GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

Memorandum

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: January 22, 2002

BZA
Case No. 16828
Exhibit No. 20

SUBJECT: BZA Application #16828 (Augustana Lutheran Church)
2100 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. (Square 188, Lot 807)

APPLICATION

The application by Augustana Lutheran Church requests, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3103.2, a variance from the provision of Section 403.2 that requires 75% lot occupancy in the R-5-D District and from Section 2001.3 regarding the enlargement of a non-conforming structure.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The proposed renovation and addition will allow the church to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements to make the building accessible to all members and visitors to the church. The proposed addition will allow for the installation of an elevator and the renovations will include providing ramps on the inside and outside the building. These will allow for full access throughout each floor and connections to each level of the complex.

The current lot occupancy of the existing building exceeds the requirement by only 4% and will not be increased. The variance request to expand a nonconforming structure that does not meet the lot occupancy requirement meets the requirements for approving a variance as outlined in Section 3103.2 of the Zoning Regulations and therefore the Office of Planning recommends **APPROVAL** of the requested variances.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located at 2100 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W (Square 188, Lot 807) at the northwest corner of V Street and New Hampshire Avenue (Attachment 1). The site is

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developed with a two-part complex. One portion of the complex is the Augustana Lutheran Church sanctuary and a small chapel while the second portion houses the church offices and educational facilities.

The church is located in the Cardoza-Shaw neighborhood. The surrounding community is developed with predominantly high and mid-rise apartment buildings along New Hampshire Avenue, 16th Street, and V Street interspersed with some retail and office uses. The area also has 2-and 3-story row houses beyond the main thoroughfares.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to renovate the church complex to make it more accessible to both persons with physical disabilities as well as making movements easier for persons with limited or no physical disabilities. The renovation will be predominantly internal to the complex. However, one of the main changes will be the installation of an elevator to connect all floors of the church and education wing. A two-story addition over the one-story foyer area will be constructed within the existing footprint of the building to accommodate the elevator.

ZONING REQUIREMENT

The subject site is zoned R-5-D and a church is a permitted use in this zone. The building was constructed prior to 1938 and expanded in 1958 both prior to the current zoning regulations and does not meet many of the yard requirements and is therefore a non-conforming structure. Currently, the subject property has a lot occupancy of 79% that is 4% over the permitted 75% in the R-5-D District. The proposed two-story addition will be over the existing foyer area within the existing building footprint and will not expand the lot occupancy. The standards outlined in the self-certified application are for the R-5-C District. Table 1 below outlined the R-5-D requirements:

Table 1

	Required	Existing	Proposed	Variance
Lot Area	**Non prescribed**	**13,142.63 sq. ft.**	**No change**	**N/A**
Lot Width	**Non prescribed**	**Irregular**	**No change**	**N/A**
Lot Occupancy	**75 % max.**	**79%**	**No change**	**Nonconforming**
FAR	**3.5 max.**	**1.76**	**1.79**	**None**
Parking spaces	**240**	**2**	**No change**	**Nonconforming**
Loading Berth	**0**	**0**	**0**	**N/a**
Front Yard	**None**	**11 ft.**	**No change**	**N/A**
Rear yard	**15 ft.**	**0 ft.**	**No change**	**Nonconforming**
Side yard	**5 ft.**	**1.5 ft.**	**No change**	**Nonconforming**
Open Court	**6 ft.**	**5 ft.**	**No change**	**Nonconforming**
Closed Court	**15 ft.**	**1.5 ft.**	**No change**	**Nonconforming**

ANALYSIS

The Augustana Lutheran Church purchased the existing church building in 1939 and in 1958 the 3-story education wing was added to provide space for classrooms and meeting place. The church has a congregation of approximately 400 English speaking and 100 Spanish-speaking members. Additionally, the church serves a Swedish congregation the first Sunday of the month. Many of the members live in the immediate area with many coming from outside as well. The congregation includes a number of elderly members who need assistance and has a strong history of service in this community. In addition to providing spiritual services to its members, the church provides other services to the community through its spiritual, educational, and social outreach programs. The educational wing is used for Sunday school and other schools use the facility such as the Carlos Rosario School.

The church complex was designed and built prior to the ADA and the awareness and importance of making building accessible to all. Currently, there are approximately seven levels throughout the complex connected by stairs making some areas inaccessible to persons in wheelchairs and arduous to negotiate for more ambulatory persons. The primary reason for the renovations is to add an elevator to connect all floors and to each wing. Additional internal renovations will include reducing the number of stairs to the sanctuary, adding ramps for ease of movements, making restroom accessible to all, adding lighting in stairwells, and air conditioning the sanctuary.

Externally, the architecture of the educational wing does not complement the historic character of the church. As part of the renovation project, the façade of the new atrium and the adjacent side of the school building will be designed to be complementary to the architecture of the church and the neighboring buildings. (Attachment 2)

Parking

As stated before, the church pre-exist the current zoning regulations and is therefore non-conforming. Based on the seating in the sanctuary, 240 parking spaces would be required under the current zoning, however only 2 spaces are provided. It is not envisioned that the expansion will affect an increase in the membership of the church, as the sanctuary area is not being expanded. Many of the church members and visitors to the church complex live within walking distance and those who drive, park on the neighborhood streets. There are no parking facilities within the immediate neighborhood that could be utilized.

Section 2001-Nonconforming Structures Devoted to Conforming Uses and Section 403.2-Lot Occupancy Requirement

The subject property is developed with a church that is a conforming use in the R-5-D District. However, the structure is non-conforming, as it does not meet a number of the yard

requirements. The Zoning Regulations allows expansion of a non-conforming structure if the requirements of Section 2001.3 are met. The structure does not meet the requirement of Section 2001.3(a) which references lot occupancy.

> **"2001.3 Enlargements or additions may be made to the structure; Provided, that the following requirements shall be met:**
>
> **(a) The structure shall conform to percentage of lot occupancy requirements; and"**

Section 403 of the Zoning Regulations allows a lot occupancy of up to 75% and the building was developed at a lot occupancy of 79%. The proposed addition will not increase the lot occupancy. The standard by which the BZA should approve a variance is set forth in Section 3103.2 of the Zoning Regulations. The following demonstrates how these standards are met:

> **The property is unique by reason of its exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape, topography or other extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition;**

The subject property is unique due to an exceptional situation as the building was originally constructed over 63 years ago. Both the original and subsequent addition was constructed prior to the current Zoning Regulations and does not meet many of the current yard requirements. In addition, the ADA requirements to make buildings accessible to all persons were not enacted.

> **By reason of the aforementioned unique or exceptional condition of the property, the strict application of the Zoning Regulations will result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties or to exceptional and undue hardship upon the owner of the property.**

The strict application of providing a lot occupancy of 75% will be an exceptional practical difficulty to the applicant as the existing building exceeds this requirement. The excess in lot occupancy could only be remedied by demolishing a portion of the building. Such an action would reduce the building space and their efforts to bringing the building into compliance with the ADA accessibility standards. The applicant currently uses all the space in the complex and cannot afford a reduction in space as this could affect the services they provide to the members and the community.

> **The variance will not cause substantial detriment to the public good and will not impair the intent, purpose and integrity of the zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Map.**

The variance requested will not cause "substantial detriment to the public good." To the contrary, the proposed addition will allow the church members and others who come to the

complex for other services to have complete access to the entire complex. Externally, the renovations and addition will improve the façade of the complex as the addition and renovation of the educational wing will complement the façade and historic architecture of the church and surrounding buildings. The proposed variance to increase the lot occupancy will not diminish the intent, purpose, or integrity of the Zoning Regulations and Map as the church is a permitted use in the R-5-D District and supports the aim to provide light, air, and open space to all buildings. Although the church complex slightly exceeds the lot occupancy requirement it is lower than the neighboring buildings and does not affect their light and air. Granting this variance will therefore not impair the integrity of the Zone Regulations and Map.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC-1B reviewed the application at their December 6, 2001 meeting and recommended approval of the application.

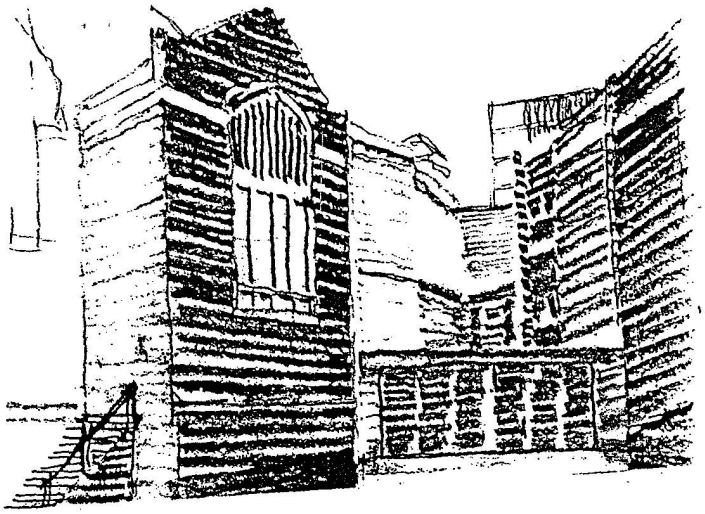
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposed renovation and addition will allow the church to meet the ADA requirements to make buildings accessible to all. The church is exempted from this requirement but it has resulted in some members and visitors not able to access areas of the building, including the sanctuary, since they can only be accessed by using stairs. The addition will allow for the installation of an elevator and renovations to provide ramps within and outside the building and therefore access throughout each floor and level of the complex.

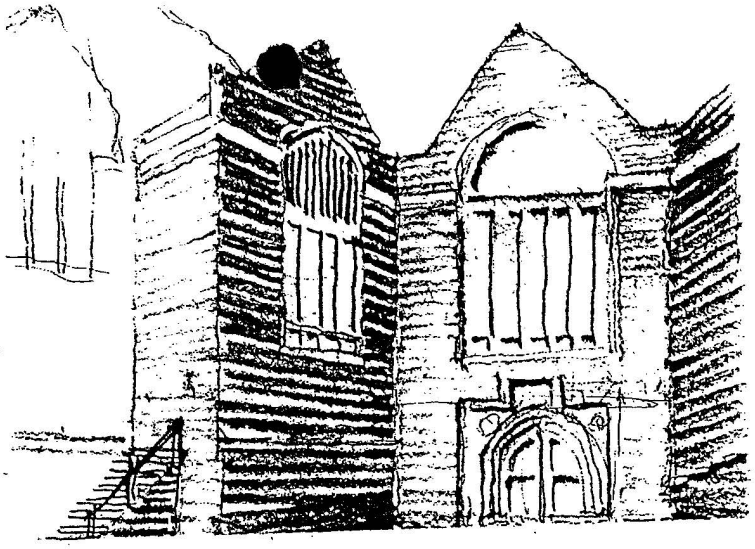
The proposed application meets the provisions of Section 3103.2 of the Zoning Ordinance for granting a variance. The "exceptional situation" of the site is demonstrated through the fact that the existing lot occupancy is currently above that permitted for the R-5-D District but will not be increased by the proposed renovations, and further, it presents a practical difficulty if the applicant were required to meet this requirement. Approval of this variance request will not cause any "substantial detriment to the public good" and "will not substantially impair the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations or Map", as the provision of light and air to surrounding buildings will be maintained. The Office of Planning therefore recommends that the Board of Zoning Adjustment **APPROVE** the variances from requested.

ATT: Attachment 1 – Site Location
Attachment 2 – Perspective, Section, and Elevation of Addition

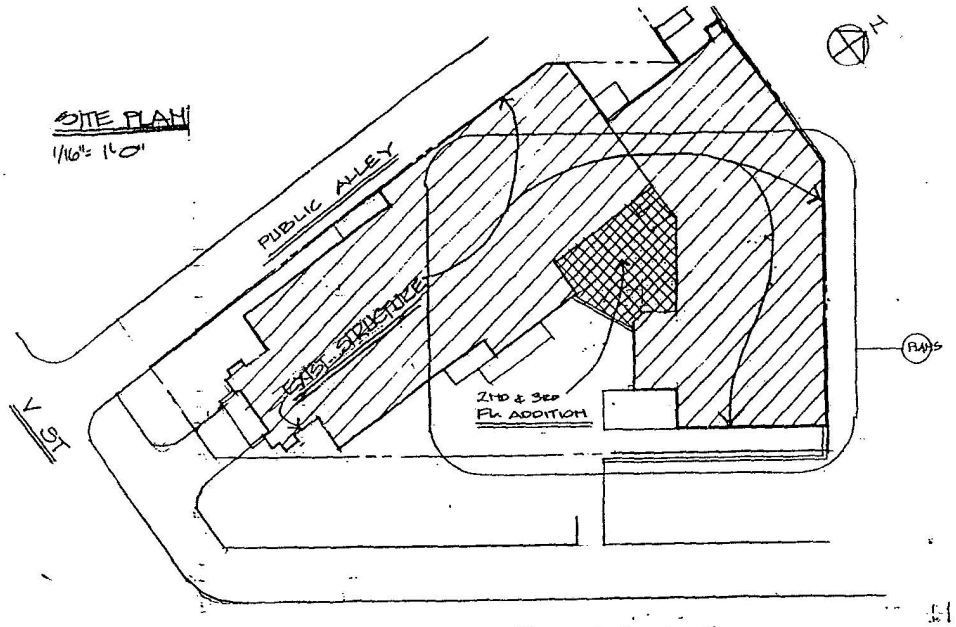
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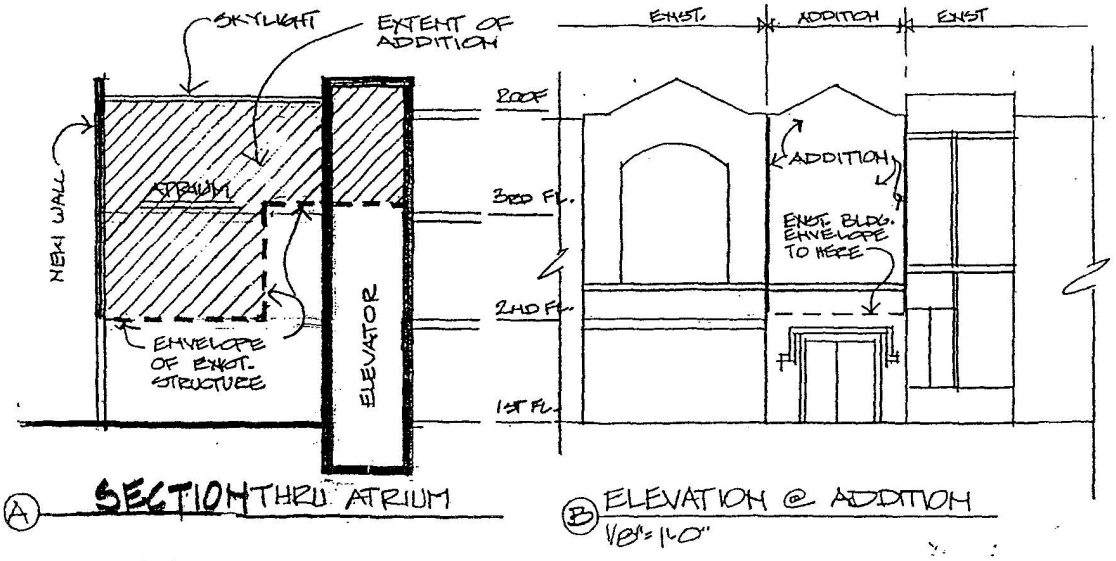


PERSPECTIVE - EXISTING



PERSPECTIVE - PROPOSED





(A) SECTION THRU ATRIUM

(B) ELEVATION @ ADDITION
1/8"= 1'-0"

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH