variance Relief

Dear Chairman Jordan and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Applicant, enclosed is a revised architectural plan set, which responds to concerns expressed by the community and by the Office of Planning. The following is a summary of the comments from the Office of Planning and the Applicant's response thereto. The Applicant also met with the Office of Planning and to discuss other concerns and revisions.

OP Comment #1: The main entrance should be located on the front façade of the building, consistent with other buildings on the block. This was a comment also made to the Applicant by certain Varnum Street neighbors at a meeting in the community.

Response: The Applicant has added a front entrance to the first floor front unit, providing a front entrance orientation which is in character with the rest of the block. While the other five units will be accessed from the side entrance, this front entrance provides a front facing orientation that the Applicant believes accomplishes OP's objective in making this comment.

OP Comment #2: The building should provide a front set-back consistent with other buildings on the block, rather than extend closer to the street as proposed.

Response: The Applicant has moved the proposed front line of the building back twelve (12) feet, to be consistent with the line of buildings on the block. Moving the building back from the Building Restriction Line has reduced the available room for parking spaces. For this reason, and to address general concern from neighbors about the proposed number of units, the Applicant has reduced the proposed number of units down to six (6) from the originally proposed seven (7) units.

OP Comment #3: Confirmation of the height and materials for the retaining wall and any grading needed for the project.

Response: The existing retaining walls will be retained, and a new masonry retaining wall will be integrated that anchors a trellis along the entry path. The new retaining wall will be less than 30” tall measured from grade. The plans show spot elevation markers on A6, which indicate the accessible path of travel from the public realm and the rear yard parking.

OP Comment #4: More information about how trash is handled and an examination of other locations for the trash bins.

Response: The Applicant had doubled the proposed number of trash bins – to six (6) – and is proposing to move the trash enclosure to the rear edge of the property. The trash enclosure will be 3’6” wide and will be located at the northeast corner of the Property (see Plan page A6). In order to locate the trash enclosure here, at its most ideal location, the Applicant is hereby requesting to amend the application to include (1) area variance relief from the parking space size requirements under Section 2115, to allow three (3) of the six (6) required spaces to be reduced by six inches to 8’6”; and (2) area variance relief from the driveway access width provisions of Section 2117.8(c)(2) to allow the driveway to be reduced to eleven (11) feet from the originally proposed thirteen (13) feet. Twelve (12) feet is required. The 6 inches shaved off of three parking spaces, along with the two feet from the driveway, will provide the 3’6” necessary to accommodate the trash enclosure at the rear of the property. This configuration will keep the trash enclosure away from the neighboring property’s house, and away from the proposed building itself, and will make the private trash collection more efficient.

OP Comment #5: Additional clarity is needed regarding proposed materials and their consistency with neighborhood character.

Response: The Applicant has worked with OP to develop facades that are consistent with the character of the existing adjacent buildings. Per OP’s request, the revised plans carry the masonry to the underside of the 3rd floor windows, which will forge a strong relationship with the row houses to the north and south. The Applicant’s architect has also designed a canopy on the front elevation that provides depth and variety as OP had requested.

Request for Variance Relief

As an alternative to providing three trash bins along the east side of the proposed building, the Applicant is proposing to locate the trash enclosure along the northeast edge of the Property, adjacent to the rear alley. The Applicant believes that the design requirements for the new building, along with the need for a common outside trash collection area, are unique conditions of the Property and the project which make it difficult to locate the trash enclosure in the ideal location, without having to minimally reduce the width of the driveway aisle and three of the six parking spaces.

The relief requested involves shaving 6 inches off of the three parking spaces located along the alley, and one foot off of the twelve-foot required driveway access. Doing so will allow the provision of a 3’6” trash enclosure. The Applicant believes that such a request is a *de minimus* request, and will provide significant

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benefit to the proposal by removing the trash bins from the area near the proposed building and the neighboring home. For this reason, the Applicant believes that granting the requested relief will not cause substantial detriment to the public good, nor will it substantially impair the integrity of the Zoning Regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin P. Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'S'.

Martin P. Sullivan

Enclosures

cc: Kathleen Crowley, ANC 4C-10
Matthew Jesick, OP