GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

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MEMORADUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: JLS for Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: January 17, 2003

SUBJECT: Waiver of Rules for Late Submittal of Final Report on Case No. 16967

The attached Final Report concerning the application for Case Number 16967 is being submitted less than 7 days prior to the Board of Zoning Adjustment's consideration of the item. The Office of Planning respectfully requests that the Board waive its rule and accept the report into the record.

BZA
Case No. 16967
Exhibit No. 23

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16967
EXHIBIT NO.23

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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RECEIVED
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2003 JAN 17 AM 11:51

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: JLS for Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: January 13, 2003

SUBJECT: BZA Application #16967
DC Government Office of Property Management / Fleet Management Administration; West Virginia Avenue & 15th Street, N.E.; Square 4092, Lot 5.

APPLICATION

The application by the DC Government Office of Property Management / Fleet Management Administration requests approval of the following:[1]

1. Special exception relief, pursuant to 11 DCMR §411.11, from the requirement to house mechanical equipment in one enclosure with all penthouses as required by 11 DCMR §411.3; and
2. Variance relief, pursuant to 11 DCMR §3103.2, from the building height restrictions under 11 DCMR §840.1.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to construct a two-story building for use by the District of Columbia Government, Department of Public Works, Fleet Management Administration primarily as a parking facility for trash trucks, other DC Government vehicles, and employee vehicles and administrative office space.

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends that the application be **APPROVED**.

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[1] Originally, the applicant sought special exception relief from the set back provisions of sections 840.3 and 411 for the elevator penthouse and variance relief from building height restrictions of section 840.1 for the roof over the automobile ramp. After OP's review of the application, discussions with the applicant, and referral of the applicant to the Zoning Administrator, the applicant has revised its application.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The site of the proposed building will be in the Ward Five neighborhood of Ivy City at 1725 15th Street, N.E. The site is bordered by 15th Street, N.E. to the east, West Virginia Avenue, N.E. to the north and west, and Fenwick Street, N.E. to the south. The area surrounding the Subject Lot is zoned C-M-1 and R-4.

The Subject Lot is approximately 189,302 square feet in area; 467 feet wide; and currently developed with two buildings which will be demolished. A second building will be constructed on the eastern portion of the Subject Lot at a future date but is not a part of this application.

Proposed Structure

The applicant plans to construct a two-story building to be used primarily as a parking facility for District owned vehicles such as packers or trash trucks, motorized street cleaning vehicles, and parking enforcement cars and vans. Private vehicles belonging to city employees working at the site will also use the facility. The applicant's administrative offices will occupy approximately 10,800 square feet on the second floor of the building. The parking structure will be fully enclosed and temperature controlled. The large trash trucks will access the structure from 15th Street and park on the first and second floors. A key feature of the facility will be 171 parking spaces on the roof of the building for all other District owned and employee automobiles. All automobiles will enter and exit the roof top parking by way of a covered ramp from Fenwick Street.

The automobile ramp will begin at grade on Fenwick Street and gradually slope upward along the entire western side of the building leading to the roof top parking deck. The applicant plans to erect a roof over the automobile ramp to protect the vehicles as they climb the ramp in inclement weather. Because the ramp will slope upward to the structures roof, the ramp's roof will need to extend 14'9" above the roof of the building.

According to the applicant, the rear yard, as measured from the center line of Fenwick Street, will be 58 feet. In addition, all roof structures will meet one-to-one set back, where applicable. The elevator penthouse will be at least 30 feet from the closest exterior wall. Based upon a revised application and documentation, stairway numbers 3 and 4 will be set back 4'8" at the point where the stairs first rise above the roof. At that point, the stairs will protrude 1' 8 inches above the roof and will gradually slope upward toward the center of the building to approximately 7'5". At its highest point, the stairs will be set back approximately 19 feet from the closest exterior wall at Fenwick Street. Stairway number 2 will be approximately 30 feet from the closest exterior wall at 15th Street.

ZONING REQUIREMENTS

The subject site is in a C-M-1 zoned district. The C-M-1 district is intended to provide sites for heavy commercial and light manufacturing activities employing large numbers of people and requiring some heavy machinery under controls that would minimize any adverse effect on other nearby, more restrictive districts. 11 DCMR §800.1. The proposed building will comply with all applicable zoning requirements with the exception of building height as shown on Table 1 and roof structures for mechanical equipment as required by 411.

Table 1

	Allowed/Required	Existing	Proposed
Lot Area	**N/A**		
Lot Width	**N/A**		
Lot Occupancy	**100%**	**20%**	**54%**
Floor Area Ratio	**3.0**	**.333**	**.87**
Height	**40 ft. /3 stories**	**50 ft**	**54'9"**
Side Yard	**N/A**		
Rear Yard	**12 ft.**	**320 ft.**	**59 ft.**
Parking	**11 (office)**	**152**	**11 (office) 135 (1st & 2nd flrs) 171 (roof)**

ANALYSIS OF REQUESTED ZONING RELIEF

Special exception to locate all penthouses and mechanical equipment in separate enclosures.

Section 3104.1
The standard by which the BZA should approve a special exception is set forth in Section 3104.1 of the Zoning Regulations.

> ***. . . special exception will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.***

Standards articulated under section 411.11 for roof structures state that,

> ***Where impracticable because of operating difficulties, size of building lot, or other conditions relating to the building or surrounding area that would tend to make full compliance unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable, the Board of***

> ***Zoning Adjustment shall be empowered to approve, as a special exception under § 3104, the location, design, number, and all other aspects of such structure regulated under §§ 411.3 through 411.6, even if such structures do not meet the normal setback requirements of §§ 400.7, 530.4, 630.4, 770.6, 840.3, or 930.3, when applicable, and to approve the material of enclosing construction used if not in accordance with §§ 411.3 and 411.5; provided, that the intent and purpose of this chapter and this title shall not be materially impaired by the structure, and the light and air of adjacent buildings shall not be affected adversely.***

The following demonstrates how the proposed parking facility and office will meet these standards:

The applicant has stated that the mechanical equipment will be housed in a separate enclosure from all other penthouses. Because the mechanical equipment will rise only 3 feet 9 inches above the roof, section 411.17 exempts it from the requirements of section 411. Even though mechanical equipment is not subject to section 411, OP will include the applicant's rationale to support its need for separate locations.

According to the applicant, mechanical equipment must be housed separately because the entire building and parking facility will be climate controlled. As a result, low rise roof top heating and cooling units and exhaust fans must be placed on the parking deck. If the mechanical equipment is required to be co-located with the penthouses, it will increase building cost because additional duct work will be required. Additional duct work would reduce ceiling height and decrease clearance capacity on the first and second floors of the facility. It will also increase the operational cost of the building because it will result in an inefficient mechanical system.

Similarly, co-locating the stairway penthouses with all other penthouses and mechanical equipment would be impractical. The roof top parking deck of the building will have 171 parking spaces. Thus, the applicant will need more than a single point of access to the roof. Therefore, separate locations for the stairways are necessary.

In OP's opinion, a single enclosure for mechanical equipment and penthouses would be impractical, costly, and unreasonable. Neither the mechanical equipment nor the penthouses will be visible from the street. The mechanical equipment and penthouses will be placed in the most cost and energy efficient locations in harmony with the primary use of the roof deck as a parking facility. Further, as the use and most other aspects of the building are allowed as a matter of right in a C-M-1 zone, approval will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map. As the only neighboring properties are other vehicle maintenance facilities operated by the applicant, granting the special exception will not tend to affect adversely the use of adjacent or neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps. Finally, the intent and purpose of this chapter and this title will

not be materially impaired by the structure, and the light and air of adjacent buildings shall not be affected adversely.

Height Variance for Ramp Roof
Section 3103

The applicant has requested a variance from the following building height restrictions as per 840.1. The standard by which the BZA should approve a variance is set forth in Section 3103.2 of the Zoning Regulations.

> **The property is unique by reason of its exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape, topography or other extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition;**
> **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 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 applicant is requesting relief from the building height restrictions as follows:

	Permitted	**Requested**
Building Height	40 ft./3 stories	55 ft. / 2 stories

Relief from the 40 foot building height limit is only for an extension of a roof over the auto ramp as it rises to the rooftop parking deck. According to the applicant, the parking ramp roof will enhance the life safety operation of the roof top parking facility during inclement weather, help convey rain water run off to roof gutters, avoid ice build-up on the ramp, and allow the District government to maximize the maintenance and operation of these expensive vehicles.

The District is the owner of the property. The District plans to demolish the existing structures along Fenwick Street and 15th Street, NE, and construct a new climate-controlled parking facility for the city's fleet of packer trucks with administrative offices in one building and an truck inspection facility in an adjoining building on the lot. The West Virginia Avenue Campus of the Fleet Management Administration will be the major location for the storage of the District's large packer trucks. Over the past several years, the District government has lost its major vehicle storage facility at Brentwood to commercial uses.

With the exception of the rooftop parking deck, the proposed building will be a fully enclosed and temperature controlled parking facility. The facility will be primarily used to house the

District's packers which represent a considerable investment by the City of taxpayer dollars. Motorized street cleaning vehicles, parking enforcement cars and vans, and private vehicles of city employees working on site will also be parked at the facility.

To provide access to the facility a ramp will be constructed from Fenwick Street along the west and southwest portion of the building and will slope upward to the roof. The ramp will be covered with a standing seam metal roof which, due to the upward slope of the ramp, will extend 14'9" above the roof of the building. Entrance to the ramp will be from the rear of the building on Fenwick Street.

Uniqueness
The property is a uniquely hexagonal pie-shaped lot. The new structure will be constructed to house fleet of packer truckers which are taller than standard automobiles and therefore require a taller height parking garage; each floor to ceiling height is approximately 20 feet. This necessarily taller garage floor height allows for only two stories of structure within the 40-foor height limit.

Practical Difficulty
The need for the tall garage height, the retention of the on-site inspection station coupled with the unique shape of the lot result in a practical difficultly for the applicant to locate the roofdeck parking to another location on site. The roof top parking represents 69,900 square feet of parking. As illustrated on the site plan, there is not sufficient space to locate the equivalent elsewhere on the lot, due to the needed inspection station that will be located to the rear of the proposed structure.

In OP's opinion, an exceptional situation exists to warrant approval of the variance and that a practical difficulty exists that merits variance relief. The relief is the minimum necessary to relieve the difficulty; the ramp roof extends only along the southeastern edge of the building and only for an approximate width of 31 feet; the area of relief is only about 15% of the roof surface.

Intent and Purpose of the Zone Plan
Approval of the variance will not cause substantial detriment to the public good and will not impair the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zone plan for several reasons:

1) The property is zoned C-M-1 and transportation services such as a parking facility and office use is a permitted use within the zone,
2) The ramp roof is located so its impact is focused to the center of the lot and will not adversely affect neighboring properties,
3) The building remains is only 2 stories while the area requirements for the CM-1 zone anticipate up to 3 stories, and
4) The public good is served because the proposed facility will reduce parking and congestion on contiguous neighborhood streets and save taxpayer dollars by increasing the life span and operating costs of these vehicles.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
The use and zone are consistent with the Generalized Land Use Map which identifies the area as production and technical employment. The Generalized Land Use Map defines production and technical employment as follows:

> ***Restructured industrial land intended to encourage growth industries and industries with a high ratio of employees to land area occupied, such as office support systems, communications, printing and publishing, wholesaling, transportation services, food services, and tourism support services; warehousing; and other commercial activities that generally do not occur to substantial degree in other commercial areas are the predominant uses.***

COMMUNITY COMMENTS
The proposed project is located in Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5A. The applicant is scheduled to present the project to the ANC at its regularly scheduled meeting on January 9, 2003.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning supports the construction of a parking facility for District government vehicles and finds that the requested relief will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map, will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property, and will not cause substantial detriment to the public good and therefore recommends that the application be **APPROVED.**

ATT: Aerial Map
Photographs

AA/vr



Feature Key

Zoning Boundaries

Square Index

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Application No. #16967

DC Office of Planning

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Scale 1:1783

25 0 25 50 75 100 Feet

Attachment 1