Government of the District of Columbia

Office of the Director

Office of Planning
415 12th Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 2000

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ZONING SECRETARIAT
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Fred L. Greene
Director of OFFICE OF PL.

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 15164

Application

Application of First Baptist Church, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3108.1 and 3107.2, for a special exception under Section 206 to expand an existing child development center, a variance from the rear yard requirements (Sub-section 404.1), a variance from the lot occupancy requirements (Sub-section 403.2), and a variance from the number of stories requirements (Sub-section 400.1) for the proposed subdivision and construction of an addition to a church containing ancillary facilities and the expansion of an existing child development center from 86 to 121 children in an R-4 District at premises 712 Randolph Street, N.W., (Square 3131, Lots 41 and 823).

Summary Recommendation

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends that this application be approved.

Applicant's Proposal

The applicant is proposing to raze an existing single-family row dwelling to allow for the construction of an addition onto a church. The new addition will be used to provide child care services and other ancillary church functions.

BZA
Case No. 17150
Exhibit No. 36

BZA
CASE No. 15164
EXHIBIT No. 27

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17150
EXHIBIT NO. 36

10/19

Site and Area Description

The site is located in Ward 4 at the southeast intersection of New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., and Randolph Street, N.W. The irregularly shaped property has six sides (hexagon). The site consists of Lots 41 and 823. The combined land area of both lots is 14,816.35 square feet.

The existing church is located on Lot 823. It was constructed in 1926. The church has a congregation of approximately 200 worshipers. The single-family row dwelling is located on Lot 41. It was constructed in 1913, and adjoins three other row houses and two semi-detached homes on the south side of Randolph Street, between 7th Street and New Hampshire Avenue. The dwelling contains two-stories, a basement and an attic.

The site is in the southern section of the Petworth neighborhood. The community is almost totally residential. The dwellings are primarily two and three-story row houses and are generally occupied by single-family households. Institutional use is the second largest land use in the community. There are many churches in the neighborhood in addition to Clark and Petworth Elementary Schools, Roosevelt Senior High School, Petworth Library and other local public facilities within walking distance of the site.

A public alley is located at the rear of the property. Its access/egress is from 7th Street, N.W., at which point the alley is 10-foot wide. The alley's width is 15-foot at the rear of the site and 20-foot where it dead ends to the west of the site.

The subject property is zoned R-4. This permits matter-of-right development of residential uses (including detached, semi-detached and row single-family dwellings and flats) with a minimum lot area of 1,800 square feet, a minimum lot width of 18 feet, a maximum lot occupancy of 60 percent, and maximum height of three stories/40 feet. Conversions of existing buildings to apartments are permitted for lots with a minimum lot area of 900 square feet per dwelling unit.

Compliance with the Zoning Regulations

Where justifiable, based on specific standards and criteria, the Board of Zoning Adjustment may allow deviations from the provisions of the Zoning Regulations. The granting of an area variance is predicated on the following findings as specified in Subsection 3107.2 of the Zoning Regulations:

> The fundamental finding necessary in support of area variances is that there is something unique to a property itself which would create a practical difficulty for the owner in the ability to develop the property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and, therefore, would deprive the owner of reasonable use of the property. The variance can also be granted without substantially impairing the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Map.

The granting of a special exception is predicated on the following findings as specified in Section 3108.1 of the Zoning Regulations:

> Pursuant to authority contained in the Zoning Act of June 20, 1938 (52 Stat. 797), as amended, the Board is authorized to grant special exceptions, as provided in this title where, in the judgment of the Board, those special exceptions will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps, subject in each case to the special conditions specified in this title.

Comments

The Zoning Regulations allow 60 percent or 8,889.81 square feet of the site to be occupied. The applicant is proposing to occupy approximately 85 percent of the site. A variance is being sought to occupy 41 percent or 3,667 square feet more of the site than allowed by the regulations.

The minimum depth of a rear yard in an R-4 District is 20 feet. A five foot rear yard will be provided for the subject project. Thus, the applicant requires a variance of 15 feet from the rear yard requirements of the Zoning Regulations.

Except as provided for in Section 400 of the regulations, buildings in the R-4 District shall not exceed 40 feet/three stories. The Zoning Administrator's computations indicate that the height of the building would be 40 feet. Also, the addition would exceed the height limit by one story. Therefore, a variance of 33 percent from the height limit is being requested.

The applicant references Section 400.7 of the regulations which state that "A church may be erected to a height of sixty feet (60'); Provided, that it shall not exceed the number of stories permitted in the district in which it is located." Information submitted indicates that the addition would have a height of 48 feet/four stories. Irrespective of the 40 or 48 foot height for the addition, the applicant cannot build beyond the three stories without approval of the Board in the R-4 District.

The applicant can meet most of the zoning requirements for the proposed expansion. However, the shape of the property in addition to the fact that the existing church building predates the 1958 Zoning Regulations create a practical difficulty for the applicant. Further, the applicant will be providing needed outreach services to the surrounding community, namely an expanded child care center. In this regard, the applicant's proposal will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps.

The proposed hours and days of operation for the new child care facility are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The picking up and dropping off of children would take place from New Hampshire Avenue where ample on-street parking is available. Neighborhood school facilities would be used for off-site play space. The number of persons that would be employed at the facility was not finalized prior to completion of OP's report.

Correspondence received from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, the Department of Human Services and the Metropolitan Police Department indicate that the agencies have no objections to the application.

Sufficient parking is available on the local streets in the neighborhood, however, there is a two-hour limit on some of the streets.

Community Comments

The recommendation of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 4C was not available to OP prior to completion of this report.

Recommendation

The Office of Planning recommends that application No. 15164 be approved for a special exception and area variances. The applicant's long distinguised history in providing community services in the Petworth neighborhood is especially noteworthy.

3

Attachments