


**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



**d. Planning and Sustainability Division**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

**FROM:** Anna Chamberlin  
Project Review Manager 

**DATE:** February 22, 2018

**SUBJECT:** **BZA Case No. 19693** – 128 17<sup>th</sup> Street NE

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**APPLICATION**

128 17th Street LLC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9, requests a special exception under Subtitle E § 205.5 from the rear addition requirements of Subtitle E § 205.4 to construct a rear addition to an existing one-family dwelling and convert it into a flat in the RF-1 Zone. The applicant currently provides one (1) vehicle parking space to the rear of the property off of a shared private alley spanning the rear of adjacent properties on the block. The Applicant proposes to reorient its existing vehicle parking space to be parallel to the alley to accommodate the proposed addition. The site is located at 128 17<sup>th</sup> Street NE (Square 1083, Lot 56).

**SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW**

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieve an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and outstanding access to goods and services. As a means to achieve this vision, DDOT works through the zoning process to ensure that impacts from new developments are manageable within and take advantage of the District’s multimodal transportation network.

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of the proposed action on the District’s transportation network and, as necessary, propose mitigations that are commensurate with the action. After an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT has no safety or capacity concerns, but notes that there are numerous proposed public space elements that need to be addressed:

- The Applicant proposes a 4-foot projection into public space on Constitution Avenue, which is an extension of the addition rather than a distinct architectural element such as a bay or a colonnade;

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- The Applicant proposes porch steps off of the proposed addition that exceed the permissible projection allowance of five (5) feet;
- The Applicant proposes an areaway that complies with projection regulations. However, there is an existing separate areaway serving the building and access could be provided internally to reduce impacts to public space;
- As depicted on its plans, the Applicant's proposed vehicle space encroaches into public space on Constitution Avenue NE. As vehicles are not permitted to encroach into public space, the proposed vehicle parking space is not acceptable per DDOT standards;
- Portions of the sites existing fence do not comply with the District's public space standards. The Applicant has agreed to demolish all non-compliant fencing. For all new proposed and replacement fencing, the Applicant has agreed to select a design that is no less than 50 percent open and no more than 42 inches high;
- The Applicant has agreed to bring the gate of its existing fence on Constitution Avenue behind the top of the existing steps, which will allow the gate to swing inward rather than outward into the sidewalk;
- The Applicant proposes to add a permeable paver hardscape in public space west of the steps and existing areaway, which is not permissible per DCMR Chapter 24 § 104.1; and
- The streetscape adjacent to the site on 17th Street NE and Constitution Avenue NE appears to have space available for new street trees.

### **CONTINUED COORDINATION**

The Applicant has acknowledged that it became aware of the District's public space regulations subsequent to its BZA application. DDOT looks forward to further coordination with the Applicant to bring the aforementioned public space elements into compliance.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed action will have no adverse impacts on the travel conditions of the District's transportation network. Despite the identified public space issues, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested special exception on the condition that the Applicant eliminate the building addition at its property line rather than project four (4) feet into the public space fronting Constitution Avenue NE.

### **TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS**

#### Vehicle Parking

The Applicant submitted a zoning analysis on December 19, 2017 which indicates that the Applicant is required to provide one (1) vehicle parking space, however, it is DDOT's understanding that the Applicant now believes it is not required to provide vehicle parking. The Applicant's plans propose to reorient the site's existing vehicle space parallel to a shared private alley to accommodate the proposed addition. The shared private alley spans the rear of several separate lots, who all share access from a single curb cut on Constitution Avenue NE. As shown on the plan, the Applicant proposes a vehicle parking space with dimensions below DDOT's standard and compact requirements.

DDOT defers to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) regarding the Applicant's parking requirement. In the event vehicle parking is required, DDOT cannot accept the current proposal as it encroaches into public space and recommends that the Applicant seek relief from its requirement. DDOT has discussed this option with the Applicant.

### Public Space

DDOT's lack of objection to the requested special exception should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. Any elements of the project proposed in public space require the Applicant to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process. DDOT notes that there are numerous public space elements at this site which will need to be formally considered and approved through the DDOT public space permitting system.

The proposed addition projects four (4) feet into public space on Constitution Avenue. Projections into public space are permitted when they visually enhance the pedestrian realm and are typically architectural features such as bays or colonnades. The portion of the proposed addition that extends into public space cannot be visually differentiated from the rest of the proposed addition and does not improve the pedestrian scale of Constitution Avenue's streetscape.

The Applicant proposes two (2) additional projections on Constitution Avenue extending from the addition. When accounting for the addition's 4-foot projection onto Constitution Avenue, the proposed porch steps exceed the projection limit of five (5) feet. The proposed areaway projects approximately 6.33 feet into public space, which is permissible. However, the site already contains one existing areaway. DDOT supports limiting the impacts to public space and would prefer that internal access to the addition be provided to eliminate the need for the second areaway.

Beyond the proposed projections, the Applicant proposes to add a permeable paver hardscape within public space, which warrants further discussion. The Applicant has also suggested that it will bring its proposed and existing fencing into compliance with the District's public space standards.

DDOT looks forward to continuing dialogue with the Applicant to improve the design during the public space permitting process. The Applicant may refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the DCMR and DDOT's recently released 2017 Design and Engineering Manual (DEM) for specific controls of public space. A summary can also be found in DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual.

AC:pr

