GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

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MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Kenneth G. Laden
Associate Director for Transportation Planning

DATE: November 19, 2002

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 16938 – Application for a Special Exception to Operate an Accessory Parking Lot Located at 1902 Vermont Avenue, NW, Lots 824 and 825, Square 333 and 1906 Vermont Avenue, NW Lot 827, Square 333

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the subject application and material for the above site. This memorandum addresses the transportation aspects of the proposal.

The applicant, The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, proposes to use the subject property as an accessory parking lot to serve members and visitors to the Lodge located at 1000 U Street, NW, near the intersection with 10th and U Streets, NW. The subject lot is located in an R-4 district, additionally the Uptown Arts-Overlay (Arts) District applies to Square 333 as listed in §1900.1. Arts Overlay District encourages the development of a mixture of building uses to encourage pedestrian activity. A previously submitted BZA Application for the site, No. 16901, was withdrawn prior to the scheduled BZA hearing date and subsequently modified for this submission.

The site is located at the northwest corner of Vermont Avenue and T Street, NW. The subject property is an existing accessory surface parking lot within Lots 824 and 825, and a vacant grass lot within Lot 827. The applicant proposes to use the vacant lot to expand the existing parking area. The existing accessory surface parking lot has 28 parking spaces, with access via a driveway entrance off Vermont Avenue, NW. Directly to the north and west of the subject lot are occupied single-family row dwellings.
The applicant submitted a site plan that shows a total of 32 parking spaces, with three parallel parking spaces, and 29 90° - angled parking spaces. Patrons of the lot would enter

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through a public alley at the rear of the site, and exit through a driveway entrance on Vermont Avenue, NW.

The applicant does not show on site plans any proposal to screen the parking lot from the row dwelling to the north. As listed in §2117.12, open parking spaces shall be screened from all contiguous residential property by a solid brick or stonewall at least 12" thick and 42" high, or by evergreen hedges or evergreen trees which are thickly planted and maintained and are at least 42" in height. DDOT staff requested, but did not receive, a scaled site plan of the parking lot showing the dimensions of proposed parking spaces, drive aisles, entrances, and drainage.

DDOT staff conducted several midday site visits. The parking lot was in use with between eight to 12 vehicles parked on site. However, the last BZA Order, No. 13675, approving the use of the property as an accessory parking lot expired on November 8th, 1981. The lot was well maintained, and parking spaces were clearly striped. A guard booth is installed at the western edge of the site abutting a residence.

The proposed use of the site as an accessory parking lot does not reflect the residential zoning use of the site, or the character of the immediate area. Less than a block from the site is the U Street-Cardoza Metro Station and several major bus routes traverse U Street and 9th Street, NW. The African American Civil War Memorial is located at the Metro Station. Within a two-block radius of the site are three surface parking lots with a total of 61 parking spaces that can be used by patrons or visitors.

The proposed expansion of the parking lot will only provide an additional three parking spaces than the existing parking lot, and discourage the development of residential uses on site. DDOT recommends the applicant encourage patrons to use public transportation, on street parking, and private parking lots available nearby. Accordingly, DDOT does not support the application.

KL:lb