GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Director

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
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MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Kenneth Laden
Associate Director, District Department of Transportation
Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

DATE: March 31, 2003

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 17001 Special Exception and Area Variance Application to Construct an Apartment House (Publicly Assisted Housing Reserved for the Elderly or Handicapped) at 14th and Irving Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

The District Department of Transportation has reviewed the application and other material submitted by the applicant. This memorandum addresses the transportation aspects of the proposal.

This is an application by the National Capital Revitalization Corporation for area variance relief from the parking requirements (Sections 2101, 2115, and 2117) and loading requirements (Section 2201). The applicant proposes to construct a seven-story Publicly Assisted housing facility for elderly adults on the currently vacant site.

BZA
Case No. 17001
Exhibit No. 24

Site Context

The proposed development is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of 14th and Irving Streets, N.W. The subject property includes lots 71, 867 and 824 within Square 2848, which is bounded by 13th Street, N.W. to the east, 14th Street, N.W. to the west, Kenyon Street, N.W. to the north and Irving Street, N.W. to the south. The surrounding uses are largely residential (zoned R-4) on Irving Street, N.W., with a greater concentration of commercial development (zoned C-3-A) located along 14th Street, N.W.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17001
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Under the proposed site plan, the development is accessible by vehicle, Metrobus and Metrorail. The Washington Area Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (WMATA) green line Columbia Heights Metro station is located adjacent to the proposed site with an additional entrance to the station on the southeast corner of the intersection of 14th and Irving Streets. A circular driveway entrance on Irving Street and a proposed alley easement on the eastern end of the site provide vehicle access to the site. The proposed alley easement will intersect an existing alley that runs parallel to Irving Street and allow access to nine parking spaces on site.

Other large projects are proposed in the area surrounding the site. The lot adjacent to the proposed site is being developed into a market-rate, multi-family housing development, and additional significant commercial developments are planned for the next five years.

Current level of service (LOS) at the intersection of 14th and Irving Streets operate at level "B" and level "C" during a.m. and p.m. peak periods, respectively. Although the proposed development will add some traffic to the existing system, given the population of the proposed facility and the proximity of Metro, DDOT does not expect it would significantly impact current LOS at 14th and Irving Streets, or the surrounding intersections.

Issue #1: Variance Relief Requested for Parking Requirements of Section 2101.1

The applicant is required by Section 2010 to provide one parking space per six dwelling units for publicly assisted housing reserved for the elderly. This would require the applicant to provide thirteen spaces on-site. The applicant proposes to offer nine spaces in order to accommodate the parking needs of the residents. Given the reduced likelihood of car ownership, close proximity to Metrorail and comparison to similar developments,[1] the Department of Transportation has no objection to the applicant receiving a variance from this requirement.

Issue #2: Variance Relief Requested for Loading Requirements of Section 2201

The applicant is required by Section 2201 to provide one 12' x 55' loading berth, one 200-square foot loading platform and one service delivery space. The proposed site plan only contains one 10' x 20' service delivery space. The applicant is seeking relief from the loading platform and loading berth requirements because it would be exceptionally difficult for a fifty-five foot truck to access the loading berth via the proposed alley easement.

[1] The "Technical Memorandum: Traffic Impact Assessment" prepared by O.R. George & Associates, Inc. for this application found that at two elderly housing developments in Northwest Washington, DC the parking ratio of dwelling units to cars was 9.5 and 9.67 units per space. This ratio is higher than the eight spaces per unit proposed in this application. The developments cited were Friendship Terrace (4201 Butterworth Pl., NW) and Colony House (930 Farragut St., NW).

However, Section 2203.4 states that loading berths may be provided to jointly serve two adjoining buildings if it meets the minimum standards for the number of units served and both parties enter into a binding covenant. In this proposal, the applicant will enter into a binding covenant with the adjacent development, which will be a multi-family housing development. Until the adjacent development has been constructed, however, the applicant will require a temporary variance. If the proposed development is occupied prior to the completion of the adjacent development, we believe the service delivery space should suffice, given that most deliveries to this residential property would include furniture/resident deliveries, home-related repair services and possibly emergency ambulances for health issues. These services tend to utilize trucks of thirty feet in length or less which could be accommodated by the delivery space accessed by the alley easement or the driveway on Irving Street. The Department of Transportation has no objection to the applicant receiving a variance from this requirement, provided the temporary variance does not exceed more than two years from the effective date of the Board of Zoning Adjustment order, and the applicant enters into a binding covenant with the adjacent development.

In summary, the District Department of Transportation supports the applicant's request for zoning relief from parking requirements and a temporary variance from loading requirements.