

525 Longfellow St NW

Summary of Zoning Relief | 20 July 2015

Owner / Applicant	525 Longfellow LLC 3606 Rock Creek Church Rd NW Washington, DC 20010
Agent	Will Teass, AIA Teass \ Warren Architects 515 M St SE, Suite 200, Washington DC 20003 (202) 683-6260 will@teass-warren.com

Summary of Relief

In order to accommodate the improvements, the Owner / Applicant seeks a variance in order to subdivide an existing lot into three sub-standard lots. The Board of Zoning Adjustment is authorized to grant a variance from the Minimum Lot Dimensions set forth in Section 401.3

- Lot width of 16.67 ft (18 ft required)
- Lot area of 1530, 1592, and 1653 sf (1,800 sf required)

Background

The property is located at 525 Longfellow St NW, Lot 3 of Square 3206. It is currently zoned R-4, and is within ANC 4D. The lot is irregularly shaped measuring 50' by 89.97' (to the east) and 101.08' (to the west), and is 4,776 square feet. Longfellow St NW (85.1' ROW) borders the southern property line; Shepherd Road (34.2' ROW) borders the northern property line. The east lot line borders Lot 59 (521 Longfellow St NW), which has been improved with a row house. The west lot line borders Lot 60 (601 Longfellow St NW) and has also been improved with a row house. The property is currently improved with a two-story, wood frame single-family dwelling of 2,216 GFA. The structure was built in 1937.

Improvements

The Applicant seeks to raze the existing single-family dwelling and subdivide the lot into three lots of equal width. Each lot would then be improved with three two-family flat row house dwellings. It should be noted that existing lots to the east (1,584 sf) are also substandard for area, due to the trapezoidal shape of the square.

Lot Width / Area

Under Section 3103.2, the Board of Zoning Adjustment is permitted to grant relief from section 401.3. The proposed lot configuration will create three lots that do not meet the minimum lot area and minimum lot width for row house structures in the R-4 district. Therefore, relief is sought from Section 401.3.

525 Longfellow St NW

Summary of Zoning Relief | 20 July 2015

Conclusion

The burden of proof for variances is three-fold, and the Applicant must demonstrate the following:

- 1 Does the property exhibit specific uniqueness with respect to the exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape, topography, or other extraordinary or exceptional situations or conditions.

Response: The existing lot is exceptionally large. Subdividing the existing lot into two new lots of equal widths of 25' each would result in a configuration that is substantially wider than the majority of lots on the square. Furthermore, the larger size would permit units that would also be substantially larger than the typical rowhouse size on the square. The large lot size constitutes an extraordinary and exceptional condition.

- 2 Does the extraordinary or exceptional situation described in the first part of the of variance test impose a practical difficulty with is unnecessarily burdensome to the applicant?

Response: The property was originally purchased for conversion to a five-unit apartment house under the previous zoning R-4 zoning regulations. Building permit (B1507718) was filed in May 2015, but was not issued. As of June 2015, the R-4 regulations were revised to eliminate the matter of right conversion of single-family dwellings to apartment houses. The change in regulations constitutes an extraordinary situation in that the sales price was based on a five-unit apartment house, a matter of right project at the time of the property transaction.

- 3 Can the relief be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose and integrity of the Zoning Regulations and Map?

Response: The R-4 zone permits single-family and two-family rowhouse development; therefore the Applicant's request is consistent with Zoning Regulations and surrounding properties. The revised proposal (instead of a larger non-contextual apartment house) would create three row houses flats that are of similar scale to the surrounding context. Not only would the project contribute to the public good, but it would also reinforce the rowhouse vision for the R-4 zone. Each lot will provide the required number of parking spaces (1 each) as required by zoning, and the light and air of adjacent properties will be minimally impacted. In addition, the newly formed lots will be similar in area to other lots on the square.