GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 25, 2005

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Ellen McCarthy, Director

SUBJECT: Board of Zoning Adjustment Case No. 17378
821 Randolph Street N.W.

Summary

The applicant is seeking to put an addition on the rear of an existing row house. The application has been amended to add one unit instead of two to create a two unit building. Since the units are vertically rather than horizontally separated, they constitute two separate principal structures and require a special exception from Section 410 of the zoning regulations. The Office of Planning **recommends approval** of the *amended* variance request based on the analysis below.

Site and Area Description

The subject property is located at 821 Randolph Street N.W., Square 3027, Lot 805. The lot is 3,182 square feet and currently contains a single family row house occupying approximately 30% of the lot. Both the subject property and the surrounding neighborhood to the north, south and east are zoned R-4. Properties along Georgia Avenue to the west are zoned C-3-A. The neighborhood is made up predominately of row houses.

City records show that the property in this application is actually two lots, Lot 805 and Lot 48. The numbers provided by the applicant and used in this report are for both lots together. This application must be conditioned on combining the two lots into one lot of record.

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EXHIBIT NO. 28

Project Description

The applicant proposes to build a one story addition onto the rear of the existing house to provide a second unit. The second unit will be behind the first and accessed from the rear.

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The two will share laundry facilities. The addition will make the total lot occupancy approximately 49%.



Figure 1: Site Area

Zoning Requirements

Per discussions with the Office of the Zoning Administrator and the Office of the Attorney General, the two units in a flat may not be separated vertically in a way that could allow for future illegal subdivision of the units. Units separated vertically constitute two principal structures on a lot and must receive a special exception from the Board under section 410. The proposed building appears to meet all other requirements of the R-4 district.

Section	Item	Required/Allowed	Existing	Requested	Variance
400.1	Height	3 stories	3 stories	3 stories	N/A
401.3	Lot Area	1800 sf	3182 sf	3182 sf	N/A
403.2	Lot Occupancy	60%	30%	49%	N/A
404.1	Rear Yard	20'	61.5'	32.5'	N/A
405.9	Side Yard	0'	0'	0'	N/A

Analysis

The provisions of §410 allow multiple buildings in the R-4 and R-5 districts to be built as one building with a special exception from the Board. In addition to the standards of Section 3104, the special exception in the R-4 is subject to the standards of 410.12, 410.4, and 410.5. The other subsections of 410 are not applicable to R-4 development.

410.4 No rear or service entrance shall abut a street, front yard, or front court unless below the main floor.

The new unit will be to the rear of the main house and will be accessed from the rear. This entrance does not abut a street or front yard.

410.5 No exterior stairway shall be constructed above the level of the joists of the main floor unless located entirely within the building area.

The addition is only one story so there will be no exterior stairway.

410.12 The erection of the group of buildings shall not affect adversely the present character or future development of the neighborhood.

The addition will be to the rear of the building and not visible from the street. The addition does not propose any relief from the FAR, lot occupancy, height, or other standards of the R-4 district. Most importantly, the proposal is for a two unit building which is allowed as a matter-of-right in the R-4 district.

In addition to the standards of Section 410, the application is in keeping with the standards of Section 3104.1. The special exception is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps because it will allow two units on a lot consistent with the intent of the R-4 district. Moreover, it does not appear that the addition will have adverse effects on the neighboring properties in terms of light, air, and privacy. OP feels that the application meets the standards for approval as a special exception.

Community Comments

OP has been in contact with the ANC and has received letters and a petition in opposition to the request. On October 25, 2005 the applicant changed the application from a use variance for an apartment building to a special exception for a flat constituting two primary structures. OP has been unable to reach the ANC to discuss the change and will continue to try to do so prior to the public hearing.

Recommendation

The Office of Planning concludes that the applicant has met the burden of proof, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3104 of the Zoning Regulations, for the granting of the requested special exception as amended. The request can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose, and integrity of the Zoning Regulations. The Office of Planning **recommends approval** of the special exception under Section 410 at 821 Randolph Street N.W.