

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Megan Rappolt, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: January 26, 2016

SUBJECT: BZA Case #19172- special exception per §3104 and §411.11 for roof structure setback relief for screening of mechanical equipment located at 2425 N Street NW

I. BACKGROUND

Per guidance from DCRA, the Applicant filed the request for mechanical screen wall setback relief via §411.11 on October 29, 2015. At that time, the applicable setback relief cited was from §400.7 (b), which requires a 1:1 setback from the exterior wall of the roof. As of December 30, 2015, the new roof structure and penthouse regulations (ZC #14-12) went into effect. As such, relief per §411.11 remains and the mechanical screen wall setback requires relief from §411.18.

II. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (“OP”) recommends **approval** of the following special exception relief for mechanical equipment screening setback per §411.11:

- §411.18 (b), screening shall be setback from edge of roof upon which it is located a distance equal to its height from the rear of the building wall (6’-8” required, 3’ provided).

LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION:

Address:	2425 N Street NW, Francis-Stevens Education Campus
Legal Description:	Square 23 Lots 803
Ward/ANC:	2/2B
Characteristics of the Lots:	The rectangular lot is bounded to the north, east and west by the unzoned Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway and other unzoned lands. To the the south lies N Street NW and C-R zoned PUDs (ZC 84-19, 87-18, 06-35).
Zoning:	R-4– which permits school uses, but is primarily a row house district.
Existing Development:	The Francis-Stevens Education Campus exists and will remain with the roof structures sought.
Historic District:	Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway

Adjacent Properties:	Office buildings of 7-stories in height lie to the south; 7-story residential uses lie to the east along with unzoned, vacant land; and to the north and west, unzoned vacant parkway lands.
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III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION IN BRIEF

Applicant:	Department of Government Services (DGS) by Douglas Foster, expeditor
Proposal:	New roof equipment and screening, which requires setback relief
Relief Pursuant To:	§3104 and §411.11 Special exception

IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS

R-4 Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed ¹	Relief:
Height (ft.) § 400.9	90 feet	~ 40	No change	None required
Lot Width (ft.) § 401	120 ft. min.	unknown	No change	None required
Lot Area (sq.ft.) § 401	9,000 sf. min.	unknown	No change	None required
Lot Occupancy § 403.2	40% max.	unknown	No change	None required
Rear Yard (ft.) § 404	20 ft. min. and may be reduced or omitted per §404.3	>20'	No change	None required
Side Yard (ft.) § 405.3	Not required	Unknown	No change	None required

V. OP ANALYSIS

§411.11

The following is OP's analysis of how the request addresses the criteria of §411.11.

Per §411.11, the BZA may grant special exceptions under §3104 from §§411.6 through 411.10 and 400.18 upon a showing of the following:

The Applicant requests relief from 411.18, which requires a 1:1 setback of mechanical screens at the rear of the building from the roof edge.

(a) Operating difficulties such as meeting Building Code requirements for roof access and stairwell separation or elevator stack location to achieve reasonable efficiencies in lower floors; size of building lot; or other conditions relating to the building or surrounding area make full compliance unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable;

The main reason why full compliance is difficult is due to the fact the building and roof are both existing structures and the roof equipment proposed to be screened is new.

¹ Information provided by the Applicant.

(b) The intent and purpose of this chapter and this title will not be materially impaired by the structure; and

Because the proposed screen is located along the rear of the property, there is a significant rear yard, there is unzoned, vacant land along the rear/north of the screen wall, and the buildings exist and are not new, the intent of this chapter likely would not be materially impaired by the screen wall.

(c) The light and air of adjacent buildings will not be affected adversely.

Due to great amount of horizontal distance between the screen wall and adjacent properties, as well as the rear positioning of the mechanical equipment and the proposed screen wall, it is unlikely the light and air of adjacent buildings would be affected adversely.

§3104.1

The BZA is authorized to grant special exceptions where it finds the special exceptions will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

Is the relief in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?

Granting relief for roof top mechanical equipment screening that will not be visible from N Street and will be minimally visible from an adjacent property to the east is in harmony with the general purpose of the intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map. Because the building and roof exists, options for locating new roof top equipment are limited. The Applicant located the equipment at the rear of the building, which is consistent with the intent of the Zoning Regulations, which is to minimize the view and impact of the roof equipment and its screening.

Will the relief not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring properties in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?

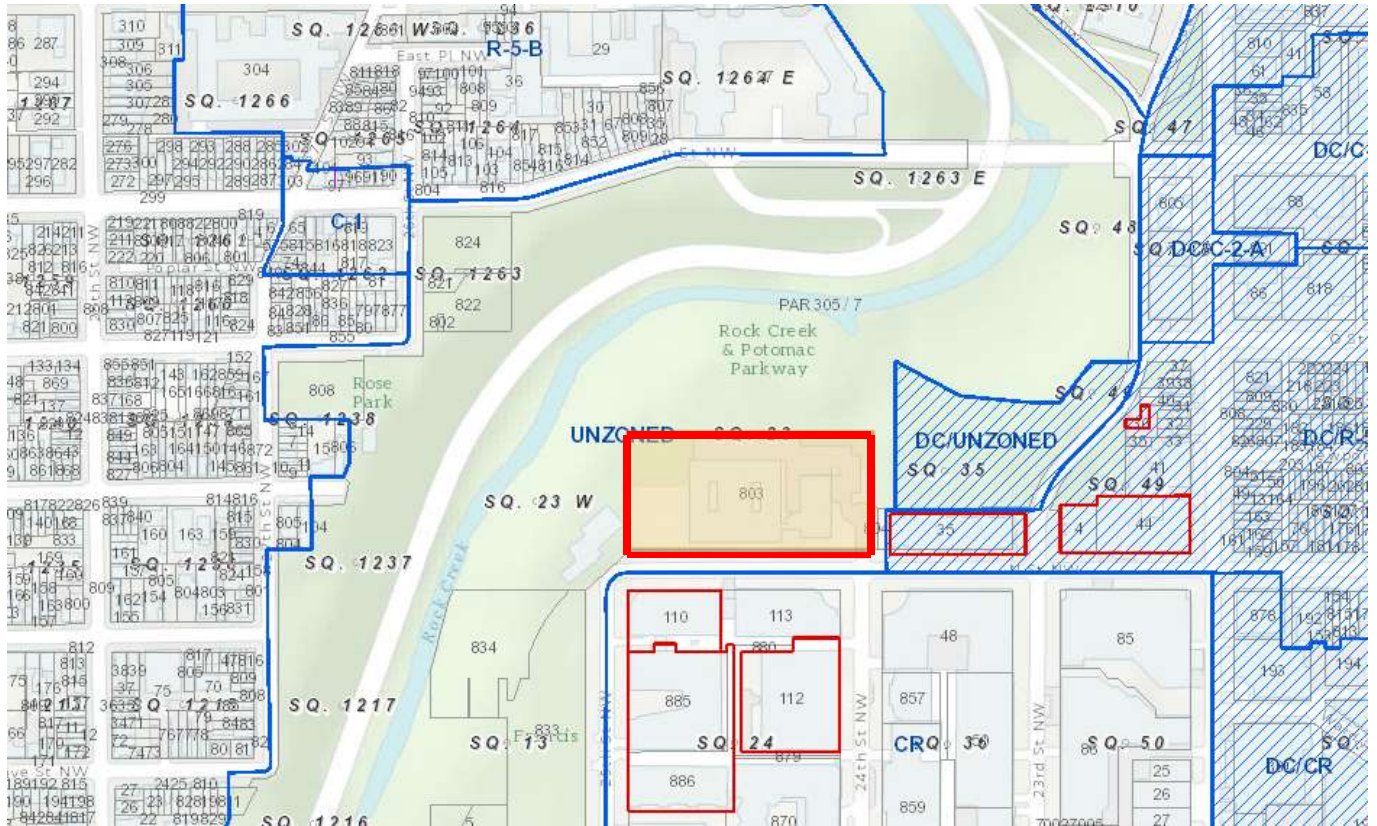
The properties to the north and west are vacant and the screening is separated from buildings by a large distance and may not be visible. The screening will not be visible from properties across N Street, but may be visible by a building located to the east; however the screening will be set back an appropriate distance from the east side of the roof/building wall. Due the long horizontal distance between the screening and any nearby properties that could view it, it will not tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring properties in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Adjacent neighbors: At the time of the writing of this report, neither letters of support or opposition have been entered into the record.

Ward/ANC: The property is within ANC-2B. At the time of the filing of this report, ANC 2B has not entered a letter into the record regarding its position on the Applicant's request.

Attachment: Location Map



Location Map