

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Brandice Elliott, Case Manager
JLS
for Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: January 20, 2016

SUBJECT: BZA 19100, 525 Longfellow Street, N.E. – Supplemental Report

At the hearing of November 17, 2015, the Board requested additional information from OP regarding questions that arose regarding the proposed project. In its report dated November 10, 2015, OP recommended denial of variances from lot width and lot area that would allow for the development of a three-lot subdivision, noting in particular that there did not appear to be an exceptional situation resulting in a practical difficulty that would impede development of the lot. However, OP did recommend approval from § 2117.8(d), which would allow for new dwellings to be accessed from a street.

The Board requested that OP provide responses to two questions: 1) Would the proposal require relief from height?; and 2) Is the basement of the proposed development considered a story?

The R-4 regulations, approved in June 2015, reduced the permitted height of structures in the R-4 District from 40 feet to 35 feet. However, new construction consisting of three or more immediately adjoining residential row dwellings that are built concurrently on separate record lots are permitted a height of 40 feet. The proposal of three flats would appear to comply with this requirement. The alternative proposal to construct two flats on two separate lots of record would be permitted a maximum height of 35 feet. The height dimension has not been provided on the alternative proposal, so OP is unable to ascertain whether it is compliant with this requirement.

A basement that is greater than four feet in height as measured from the ceiling to adjacent finished grade is considered a story. The building sections provided in the pre-hearing statement indicate that the below-grade portion of the dwelling is a cellar rather than a basement, and is 3.5 feet above grade as measured to the ceiling; therefore, the structure is considered a three story building and is compliant with the Zoning Regulations. Again, the height of the cellar or basement has not been provided on the alternative scenario, so OP is unable to determine if relief would be required.

The applicant has submitted, as requested by the Board, renderings of an alternative proposal that consists of the development of two flats, demonstrating compliance with lot area and lot width requirements. Additional information demonstrating that there is a practical difficulty related to the development of the site was not provided to OP prior to the date of this report. As a result, OP continues to recommend denial of the relief requested for lot area and lot width.