GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Ellen McCarthy, Interim Director, OP

DATE: May 3, 2005

SUBJECT: BZA Case #17316, Proposed rowhouse development in the R-5-A zone

D.C. OFFICE OF PLANNING
2005 MAY -3 PM 3:22

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION-IN-BRIEF

The Office of Planning recommends approval of the revised application submitted April 27, 2005 for special exception relief for the development of 10 new rowhouse units in the R-5-A zone and variance relief from side yard requirements.

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location 2700 R Street SE, Square 5585, Lot 812; ANC 7B

Applicant: Jerry Moore II, Venable LLP for Randle Highlands Manor LP

Zoning: R-5-A

Proposal: Subdivision of a site into 10 lots for development as rowhouse / semi-detached dwelling units.

Relief Sought: Special Exception review of rowhouse use in the R-5-A zone pursuant to §353 and lot area and width pursuant to §401.1; and

Variance to side yard setback requirements pursuant to §3103.

III. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION – Refer to Location Plan, Site Plan, & Context Photos, Attachments I, II, & III

The rectangular site is about 1/3 of an acre in size, with frontage on both R Street and 27th Street SE. The site steeply slopes up along the alley to the east of the site and along R Street SE. The site is currently vacant, but was developed in the past with a 3-story pre-1958 apartment building with an FAR of about 1.4. The District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) purchased the site with an abandoned apartment building, and subsequently entered into agreements with the Anacostia Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) for AEDC development of the site. The sale required the rehabilitation or replacement of the apartment building, which was deemed in poor condition and demolished. The sale agreement also required that the development provide housing for first time homebuyers.

The general area includes a mixture of detached, attached, and low-rise apartment dwellings.

IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The original application was for the creation of 11 lots, 7 of which would be standard lots facing 27th Street SE, and 4 would be theoretical lots between a new, substandard private drive and the existing alley. Numerous forms of relief would have been required, in addition to

BZA Case No. 17316 Exhibit No. 26

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17316
EXHIBIT NO. 26

BZA approval of the theoretical lot subdivision. Some of the lots would have been much smaller than is standard for this area. While the Office of Planning (OP) supports rowhouse development on this lot, OP was concerned about the amount of relief needed for the original proposal.

Following discussions with OP and with the Department of Transportation (DDOT), the applicant submitted a revised proposal (Site Plan Attachment IV, and Exhibit "C" of the applicant's April 27, 2005 submission) which:

- reduces the number of lots to 10, all of which have frontage on a public street so the need for a theoretical lot subdivision has been eliminated;
- increases the average lot size, which reduces the special exception / variance relief required;
- provides for development which conforms to FAR and lot occupancy requirements on all lots; and
- retains rear access to parking via driveway access easements.

Under the current proposal, 10 dwelling units would be developed. The design of the units has not changed from the original proposal. The 8 rowhouse units facing 27th Street SE would have parking access via an easement running across the rear of the lots from R Street SE. The 2 semi-attached units facing R Street SE would have their parking accessed from the existing alley.

The significant grade change would be largely dealt with by a retaining wall separating the rear of lots 1-8 from the side of lot 9. OP has requested that the applicant provide additional information, including site sections, to fully explain this retaining wall and proposed grades on the site.

V. BZA Case 16896

BZA Case 16896 for this site was for an assisted living facility for 52 people, primarily 75 years in age, or older. At its January 28, 2003 meeting, the BZA denied this application. Similarly, a motion by the applicant to reconsider this decision was denied by the BZA at its July 1, 2003 meeting.

VI. RELATIONSHIP OF THE APPLICATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The property is designated "moderate density" residential (rowhouses and garden apartment as the predominant uses) on the Comprehensive Plan Generalized Land use Map. The proposal would not be inconsistent to this designation.

The proposal would also generally further a number of Comprehensive Plan major themes, and Ward 7 goals and objectives related to housing, urban design, and land use:

Chapter 1 - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: GENERAL PROVISIONS ELEMENT

101 Major Themes Of The Comprehensive Plan

101.1 In the process of developing the District elements of the Comprehensive Plan ("the Plan") and coordinating the widespread citizens review the following ten (10) major themes were discerned:

(a) Stabilizing and improving the District's neighborhoods

(e) Respecting and improving the physical character of the District

(f) Preserving and ensuring community input

(i) Promoting enhanced public safety

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CHAPTER 18 - WARD 7 PLAN

1801 Ward 7 Planning Focus

1801.1 (g) Recognize the need to preserve and enhance an appropriate range and density of land uses in order to maintain the integrity of neighborhoods;

1808 Ward 7 Objectives For Housing

1808.1 (b) Stimulate the production of new and rehabilitated housing to meet all levels of need and to provide incentives for all types of housing at desired locations;

(c) Provide for the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households, ..., to encourage ownership ...;

1820 Ward 7 Objectives For Urban Design

1820.1 (b) Encourage the superior design of future development in Ward 7 and enhance the established character of the distinct physical qualities of the ward's neighborhoods;

(c) Encourage the design of development that is sensitive to the existing scale and character of Ward 7's established residential areas;

1828 Ward 7 Land Use/Zoning

1828.1 The overall land use objectives for the ward are to preserve residential neighborhoods, provide housing opportunities for a range of income levels ...

VII. AREA ZONING

Like the subject property, the area is zoned R-5-A (low rise apartment, garden apartment and row dwellings), and is developed with a variety of detached, attached, and low-rise apartment buildings.

VIII. REQUESTED ZONING RELIEF (refer to Project Profile, Attachment V)

1. §353 Special Exception Review of Rowhouse Development in the R-5-A Zone

In Zoning Regulation §353 New Residential Developments (R-5-A), §353.1 states that "*In R-5-A Districts, all new residential developments, except those comprising all one-family detached and semi-detached dwellings, shall be reviewed by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as special exceptions under § 3104 in accordance with the standards and requirements in § 410 and this section.*"

The semi-detached dwelling facing R Street SE is not subject to §353 review. The rowhouse units facing 27th Street SE are subject to BZA review against the following provisions:

353.2 The Board shall refer the application to the D.C. Board of Education for comment and recommendation as to the adequacy of existing and planned area schools to accommodate the numbers of students that can be expected to reside in the project.	As of the date of this report, OP has not received comments from DC Public Schools. The units are designed to accommodate families. OP notes that the closest elementary school is about 1,000 feet from the site, while the closest middle school is just over ½ mile from the site.

353.3 The Board shall refer the application to the D.C. Departments of *Transportation and Housing* and Community Development for comment and recommendation as to the adequacy of public streets, recreation, and other services to accommodate the residents of the project and the relationship of the proposed project to public plans and projects.	DDOT had indicated opposition to the original proposal, due to the overall configuration and narrow private drive. The applicant subsequently worked with DDOT to prepare the revised site layout. As of the date of this report, OP has not received comments on the revised proposal directly from DDOT. DHCD has submitted comments in support for the proposed development (Attachment VI).
353.4 The Board shall refer the application to the D.C. Office of Planning for comment and recommendation on the site plan, arrangement of buildings and structures, and provisions of light, air, parking, recreation, landscaping, and grading as they relate to the future residents of the project and the surrounding neighborhood.	OP is supportive of the revised 10 unit proposal to develop this vacant lot with rowhouses for sale to moderate income families. The revised site plan is substantially preferable to the original scheme, and provides for adequate light, air, parking, and outdoor recreation needs of residents. The site plan, with each unit having frontage on an exiting public street and parking access from the rear, is in keeping with the character of the area. Although the number of units is small, the designer has provided some front façade relief in the form of 2' setbacks for alternate units, and the provision of bay windows, entry landings, and other front façade articulation. Additional articulation as the designers enter more detailed design phases would be appropriate. OP has requested additional information related to the retaining wall, but in general feels that the proposed location is preferable to a retaining wall along the public alley.
§410 - Groups Of Residential Buildings In R-4 And R-5 Districts.	The proposal generally conforms to the requirements of this section. In specific: • each unit has a front entrance on a public street (§410.3); • each unit has access to a rear service / parking area (§410.4); • there are no exterior stairs to upper stories (§410.5); • the units provide adequate separation for air, light, and emergency access (§410.6); and • all units are well within the permitted height (§410.7).

With regards to the Special Exception test of §3104:

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

The proposed row house development would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning regulations and Maps. The R-5-A zone permits low-rise apartments (which, on this site, could yield 20 or more units) or rowhouse development. As noted above, the proposal is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan Generalized Land Use Map, and would further many

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Does the property exhibit specific uniqueness with respect to exceptional shape, narrowness, shallowness, topography or other extraordinary or other exceptional situations or conditions that impose a practical difficulty that is unnecessarily burdensome to the applicant?

The applicant notes that the relative small size of the site for rowhouse development and the steep slopes along the south and east edges of the lot make meeting the strict application of the zoning regulation side yard requirements difficult. The intent to provide parking from the rear, which is supported by OP and DDOT, rather than directly from the street to internal garage space also impacts site planning and unit layout options. If the BZA accepts that 10 units is an appropriate number for this site, the provision of fully complying side yards would represent a practical difficulty, and would result in the provision of housing which would be unnecessarily narrow and less in character with housing in the area.

Can the relief be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose and integrity of the Zoning Regulations and Map?

Side yard setback variance is required for lots 1, 9 and 10. To the north of Lot 1 is a low-rise apartment building with a substantial setback for required parking from the common lot line. To the west of Lot 9 is the proposed driveway easement / rear yard area for lots 1 – 8. To the east of Lot 10 is a 15' wide public alley. There is also a wide boulevard separating private property from the paved portion of the street, and the houses are proposed to be a height considerably less than permitted. As such, the revised site plan would have no significant impact on the light, air or privacy in the area and would not impair the intent or integrity of the Zoning Regulations.

IX. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION (ANC) COMMENTS

OP has been informed by the applicant that ANC 7B received a presentation from the applicant of the current proposal at its April 21, 2005 meeting but did not vote on the proposal. The applicant had also presented the original scheme to the ANC and other community groups.

X. OP SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved. This recommendation is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Generalized Land Use Map, and would not undermine the integrity of the Zoning Regulations.

EM/jl

ATTACHMENTS:

I. Location Plan
II. Site Plan
III. Context Photos
IV. Revised Site Plan as Submitted by Applicant
V. Project Profile for Revised Proposal
VI. DHCD Comments

Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives. The consistent lot width yielding 16 foot wide units adds affordability to the construction of units targeted to first time homebuyers.

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

The proposed development would not adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Maps. Rather, the proposal would result in the development of a currently vacant lot with a form of housing that is in keeping with that of the surrounding streetscape and development patterns, and which area residents have stated they prefer to otherwise permitted apartment building development. All of the units would have on-site parking accessed either from a common driveway from R Street or from an existing alley.

2. §401.3 Special Exception Review of Lot Area and Lot Width:

In its revised submission, the applicant requested variance relief from lot area. §401.3, however, states that lot area and lot width shall be "*as prescribed by the Board* (of Zoning Adjustment) *pursuant to Section 3104* (Special Exception). OP has confirmed with OAG that this provision is the appropriate relief and has analyzed the proposal accordingly.

Proposed lot size varies from 1,340 to 2,112 sq.ft., for an average of 1,542 sq.ft. Lot width varies from 16 to 20 feet, for an average of 16.8 feet. Cursory analysis of rowhouse lot sizes in the neighborhood indicates that they vary widely in size, from under 1,200 sq.ft. to over 5,000 sq.ft. in area, and from 12 feet to 50 feet in width. All of the proposed lots fall well within this range.

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

The revised proposal meets the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and maps. The proposed rowhouse development is permitted by zoning, would be consistent with the "moderate density residential" designation on the Comprehensive Land Use Map, and would provide lots and dwellings within the norms for the area.

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

The proposed form of development, compared to the current vacant lot or a possible apartment building on the site, would have a positive impact on the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties. The proposal represents a form and scale of development that would compliment surrounding housing stock in terms of use, tenure, density, and building height and size. The neighborhood has indicated it prefers rowhouse to low-rise apartment development.

3. Side Yard (§405.2) Variance Relief for Lots 1, 9 and 10:

The zone requires the provision of a side yard of 8 feet minimum for each semi-detached end unit that is not located at the intersection of two streets. Lots 1, 9 and 10 do not provide the required setback. The other semi-detached lot, Lot 8, is a corner lot so is not required to provide the side yard.

Does the property exhibit specific uniqueness with respect to exceptional shape, narrowness, shallowness, topography or other extraordinary or other exceptional situations or conditions that impose a practical difficulty that is unnecessarily burdensome to the applicant?

The applicant notes that the relative small size of the site for rowhouse development and the steep slopes along the south and east edges of the lot make meeting the strict application of the zoning regulation side yard requirements difficult. The intent to provide parking from the rear, which is supported by OP and DDOT, rather than directly from the street to internal garage space also impacts site planning and unit layout options. If the BZA accepts that 10 units is an appropriate number for this site, the provision of fully complying side yards would represent a practical difficulty, and would result in the provision of housing which would be unnecessarily narrow and less in character with housing in the area.

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OPID0004358

BZA Case # 17316
2700 R Street SE - LOCATION PLAN

★ ★ ★ Government of the
District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

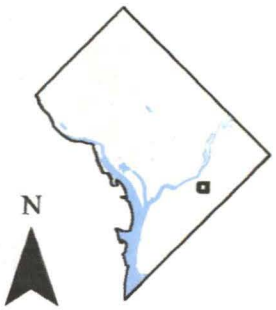
Office of Planning ~ April, 2005

This map was created for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

Feet
0 200 400

Legend

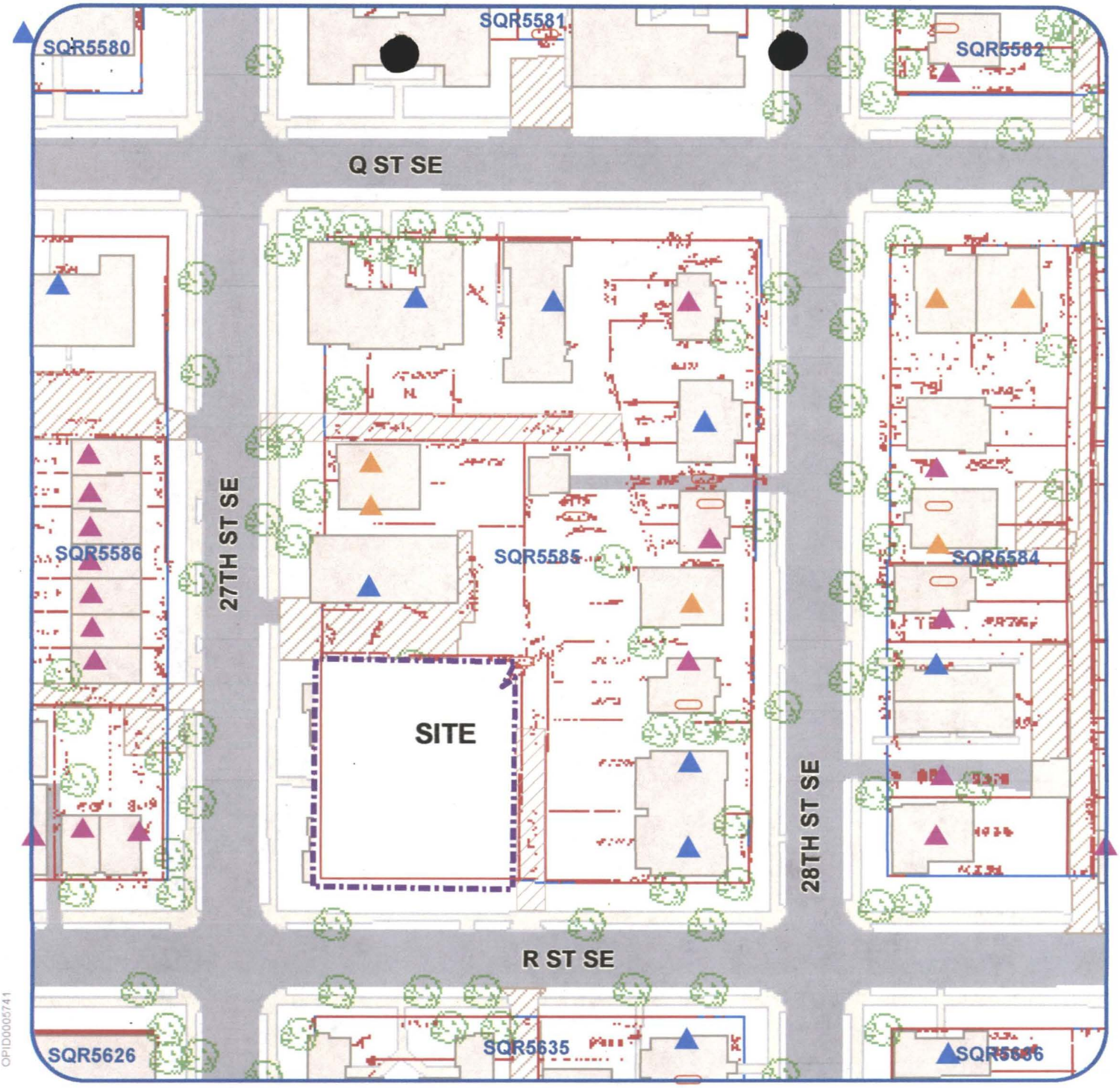
- Property Squares
- Zoning Districts
- Buildings
- National Parks



Attachment I


Q Street SE
28th Street SE
27th Street SE
SITE
R Street SE
Facing North


27th Street SE
SITE
R Street SE
Q Street SE
28th Street SE
Facing East



OPID0005741

Legend

- Property Squares
- Tax Lot Vectors (red)
- Alleys and Parking
- Single Family Dwelling
- Flat
- Multi-family Dwelling
- Vacant

BZA Case # 17316
2700 R Street SE - SITE PLAN

★ ★ ★ **Government of the District of Columbia**
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

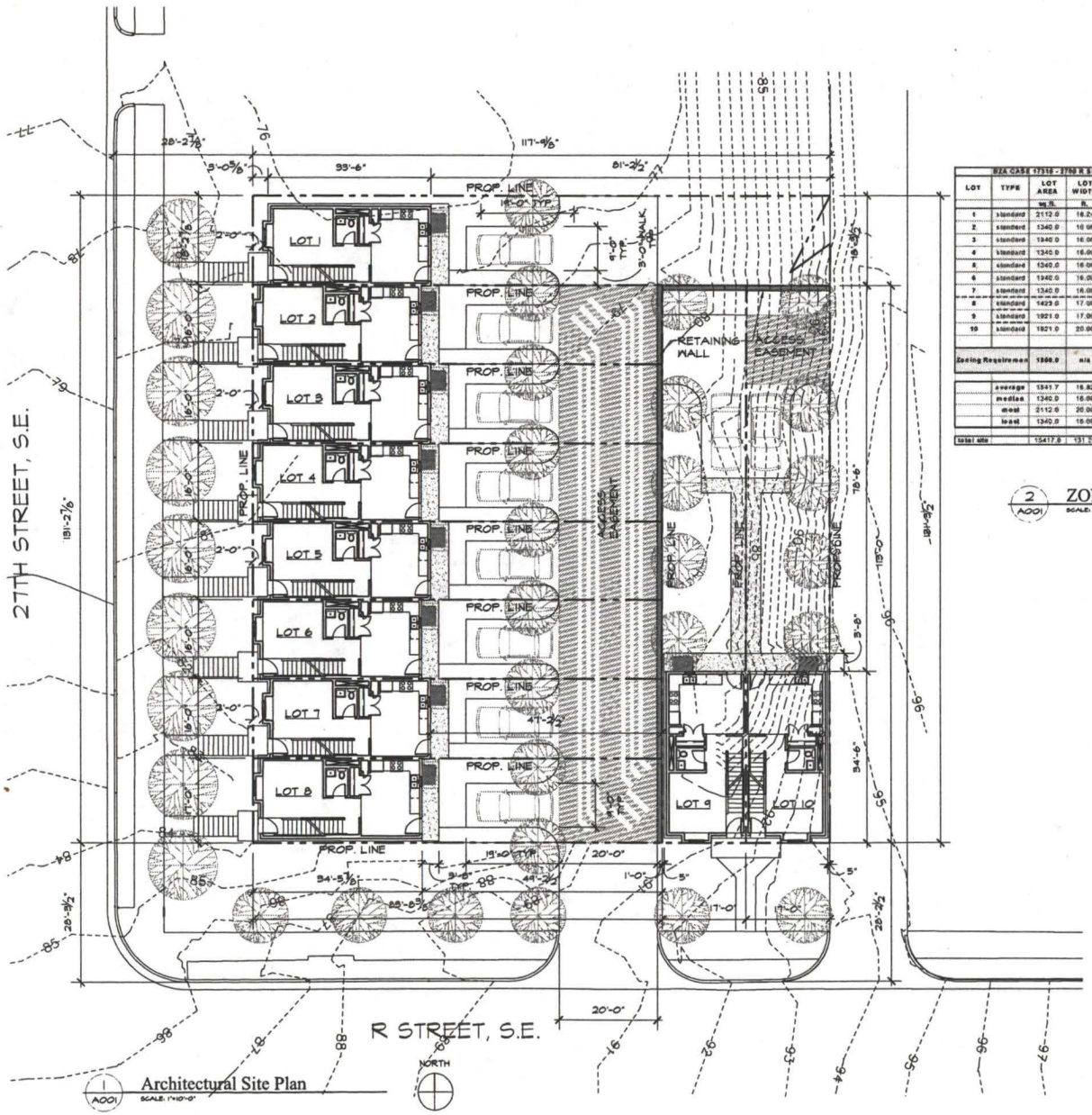
Office of Planning ~ April, 2005

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Feet
0 50 100

N

Attachment II



1 A001 Architectural Site Plan
SCALE: 1"=10'-0"

BZA CASE 17516 - 3700 R Street SE -

LOT	TYPE	LOT AREA	LOT WIDTH	HEIGHT	LOT OCCUPANCY	FAR	Bldg Size	REAR YARD	FRONT YARD	SIDE YARD	COURTS	PARKING	ROAD WIDTH
		sq. ft.	ft.	ft.	%		sq. ft.	ft.	ft.	ft.	ft.		ft.
1	standard	2112.0	16.24	19.00	25%	0.51	1,074	77.0	2.00	0.0	na	1	
2	standard	1340.0	16.00	19.00	40%	0.80	1,074	49.2	0.00	0	na	1	
3	standard	1340.0	16.00	19.00	40%	0.80	1,074	47.2	2.00	0	na	1	
4	standard	1340.0	16.00	19.00	40%	0.80	1,074	49.2	0.00	0	na	1	
5	standard	1340.0	16.00	19.00	40%	0.80	1,074	47.2	2.00	0	na	1	
6	standard	1340.0	16.00	19.00	40%	0.80	1,074	49.2	0.00	0	na	1	
7	standard	1340.0	16.00	19.00	40%	0.80	1,074	47.2	2.00	0	na	1	
8	standard	1423.0	17.00	19.00	36%	0.75	1,074	49.2	0.00	0.2	na	1	
9	standard	1921.0	17.00	19.00	28%	0.56	1,074	78.5	0.00	0.2	na	1	
10	standard	1921.0	20.00	19.00	28%	0.56	1,074	78.5	0.00	0.2	na	1	
Zoning Requirement		1800.0	n/a	40.00	40%	0.90		20.0	20.00	8' (outside units)		1 / unit	30 ft. min.
	average	1541.7	16.82	19.00	36%	0.72	1,074	57.2	0.80	0.1	na	1.0	
	median	1340.0	16.00	19.00	40%	0.80	1,074	49.2	0.00	0	na	1	
	most	2112.0	20.00	19.00	40%	0.80	1,074	78.5	2.00	0.8	na	1	
	least	1340.0	16.00	19.00	25%	0.51	1,074	47.2	0.00	0	na	1	
total site		15417.0	131.24										

2 A001 ZONING DATA
SCALE: NTS

Zavos Architecture + Design

PRINTS ISSUED

REVISIONS

REDUCED PRINT/ NOT TO SCALE

RANDLE HIGHLANDS TOWNHOMES
NEW ROWHOUSES AT 27TH AND R ST SE
WASHINGTON, DC 20020
OWNER: Anacostia Economic Development Corporation

SHEET TITLE
ARCHITECTURAL SITE PLAN
CODE ANALYSIS

A0.0.1

P. 301.698.0020
F. 301.698.0920
323 WEST PATRICK ST.
FREDERICK, MD 21701

Attachment IV

Standard	R-5-A Zone Regulations	Original Proposal[1]	Revised Current Proposal	Variance
Development Type:	Row dwellings, low rise apartment	11 rowhouse units on 7 standard lots and 4 theoretical lots fronting on a new substandard internal road	10 rowhouse units on standard lots; parking access easement	**BZA approval for rowhouse development in R-5-A required**
Site Area:		12,078 sq.ft. total[2]	15,414.7 sq.ft.	
Height (§400.1)	40 feet max.	18.2 – 29.75 feet	19 feet	Conforming
Stories (§400.1)	3 stories max.	2 + basement / cellar	2 + basement	Conforming
Lot Area (§401.3)	As prescribed by BZA	888.9 to 1,880.4 sq.ft. (1,098 sq.ft. ave.)	1,340 to 2,112 sq.ft. (1,541.7 sq.ft. ave.)	**BZA review required**
Lot Width (§401.3)	As prescribed by BZA	16 feet to 29.8 ft (18.5 ft ave.)	16 feet to 20 ft (16.8 ft. ave.)	**BZA review required**
Floor Area Ratio: (§402.5)	0.90 max	.56 to 1.19 (1.02 ave. – 9 non-conforming)	.51 to .80 (.72 average)	Conforming
Defined Sq.Ft.:		1,074 sq.ft. per unit, typical	1,074 sq.ft. per unit, typical	
Lot Occupancy: (§403.2)	40% max.	28% - 55% (51% average – 9 non-conforming)	25% - 40% (36% average)	Conforming
Rear Yard: (§404.1)	20 feet min.	Lots 1 – 7 = 27.5'; Lots 8 – 11 = 2.5' (non-conforming)	47.2 to 78.5 ft (57.2 ft. average)	Conforming
Front Yard: (§2516.5b))	20 feet min.	Lots 8 – 11 = 2.9' (non-conforming)	Not required; 0 to 2 ft. provided	Conforming
Side Yard: (§405.2)	0' for internal units; 8' min. for end units	Lots 1 and 7 = 0'; Lots 8 = 19.3; Lot 11 = 11.8' (2 non-conforming)	Lots 1, 8, 9, 10 = less than 1 ft.	**Non-conforming (3 lots)[3]**
Parking: (§2101.1)	1/unit min.	1 / unit	1 / unit	Conforming
Road Width: (§2516.6(b)	25' for a required internal road	17' min. (not conforming)	Not applicable – no internal road required	Conforming
Principal Buildings / lot (§2516)	1 max.	4 theoretical lots would require separate BZA approval	Not applicable – 1 unit per lot provided	Conforming

1 Information supplied by applicant.

2 Approx. 12,078 sq.ft. net of internal private road, as proposed; 15,414.7 sq.ft. in total.

3 Lot 8, being at the intersection of two streets, is not required to provide a conforming side yard.

ATTACHMENT VI

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joel Lawson
Development Review Specialist
Office of Planning

THROUGH: Lawrence C. Cager, Jr.
Deputy Director for Development Finance

FROM: James Thackaberry
Supervisory Project Manager

DATE: May 3, 2005

SUBJECT: Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Review of BZA Case No. 17316 – 2700 R Street SE, Lot 812, Square 5585 – Construction of a 10-unit fee simple townhouse development

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DHCD has reviewed the above referenced Zoning Commission Case you sent by e-mail on April 27, 2005. This memorandum offers comments on the BZA Case. After staff review of the application materials, DHCD is supportive of the retention of the construction of the 10-unit townhouse development as proposed in BZA Case No. 17316 for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development will provide 10 units of badly needed affordable fee-simple townhouses in the Ward 7 neighborhood community.
2. BZA review and approval is required for all townhouse proposals in a R-5-A zone.
3. The proposed 10 townhouses will all front on the street (2 on R Street and 8 on 27th Street) and complement and blend in with the scale of the other houses in the neighborhood which also front on the street. The front facing houses provide more residents that have a direct view of the street from the living rooms of their residences.
4. The proposed townhouses will eliminate a potentially blighting vacant lot that was created recently when an old apartments building fronting on 27th Street SE was demolished.

5. The approximately 130 foot long retaining wall, that is on the property line of proposed Lot 9 and adjacent to the common driveway parking access for the 8 parking spaces serving the 8 townhouses fronting on 27th Street SE, will require very careful design to prevent it from becoming an unsightly blighting element in the proposed development.
6. The twenty (20) foot width of the common driveway easement is probably necessary in order to allow for vehicles to maneuver into and out of the 8 parking spaces without scrapping the retaining wall along the edge of the driveway.
7. The width of six of the ten townhouses is 16 feet which is a standard width for townhouses even though they are narrower than the minimum lot width of 18 feet.
8. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission in which the site is located is supportive of townhouse development on this site.