GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Andrew Altman, Director

DATE: March 18, 2003

SUBJECT: BZA Case #16997, Special Exception Request

2003 MAR 19 PM 2:24 D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION-IN-BRIEF

The Office of Planning recommends the subject application be approved.

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location	3321 Cathedral Avenue, Washington DC Square 2118, Lot 38, Ward 3; ANC 3C
Applicant:	Bruce Wentworth, Wentworth Levine Architect / Builder
Owner:	Kimiko Dornburg
Zoning:	R-1-B
Proposal:	Construction of a rear addition to the existing dwelling.
Relief Sought:	Special exception to §405 Side Yards, pursuant to §223.

III. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION – Refer to Location Plan, Attachment I

Square 2118 is located on Cathedral Avenue NW, between Cleveland Avenue NW and 34th Street NW, to the east of the National Cathedral site and the playing fields associated with National Cathedral School. The property is mid-block, on the south side of the street. It is the middle of a row of three large townhouses, to the east of which is a public alley and another three townhouses. A private rear alley (with ownership divided among the townhouse owners) runs between the public alley to the east and 34th Street to the west. The 1920's brick townhouse is two full levels plus an attic and a basement. The basement is buried at the front elevation, and partly exposed at the back. Vehicular access is from the rear lane to a basement level parking space. A retaining wall along the rear lane and fill provides for a level rear yard close to the main floor level.

IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION - refer to Site Plans and Elevations, Attachment II

The owners wish to construct a one level plus basement addition to the rear of the existing house, and new external stairs up to the main level of the house. The flat-roofed addition would be clad in "hardi-plank" with wood trim. A new door on the west side of the addition would provide access to the basement level. A portion of an existing, smaller brick addition would be removed, as would a portion of the rear retaining wall and some of the current fill, to permit larger basement windows (i.e. the elevation of the rear yard would be lowered, and would be closer in elevation to the rear lance than is currently the case).

BZA
Case No. 16997
Exhibit No. 30

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CASE NO. 16997
EXHIBIT NO. 30

V. RELATIONSHIP OF THE APPLICATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The property is designated "low density" residential (single-family detached and semi-detached housing as the predominant uses) on the Comprehensive Plan Generalized Land use Map. The proposal would not be contrary to this designation.

§1104 *Policies in Support of the Residential Objectives*:

§1104.1 (h) *... encourage the maintenance of existing housing stock ... while exercising care to avoid undermining neighborhood quality and stability*

VI. AREA ZONING

The property is zoned R-1-B, one family detached residential. The surrounding area, including the National Cathedral site, is zoned R-1-A and R-1-B.

VII. REQUESTED ZONING RELIEF (refer to Project Profile, Attachment III)

The proposal would require the following special exception relief pursuant to §223:

1.	Zoning Regulation:	Proposed:
	Side Yard: (§405) - 8 ft. min.	9.9 ft. on west side, but 0 ft on east side

The house is currently non-conforming, in that it is the middle of a townhouse complex, so has no side yard on either side. The addition would provide the required side yard on the west, but would provide no side yard on the east side. §223 permits BZA review and approval of this non-conformity, provided it meets the following tests:

§223.2 - The addition shall not have a substantially adverse affect on the use of or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property; in particular;

(a) The light and air availability to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected;

Complies: The addition provides the required setback on the west side. It would abut a one story plus basement addition (approved by Special Exception in 1982) for the house to the east, which has no windows in the wall facing the subject property. As such, the proposed addition would have no impact on light, air, or privacy for adjacent properties. The neighbors to the east have submitted letters of support for the proposal (Attachment IV).

(b) The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised;

Complies: The addition would contain no windows facing or overlooking the house to the east. The addition provides the required setback on the west side, and includes only one small new window, so privacy impacts should be minimal.

(c) The addition, together with the original building, as viewed from the street, alley, and other public way, shall not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale and pattern of houses along the street frontage;

Complies: The proposed one story addition would not be visible from the street, but would be visible from the rear alley. The addition should increase the visual scale of the build as

seen from the alley, although the exterior materials would clearly distinguish it as an addition. Both of the adjacent houses have rear projections of a similar height and which provide a similar rear yard setback, so the proposed addition would be generally in character with the lane-scape.

(d) In demonstrating compliance with (a), (b), and (c) of this subsection, the applicant shall use graphical representations such as plans, photographs or elevation and section drawing sufficient to represent the relation of the proposed addiction to adjacent buildings and views from public ways.

Complies: The owner has presented photographs, plans and elevations sufficient to show the relation of the proposed addition to adjacent buildings and views from public ways.

§223.3 - The lot occupancy of the dwelling or flat, together with the addition, shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) in the R-1 and R-2 Districts ...

Complies – the lot occupancy with the addition was calculated by the applicant to be 33.6%.

§223.4 - The Board may require special treatment in the way of design, screening, exterior or interior lighting, building materials, or other features for the protection of adjacent and nearby properties.

The Office of Planning has no recommendation for special treatment at this time, but notes that some screening (hedge or well designed fence) along the rear lot line would help to decrease the scale of the house as seen from the alley. Although the alley is privately owned and likely receives little pedestrian or vehicular traffic other than by the owners of the townhouses, this would be beneficial because the owner is proposing to expose a portion of the existing basement by lowering the retaining wall at the rear lot line and removing fill material.

§223.5 - This section may not be used to permit the introduction or expansion of a nonconforming use.

The proposed addition would not appear to alter the existing use of the site as a single family dwelling.

Will the special exception be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning regulations and Maps?

Yes. The subject dwelling was constructed prior to the adoption of the Zoning Act of 1958. §223 provides housing modification relief for owners of dwellings that pre-date current zoning requirements. Requiring full conformity to current regulations would have a negative impact on the ability of home-owners to modify and upgrade their homes, so could, over the long term, have a negative impact on area revitalization. The granting of the requested special exception to allow for this small addition is an appropriate application of this special exception provision. The property would continue to function as a single dwelling.

Will the special exception adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Maps?

No. The addition should have no impact on the use or enjoyment of adjacent properties. It provides the required setback on the west side, and abuts a high, solid brick fence on the east side, so would have no impact on light, air, or privacy.

VIII. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION (ANC) COMMENTS

ANC 3C considered this item at its February 24, 2003 meeting, and adopted a recommendation of approval.

IX. OTHER AGENCY COMMENTS

The Office of Zoning has indicated no concerns with the Special Exception application. WASA noted that a review of hydraulic loading that will be placed on the storm and sanitary sewer system will be required – this would be an issue to be dealt with at the Building Permit stage.

There are no other Staff comments at this time.

X. OP SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that the BZA approve the special exemption request. This recommendation is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Generalized Land Use Map, and would not undermine the integrity of the Zoning Regulations.

AA/jl

ATTACHMENTS:

I Location Map
II Site Plans and Elevations
III Project Profile
IV Letter of support from owners of the property to the east

Standard	R-1-B Zone Regulations	Current[1]	Proposed	Variance
Dwelling Type:	one family detached dwelling	attached row dwelling	unchanged	existing condition
Lot Size: (§401)	5,000 sq.ft. min.	3,130.3 sq.ft.	unchanged	existing condition
Lot Width:	50 ft. min.	33 ft.	unchanged	existing condition
Floor Area Ratio: (§402)	n/a[2]	information not provided	additional 720 sq ft.[3]	conforming
Lot Coverage: (§403)	40% max	24%	33.6%	conforming
Rear Yard: (§404)	25 ft min.	36.23 ft.	25 ft.	conforming
Side Yard: (§405)	8 ft. min.	0 ft.	0 ft on east side; 9.9 ft. on west side	**Special exception under §223 required**
Front Yard:	not required	25 ft.	unchanged	conforming
Open Court Width: (§406)	4" / ft of building height = +/- 8.3 ft.[4]	9.9 ft.	9.9 ft.	conforming
Height: (§400)	40 ft. max.	information not provided	unchanged[5]	addition is conforming
Stories: (§400)	3 max	3 + basement	unchanged[6]	addition is conforming
Parking: (§2101.1)	1	1	unchanged	conforming

draft

1 **Information provided by applicant.**

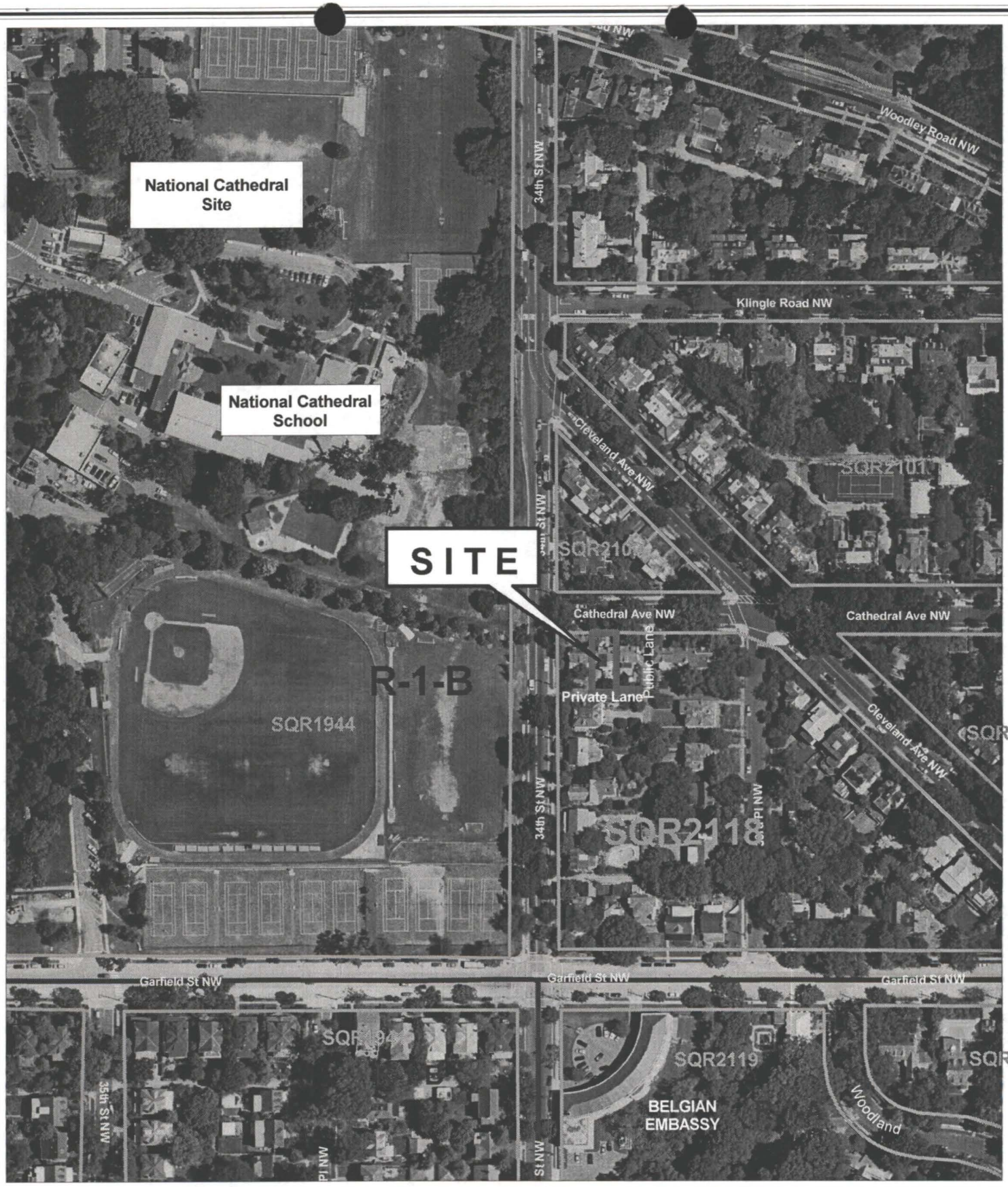
2 This zone does not establish a maximum FAR.

3 The addition is approximately 360 sq.ft. on each of the main and lower levels (720 sq.ft. total)

4 Court height = the vertical distance from the lowest level of the court to the highest point of any bounding wall, which in this case is less than 25 ft.; resulting in a minimum court width requirement of about 8.3 feet.

5 The proposed addition is approx. 18 feet in height

6 The proposed addition is one story plus fully exposed basement



Board of Zoning Adjustment

Application No. #16997 - 3321 CATHEDRAL AVENUE

Feature Key

- Zoning Boundaries
- Square Index
- Site

DC Office of Planning
February 26, 2003

N

25 0 25 50 75 100 Feet

Attachment I

of driveway at any point on private property in excess of 20% for single-family dw
or in excess of 12% at any point for other buildings. (The policy of the Highwa
permits a maximum driveway grade of 12% across the public parking an
restricted property.)

ATTACHMENT II

Surveyor, D.C.

Date: 1/22/03

By: DA

(Signature of owner or his authorized agent)

NOTE: Data shown for Assessment and Taxation Lots or Parcels are in accordance with the records of the Department of Finance and Revenue, Assessment Administration, and do not necessarily agree with deed description.

CATHEDRAL AVENUE

