

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Policy, Planning, and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Samuel Zimbabwe
Associate Director

DATE: January 19, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 19165 – 1301 H Street NE

APPLICATION

3317 16th Street LLC (the “Applicant”) requests a variance pursuant to the off-street parking space requirements as well as loading berth requirements to allow the construction of a four-story mixed-use building with nine residential units and 5,619 sf of ground floor and cellar retail in the HS-A/C-2-A District at premises 1301 H Street NE (Square 1027, Lot 156) (the “Site”).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the impact of the proposed action on the District’s transportation network and, as necessary, propose appropriate mitigations. After review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- An appropriate network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure exists in close proximity to the proposed development;
- Two vehicular parking spaces are proposed onsite;
- The parking utilization study shows nearby parking availability on-street to accommodate expected vehicles from this Site;
- Long-term bicycle parking spots will be provided along with a bicycle repair facility;
- Loading for the building will be conducted within the bus loading and unloading zone adjacent to the Site via coordination with DDOT, and a written agreement from the hotel should also be provided to document this condition; and
- The Applicant proposes a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan intended to promote non-auto trips. With the added elements outlined within, the proposed TDM plan will sufficiently encourage travel behavior change.

The Site’s access to bus and streetcar transit, proximity to Capital Bikeshare stations, presence of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the subject area, along with the commitment to a TDM program will lead to low levels of auto ownership and use. Considering the provided bicycle storage, nearby

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available vehicular parking, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips, as well as proposed means for accommodation of loading, DDOT finds the Applicant's request for variance appropriate.

CONTINUED COORDINATION

Given the proposed development and action, and in following standard procedures and practice, the Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters:

- Public space, including curb and gutter, curb cut, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other features within the public rights of way, are expected to be designed and built or maintained to DDOT standards;
- A loading management plan and public space permitting finalizing the loading arrangement conceptualized here;
- All utility vaults are expected to be accommodated on private property; and
- Streetcar is in the pre-operations stage in this corridor, which could impact construction and staging activities. Construction and Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) should be closely coordinated with DDOT to minimize the potential for streetcar conflicts.

ANALYSIS

DDOT is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation's capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, constructing safer streets, and providing outstanding access to goods and services. As one means to achieve this vision, DDOT works through the zoning process to ensure that impacts from new developments are manageable within, and take advantage of, the District's multimodal transportation network.

Accordingly, an Applicant is expected to show the existing conditions for each transportation mode affected, the proposed impact on the respective network and any proposed mitigations, along with the effects of the mitigations on other travel modes. A Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) should be performed according to DDOT direction. The Applicant and DDOT coordinated on an agreed-upon scope for transportation documentation that is consistent with the scale of this action. An outline of this project's impacts follows below. The proposed Site plan is shown in *Figure 1*.

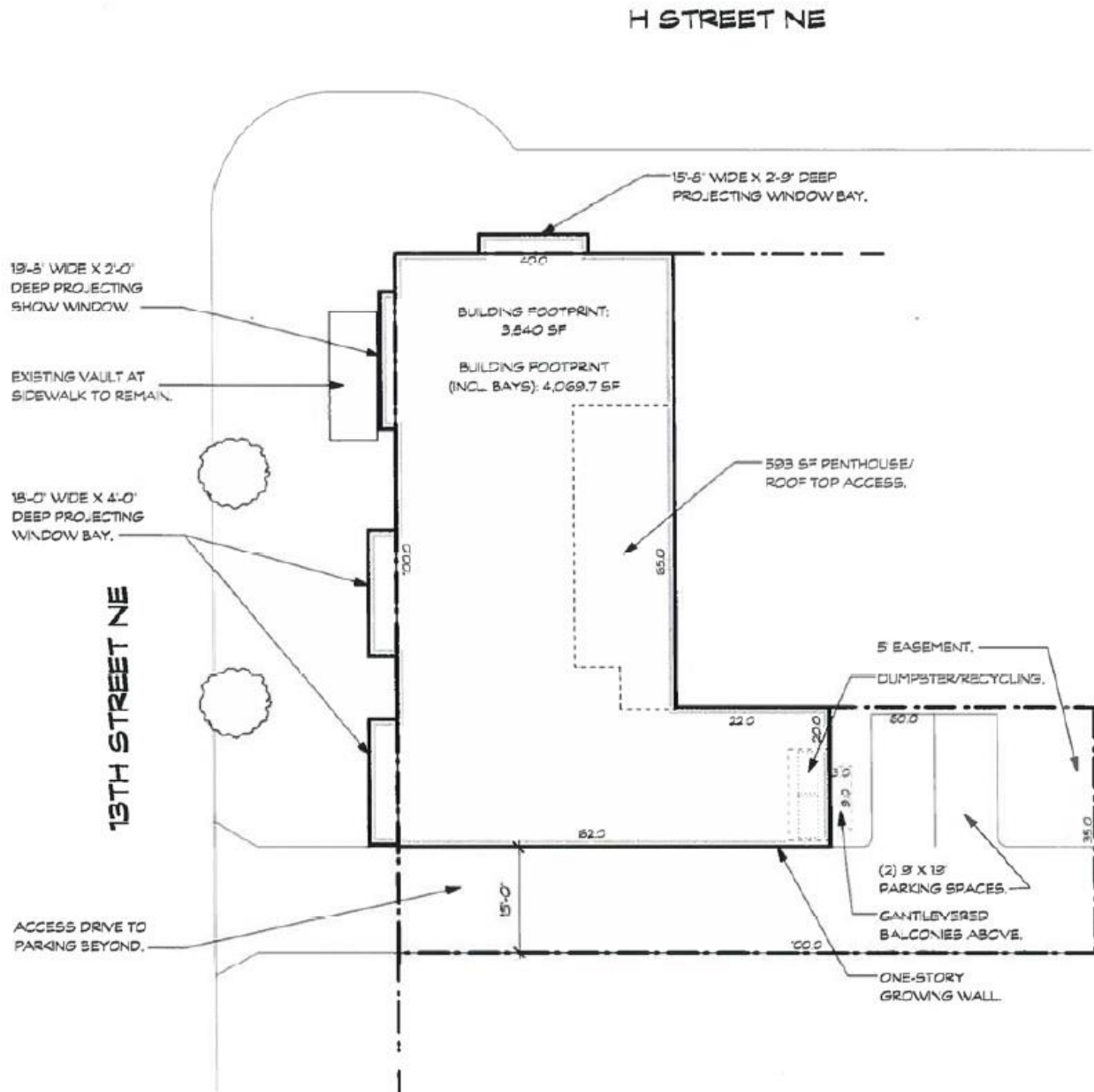


Figure 1. Proposed Site Plan (Source: Applicant)

Vehicle Parking

The proposed building is required by zoning regulation to provide 14 vehicular parking spaces, five for residential use, and nine for retail use. Two spaces are being provided.

The projected trip generation for the Site expects six auto-based trips originating in the AM and 13 in the PM peak hour, illustrating the relatively low amount of parking turnover anticipated on a day-to-day basis. Existing parking utilization information for an appropriate parking study area was provided, and this analysis shows unused nearby street parking, with at least 42 spaces available. Additionally, three carsharing locations can be found nearby.

Generally, DDOT has no objection to reduced parking provision if documentation as to where parking could occur is made or if the overall available transportation network supports an appropriate split between vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips. Thus, due to the close proximity to transit,

provided bicycle storage, nearby available parking, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips, DDOT finds appropriate the lack of parking provision in this area. Further, the Applicant has proposed TDM measures, which will further alleviate parking needs.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities

Residents without autos will utilize the transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure available to this development. As agreed to during the scoping process, the Applicant anticipates an approximately 50% non-auto estimated mode split for building residents or retail customers. The development is located fronting Metrobus routes and the H/Benning streetcar line. Per the Applicant, the Site is well served by Metrobus by way of routes X1/X3, X8-9 and B2.

As aforementioned, an adequate pedestrian and bicycle network is available surrounding the Site, and two Capital Bikeshare stations are located nearby. The Applicant is proposing provision of at least five long-term bicycle parking spaces within a bike room in the building for residents, which meets the necessary one bicycle parking space per three residential units. The proposed bicycle room will be located in the cellar and include a bicycle repair facility. An additional three short-term bicycle parking spaces will be required in the public space area surrounding the building, as well as potentially behind the building. Full accommodation details (infrastructure provided and its design) for bicycles as well as pedestrians will be coordinated during the public space permitting process.

Loading

DDOT's practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle mode areas and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT standards require that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. This often results in loading being accessed through an alley network or an approved loading location. Here, however, the Site does not have access to an alley.

Zoning regulations require a 30' loading berth and a 100 sf loading platform. The project seeks a variance from this requirement, providing no onsite loading. The Applicant proposes to utilize on-street loading from the bus loading and unloading zone (for the Rock and Roll Hotel) located adjacent to the Site. Trash collection is also proposed to occur via this same location. Per the Applicant, the hotel has been coordinated with and is amenable to this shared use. DDOT will work with the Applicant and hotel to determine this shared usage.

A workable loading concept is necessary to show this building can function effectively. While the relatively modest use by motorcoaches of the bus loading and unloading zone may allow complementary loading activity, DDOT is concerned about the function of this space should dueling needs arise. As such, DDOT seeks to see the Applicant work with DDOT to most appropriately update the signage for this space. As well, further documentation as to the hotel's willingness to share this space should be provided in writing. With this space available, DDOT does find that the most common service/delivery/moving/trash trucks anticipated could be accommodated. DDOT expects the Applicant to address these details further as part of the permitting process for this property.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The Applicant proposes the following elements amongst their TDM measures:

- Provide, as a one-time incentive, each initial purchaser (one per household) a bicycle helmet (9 helmets);
- Offer a one-year Capital Bikeshare and Car share membership for each initial residential unit (one per household);
- Provide a repair station within the bike room; and
- Post all TDM commitments on-line for a one-year period. The source will also include links to CommuterConnections.com, goDCgo.com, WMATA Metrobus routes, DC Bicycle maps and other useful information in support of car-free urban living.

These TDM measures do provide encouragement of alternative modes of transportation, but additional elements should also be included. As such, DDOT proposes the following additions:

- Installation of at least three short-term bicycle parking spaces in public space; and
- Provision of at least five years of Capital Bikeshare and carsharing memberships to each unit in the building.

With the addition of these TDM measures, and if the other measures are implemented as planned, the TDM program will adequately encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.

Streetscape and Public Realm

In line with District policy and practice, any substantial new building development or renovation is expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines. This includes curb and gutters, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the Site.

The Applicant must work closely with DDOT and the Office of Planning to ensure that the design of the public realm meets current standards and will substantially upgrade the appearance and functionality of the streetscape for public users needing to access the property or circulate around it. In conjunction with the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, DDOT's *Design and Engineering Manual* will serve as the main public realm references for the Applicant. As such, all public space shall be designed and constructed to DDOT standards. While the existing utility vault is currently proposed to remain, if a new one is proposed, DDOT will require it to remain on private property. Additionally, the development is located adjacent to a streetcar route, for which disturbances must be limited.

DDOT's lack of objection or discussion of other public space elements as part of the zoning variance should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. Final design of the public space will be determined during DDOT's public space permitting process.

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