GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA
Director, Office of Zoning

FROM: Kenneth Laden
Associate Director

DATE: November 12, 2002

SUBJECT: BZA Application # 16823 – Humberto Gonzalez
Toutorsky Mansion

On August 12, 2002, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) was asked to review and comment on a revised Transportation Plan for a proposed Bed and Breakfast at 1720 16th Street NW. We received the revised Transportation Plan from the applicant on September 10, 2002 and prepared a response, which was transmitted to the Board of Zoning Adjustment on September 26, 2002.

We understand that at the October 29, 2002 Board of Zoning Adjustment hearing on the above referenced case, DDOT was requested to respond to questions raised by the opponents of the application, and appear at the November 12, 2002 BZA hearing. On November 7, 2002, DDOT received an email request from the Office of Planning to appear at the November 12, 2002 hearing. To date, we have not received a list of questions from the opponents, however, we did receive a series of questions from neighborhood sources (via the applicant's attorney) which we are responding to here.

I will appear at the November 12, 2002 hearing to respond to any additional questions.

I apologize for the not meeting the Board's requirements for receiving testimony in advance of the hearing, and request a waiver from the Board's rules to allow these responses to be added to the public record.

Attachment

BZA
Case No. 16823
Exhibit No. 104

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16823
EXHIBIT NO.104

Questions Regarding BZA Application # 16823
November 12, 2002

Does the applicant's property have the physical configuration and capacity to accommodate all vehicles that require access to the proposed business?

The applicant has adequate capacity to handle normal bed and breakfast functions. There is not sufficient capacity to handle all proposed event functions.

Did DDOT verify the accuracy of the configurations and dimensions stated by the applicant? Is it DDOT's opinion that all vehicular activities of the Bed and Breakfast and Events Facility can take place in the garage? If the facility owner parks their car in the garage, can the taxi and limousines still drop off passengers in the garage?

DDOT did not verify the accuracy of garage dimensions prior to the September 26, 2002 written response. We believe normal bed and breakfast facility functions could take place in the garage, if carefully planned. If a car is parked in the garage, it cannot be used for other purposes.

Will the garage door be left open? What options are available to an arriving guest if the garage door is closed, block the sidewalk, double park, block the alley, beep his horn? What are the impacts on the neighbors?

The applicant would be responsible for making arrangements to allow access to loading and unloading areas without blocking the sidewalk, alley or adjacent streets.

What is the location of the proposed parking garage, and how far is it from the Toutorsky Mansion?

The Atlantic Parking garage is located at 1776 Massachusetts Avenue NW, on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue, between 17th Street and 18th Street. The garage is located eight and one-half blocks from the Toutorsky Mansion.

Are alternate modal split and other behavioral assumptions equally plausible as the applicant's assumptions? Would drivers most likely drop off passengers before driving to the proposed parking facility and then return on the shuttle? Would a similar pattern occur after an event at the Toutorsky Mansion? Does not this result in two extra trips through the neighborhood?

Alternate modal splits are equally or more plausible. Many drivers would drop off passengers before parking their vehicles. This does not necessarily result in extra trips through the neighborhood.

Given other demands on garage space, is it reasonable to expect the shuttle bus to operate out of the garage? What happens if a delivery van or another vehicle is occupying the garage space?

If the applicant uses the garage to stage shuttle bus operations, it would be under his control to regulate deliveries and other vehicles access to the garage space.

Is it safe for shuttle buses to back into or out of the garage before or after events when the curb lane and sidewalks are crowded with competing uses? Will the driver's view be obstructed by the adjacent brick wall?

The existing wall on between the garage and the sidewalk does obstruct the driver's view, especially when backing out of the garage. Therefore, we would recommend that the driver back into the garage space to improve visibility when entering and exiting the garage. The area should be brightly lit when in use, the van should have a back-up sound horn, and convex mirrors should perhaps be placed on the brick wall to improve sight lines.

Has DDOT recently conducted traffic studies in the neighborhood? Do they include the local streets or alley? What are the results? Would discussions with residents add to DDOT's understanding of traffic problems in the neighborhood or of potential problems with the transportation plan? Did DDOT contact any of the affected parties before making its report?

No, DDOT has not conducted a recent traffic study in the neighborhood. Discussions with residents would improve our understanding of the traffic problems. DDOT did not contact any residents or the applicant prior to submitting its September 26, 2002 report.

How many private off-street parking spaces are accessed via the alleys immediately to the north and south of Riggs Place? How many on-street parking spaces are there on Riggs Place?

Approximately 60 spaces are accessed from the alley on the south of Riggs Place, and approximately 30 spaces are accessed from the alley on the north side of Riggs Place. There are 19 Residential Permit parking spaces on the north side of Riggs Place and 23 Residential Permit parking spaces on the south side of Riggs Place, NW

Are you familiar with the residents' experiences of having access to their private parking spaces being blocked by transients attending nearby "club" social events?

No.

Did you examine the proposed operation of the transportation plan from the perspective of the neighborhood? Do you think the quality of residential life would be improved or degraded by the increased traffic demands?

Yes. We felt that normal bed and breakfast operations would not significantly affect traffic in the neighborhood or the quality of life. Some special events would result in short-term degradation in traffic conditions and quality of life.

From DDOT's experience, does the regular and persistent occurrence of double parking encourage an increase of more double parking in adjacent streets and alleys?

Persistent double parking can contribute to an increase in double parking on portions of that block segment. Persistent double parking may or may not contribute to increased double parking on adjacent streets and alleys, depending on the land use on those streets and alleys.

What aspects of the likely outcomes of the proposed Transportation Plan would be most disruptive or disturbing to residents, blockage of traffic or honking horns?

The most disrupting or disturbing aspects would vary with each individual.

Is it District government policy to recommend approval of changes in land use from residential to business where customers would be required to break traffic laws to access the business?

No.

Would many of the cited transportation problems be alleviated if vehicular functions could be accommodated off-street on the business property rather than on public streets and alleys?

Yes.

Can northbound vehicles on 18th Street NW turn right (eastbound) on R Street NW to access the Toutorsky Mansion?

No.

Who reviewed the Transportation Plan and what are there qualifications? Please describe each person's role in preparing the response.

- Abdoulaye Bah, Transportation Engineer, 26 years as a transportation engineer. Reviewed the Transportation Plan and prepared DDOT's comments.
- Kenneth Laden, Associate Director, Transportation Policy and Planning Administration, 26 years of government experience and 6 year as supervisor of Transportation Policy and Planning Administration. Reviewed and approved the September 26, 2002 response.

On what facts or reports did DDOT rely to make an assertion that the valet parking plan as suggested by the applicant is used in New York or Boston and works beautifully? What does the qualitative term "works beautifully" mean?

The comment was based upon personal experience in Boston and New York. The term "works beautifully" meant that valet parking provided for the safe storage of the vehicle in a congested urban area.

Did you measure the distance between the door of the garage and the sidewalk? What is the distance? What is the width and height of the brick opening leading to the garage? What is the size of an average passenger car (length and width)? What is the height of a standard van and a 16-foot delivery truck?

The distance from the garage door to the near edge of the sidewalk is 9 feet, 3 inches. The width of the garage door is 13 feet 6 inches (the brick entrance to the garage area is 8 feet, 9 inches wide) and the height of the door is 8 feet, 5 inches. The average delivery van size is 17 feet long, 6 feet, 3 inches wide and 7 feet, 3 inches tall. An average 16-foot delivery truck is 20 feet long, 7 feet, 7 inches wide and 9 feet, 10 inches tall. An average passenger car is 17 feet long and 6 feet, 3 inches wide.

In your experience, how many minutes before an event such as a wedding do people arrive? Assuming 50 guests, how many cars would arrive for that event and how many minutes would they arrive before the event? How would they most likely be staged in their arrival time?

Guests would normally arrive up to 30 minutes before a wedding, with most guests arriving 10 to 15 minutes before the event. I would anticipate approximately 30 to 35 vehicles (most wedding guests arrive as couples or families) with one-third (10-12 vehicles) arriving 15 to 30 minutes before the event, and the remaining two-thirds (20-23 vehicles) arriving 5 to 15 minutes before the event. (These estimates are based on personal experience, only.)

At the conclusion of the event, how many cars would be expected to depart the event and what would their staging be?

Again, based on personal experience, guests would leave at varying times based upon the nature of the wedding reception. Vehicles would be expected to leave over a one hour period, with guests leaving fairly evenly spread throughout that period.

What are the traffic and parking rules regarding 16th Street in front of the Toutorsky Mansion? To what extent does the bus stop in front of the location impact those rules?

Parking is prohibited on 16th Street in front of the property due to the bus stop.

Is stopping or parking in front of the house on 16th Street allowed?

No.

With regards to Riggs Place, what are the specific parking and traffic rules on the street and specifically on the side of the applicant's property?

There is no parking from the corner of Riggs and 16th Street NW west for approximately 30 feet. The north side of the street then allows Residential Permit Parking from 7 AM to 8:30 PM (allows 2 hour non-resident parking) up to the entrance to the garage. Residential permit parking is also provided on the south side of Riggs Place, NW. The north side of Riggs Place contains a parking restriction on Tuesdays from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM to allow mechanical street cleaning. The same restrictions exist on the north side of Riggs Place on Mondays.

Assuming that the one space in the garage is not available for parking, what is DDOT's view of the delivery plan? Where would the vans be expected to stop and make deliveries? What are the implications on parking and traffic flow?

The delivery plan could present some short-term parking problems if the garage is not available. DDOT would not recommend that delivery vans blocking the roadway, alley or sidewalk during deliveries. The applicant should consider seeking approval for a "No Parking, Loading Zone" restriction on that portion of Riggs Place, NW adjacent to his property.

In your experience with valet parking, how do cars arrive at the site, do they arrive one at a time or together in blocks of time?

Depending upon the type of event, cars tend to arrive in groups close to the time the event is scheduled to start.

What in the (valet parking) plan dealing with how the cars will be handled when they arrive leads you to believe that the plan will work beautifully?

This remark in DDOT's September 26, 2002 memorandum was meant to indicate that for many restaurant and special events, valet parking can provide an effective way to park vehicles of guests. We understand that the applicant may have revised their plans to provide valet parking during special events.

If two valet parking staff are working and three cars arrive together, how long will it take the staff to find parking spaces in the Dupont Circle neighborhood?

The amount of time it would take to find a curbside parking space is extremely variable. The amount of time it would take to drive to the Atlantic Garage at 1776 Massachusetts Avenue NW and return to the Toutorsky Mansion would be approximately 15 minutes.

Where do you expect other cars to be left while the valet parking staff are searching for parking spaces?

We recommend that drivers park their own cars at nearby garages or at available legal curbside spaces and that the valet parking only be provided for Bed and Breakfast guests.

What are the parking and traffic implications if they are left on Riggs Place or on 16th Street in the bus zone?

Vehicles should not be left in the bus zone or no parking zones on 16th Street or Riggs Place NW. Vehicles should not double park on Riggs Place, or block driveways or alleys or sidewalks. Illegal standing or parking could impede traffic flow and pedestrian traffic.

Additional Questions

Is stacked parking permitted on private property?

Stacked parking may be allowed on private property, so long as it does not impact (block) the public space, and so long as it does not violate a Board of Zoning Adjudication order.

What are the allowed lengths of loading zones, and how far must they be from intersections and alleys?

There is no specific requirement for loading zone lengths. If the applicant requests a loading zone designation on Riggs Place, NW, we would recommend that the DDOT Traffic Services Administration review the loading requirements and traffic conditions on Riggs Place to determine the appropriate length. Loading zones may be located within 5 feet of driveway or alley entrance, and 25 to 40 feet from an intersection, depending upon the turning radius of the intersection or alley entrance and traffic conditions on the street or alley. DDOT would need to investigate the specific intersection and alley requirements if the applicant requests a loading zone on Riggs Place.

How many parking tickets, impoundment boots and towing orders have been issued for the "No Parking" space on the north side of Riggs Place from the eastern edge of the driveway to the eastern edge of the alley, since January 2002?

DDOT has placed a request with the Department of Public Works, Parking Services Administration for information on parking enforcement activities on the curb space in question. We will forward this information to the Board of Zoning Adjudication as soon as we receive it.

Conclusion

DDOT believes that routine Bed and Breakfast operations, including guest check-in and check-out, plus breakfast related deliveries could successfully be provided in the garage area of the property if properly managed by the facility operator. Upon further review, we have concerns that some types of special events may result in traffic congestion using a valet parking system. We therefore recommend that if special events are allowed at the

location, that attendees be advised in advance use available transit services, or to parking at the designated commercial parking garage and use a shuttle bus service to attend functions.