GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 1, 2005

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Ellen McCarthy, Director

SUBJECT: Board of Zoning Adjustment Case No. 17390
1426 H Street N.W.

Summary

The applicant is seeking to convert an existing office building to residential. The change will involve a special exception from the roof structure requirements of Section 411 including more than one roof structure and structures of unequal height. The applicants also request relief from the roof structure setback requirements of Section 770.6. The Office of Planning **recommends approval** of the requested relief subject to approval by Historic Preservation (HP) staff or **postponement of the application** until it is approved by HP staff.

Site and Area Description

The subject property is located in the vicinity of the White House at the corner of 15th and H Streets N.W., Square 222, Lot 22. The building on the lot is the historic Woodward Building built in 1911 as an office building. The building is eleven stories, covers nearly 100% of the lot, and reaches a height of 128 feet. It is a contributing building in the Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District. The building and surrounding properties on all sides are zoned C-4. This area consists mainly of high-density office buildings. The White House is located one block southwest of the site.

Project Description

The applicant proposes to convert the existing building to residential use. The conversion will not involve additions or change the exterior of the building with the exception of the roof. Additional roof structures will be required to house the required mechanics and to provide a second means of stairway access. The project is currently under review by Historic Preservation Staff and may change in design.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17390
EXHIBIT NO. 26

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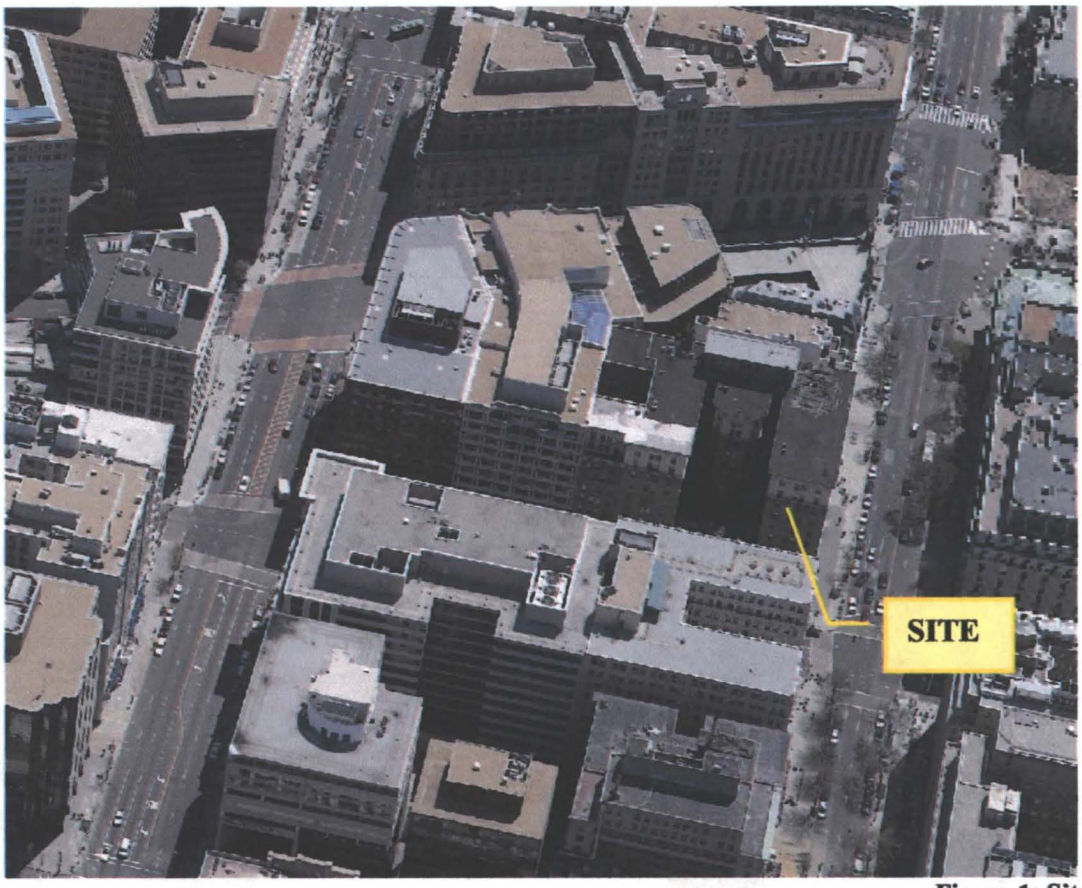


Figure 1: Site Area

Zoning Requirements

The applicant is not proposing any additions to the building with the exception of roof structures. The existing building meets the standards of the C-4 zoning district with the exception of the open court requirements.

Section	Item	Required/Allowed	Existing	Requested	Variance
770.1	Height	130'	128'	128'	N/A
771.2	FAR	10	8.2	8.2	N/A
772.1	Lot Occupancy	100%	99%	99%	N/A
774	Rear Yard	0'	0'	0'	N/A
776	Open Court	33.3	30.44	30.44	N/A

Analysis

The provisions of §411 allow special exception relief from the requirements of Sections 411.3 through 411.6 provided that the intent and purpose of the regulations shall not be materially impaired and the light and air of adjacent buildings shall not be affected adversely.

411.3 All penthouses and mechanical equipment shall be placed in one enclosure and shall harmonize with the main structure in architectural character, material, and color.

The proposal calls for an addition to the existing penthouse and a separate structure for a second stairwell access from the roof. The proposed second structure for stairwell access continues an existing stairwell. Using the existing stairwells for a second roof access do not allow for a single penthouse structure.

411.5 Enclosing walls from roof level shall be of equal height, and shall rise vertically to a roof.

The existing roof structure is greater than the 18'6" allowed under the current regulations. The addition would conform to the required height and therefore make the structure have walls with unequal height. This situation would require relief from one or the other and it is the position of OP that the addition should meet the height requirement.

The project also requires relief from the roof structure setback requirements of §770.6(b). The requirement is that any roof structure be setback from exterior walls a distance at least equal to its height above the roof. The proposed structure will be 18'6' in height but will have no setback from the rear of the building.

The main roof structure addition is proposed along the rear of the property where it will be largely hidden from view by the buildings to the south. The buildings on the south side are of similar height and will not be affected by shadows from the subject building. Neither the setback nor the other relief requested will have any impacts on the neighboring properties in terms of light or air. The application should have no detrimental effects on either the surrounding properties or the zoning regulations. For these reasons, OP finds that the applicants have met the special exception tests.

Historic Preservation

The project is currently under review by Historic Preservation (HP) staff. Staff has requested redesign of the roof structure by the applicant. Unless revised drawings are presented at the hearing, OP recommends that the Board postpone decision on the requested relief until the final design is approved by HP. This will ensure that all necessary relief has been applied for and received as well as protecting the applicant from having to return when the BZA approved plans do not match the building permit plans.

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 exceptions. 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 requested relief under Section 411 at 1426 H Street N.W. or **postponement** until such time as HP issues have been addressed.