

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen Gyor AICP, Case Manager
 JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: June 16, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case 19024 - Variance from the off-street parking requirements under § 2101.1, to allow the expansion and conversion of an existing four-unit apartment building into a ten-unit apartment building in the C-2-A District at premises 1012 Harvard Street N.W.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

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

- § 2101 Schedule of Requirements for Parking Spaces (3 spaces existing; 5 spaces required; 3 spaces proposed).

The Applicant should detail if there are opportunities to accommodate off-site parking when needed. OP would also support the addition of bike parking spaces on the Subject Property.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1012 Harvard Street NW (the “Subject Property”)
Legal Description	Square 2857, Lot 814
Applicant	1012 Harvard Street LLC (the “Applicant”)
Ward	1
Lot Characteristics	The rectangular lot is 95 ft. deep and 35 feet wide along the Harvard Street NW frontage. The lot has an area of 3,325 square feet. Parking for the Subject Property is located behind the building via an alley. A 15 foot public alley is located immediately to the west.
Zoning	C-2-A (the R-4 zone is located immediately to the south and west).
Existing Development	The Subject Property is improved with a two-story brick four-unit apartment building, permitted in this zone.
Historic District	NA

Adjacent Properties	A gas station is located immediately adjacent to the east on Harvard Street NW. A vacant lot used for parking is located immediately adjacent to the south along the public alley. Row dwellings are located across the public alley to the west. A two-story multifamily building and a PEPCO property are located across Harvard Street NW to the north.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The neighborhood is developed with a mixture of row dwellings, flats, garden apartments and high-rise multi-family residential buildings. Two-story commercial properties are also located along Sherman Ave NW.

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The Applicant proposes to construct a matter-of-right addition to an existing four-unit apartment house, resulting in the creation of a 10-unit building. According to the Applicant, no tenants currently reside in the existing building. The Applicant is proposing to move the rear line of the building to the north three feet and two and three-quarter inches, and portions of the front of the building would be moved to the lot line. The Applicant states that attempts to reach the neighboring owner of Lot 813, (located to the south of the Subject Property), to inquire about purchasing the lot for use as a parking lot have been unsuccessful.

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

C-2-A Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height § 400	50 ft.	27.5 ft.	49.5 ft.	None required
Lot Width § 401	NA	NA	NA	None required
Lot Area § 401	NA	3,325 sf min.	3,325 sf min.	None required
Floor Area Ratio § 402	2.5	1.09	2.47	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403	62% max.	54.46%	61.7%	None required
Rear Yard § 404	15 ft. min.	32 ft. 10 in.	36 ft. ¾"	None required
Side Yard § 405	0	0	0	None required
Court § 406	NA	NA	NA	None required
Parking Schedule § 2101	5 spaces	3 spaces	2 spaces	Relief required



Subject Property



Subject Property

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Variance Relief from § 2101 (Schedule of Requirements for Parking Spaces)

i. Exceptional Situation Resulting in a Practical Difficulty

§ 2101.1 requires one parking space for every two units. The proposed project would include 10 units, and would therefore need to provide five parking spaces, each measuring at least 9 feet long and 19 feet wide. The Applicant proposes to provide three conforming parking spaces.

The Subject Property is characterized by an exceptional situation and condition due to the presence and location of an existing structure on the property that is proposed to be incorporated in the new development, as well as an exceptionally narrow (35 feet) and small lot (totaling 3,325 square feet).

The Subject Property's dimensions create a practical difficulty for the Applicant in that the lot is not large enough to accommodate the required five spaces. Given the existing lot and development, below-grade parking would be impractical; the narrow width of the lot, combined with the site's existing structure, would not allow for excavation of the site to provide below-grade parking, ramps for two-way circulation, or a turning radius sufficient to access a parking garage.

Although OP supports the Applicant's effort to seek a conforming solution, the Applicant's inability to purchase a neighboring property does not contribute to the practical difficulty relating to parking relief. Similarly, the Applicant mentions the preservation of the existing building, which is not historic, as further limiting the amount of parking in the rear of the Subject Property; however, the Applicant's plans indicate some demolition of the existing structure, which would seem to negate this argument.

No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good

The Project would repair and renovate an existing structure and would help to revitalize the 1000 block of Harvard Street NW. The Applicant proposes a ten-unit development which would conform to lot occupancy and floor area ratio (FAR) requirements, and would provide relatively large (two bedroom) units.

The Applicant should detail if there are opportunities to accommodate off-site parking when needed. Further, OP would support the inclusion of bike parking spaces on the Subject Property.

ii. No Substantial Harm to the Zoning Regulations

The Project would have access to a variety of transportation options for its residents. The Subject Property is located within walking distance of a metro station and is on

WMATA bus routes and close to a Capital Bikeshare location. Further, the Subject Property has a Walkscore of 92. Alternative means of transportation such as bike, bus and Metrorail should help to mitigate the proposed relief.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of this writing, comments from the immediate neighbors have not been submitted to the record.

According to the Applicant, ANC 1B voted to support the application at its regularly scheduled meeting.