



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Matt Jesick, Case Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director for Development Review

DATE: March 30, 2018

SUBJECT: BZA #19705 – 2114 14th Street, NW – Martha’s Table Site
OP Supplemental Memorandum

I. BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATION

The Board held a hearing on this case on March 7, 2018. At that time, the Office of Planning (OP) recommended approval of two areas of relief (total height including penthouse and lot occupancy) and denial of one area (45° setback from residential zones). Please refer to Exhibit 43 for OP’s initial report.

After the initial hearing, OP met with the applicant to further discuss the 45° setback special exception, and how the design could be modified to more closely meet the intent of the regulation (K § 803.3(b)). In response, the applicant has redesigned the northern and southern wings of the building to step down as they approach the residential zone to the west. And while the building would still require some relief from the setback provision, the design would more effectively achieve the goal of the regulation to provide a visual step down to adjacent residential development.

OP, therefore, can now recommend **approval** of the following requested special exception:

- K § 803.3(b) – 45° Setback From Residential Zones (45° setback required above 50’ in height at the west building wall; some building penetration into the setback volume proposed).

II. ANALYSIS

813 SPECIAL EXCEPTION (ARTS)

813.1 The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant exceptions pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9 from the requirements or limits of this chapter, other than Subtitle K § 811.9, subject also to the following criteria:

- (a) The uses, buildings, or features at the size, intensity, and locations proposed, will substantially advance the purposes of the ARTS zones and will not adversely affect neighboring property or be detrimental to the health, safety, convenience, or general welfare of persons living, working, or visiting in the area;*

The application seeks relief in order to expand some building mass into the required stepdown along the western alley. OP finds that the revised design seen in Exhibit 83A would fulfill the purpose of the ARTS zones to “Strengthen the design character and identity of the area by means of physical design standards” (K § 800.1(g)). One of the primary physical design standards of the ARTS zones is a building stepdown when an ARTS zone abuts a residential zone, as is the case for this site. The revised design, compared to the original design, provides a strong step down in building height from the roof to floors seven, six and five. The form of the building generally follows the 45° line and provides a visual transition to the adjacent residential zone. Please refer to Sheets 58-66 of Exhibit 83A. Furthermore, the revised design would have less impact on light than the previous design. See the shadow study beginning on Sheet 86.

- (b) *The architectural design of the project will enhance the urban design features of the immediate vicinity in which it is located; provided, if a historic district or historic landmark is involved, the Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the Historic Preservation Office for review and report; and*

OP supports the revised design, which would more strongly support the urban design features of the vicinity by creating a meaningful transition from the ARTS zone down to the lower scale residential zone to the west.

The applicant has consulted with Historic Preservation Office staff who have generally supported the preservation direction proposed by the applicant for buildings along 14th Street. The project would still need full review by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), which has not yet heard the case or granted conceptual approval. HP staff and the HPRB will evaluate the revised design’s conformance with preservation standards.

- (c) *Vehicular access and egress are located and designed so as to minimize conflict with principal pedestrian ways, to function efficiently, and to create no dangerous or otherwise objectionable traffic conditions.*

Generally the vehicular access has been designed to minimize conflict with pedestrians and utilize the alley. The ramp to the parking garage, however, which had initially been shown as leading down from the alley, is now shown accessing W Street. OP does not support this change as it would unnecessarily disrupt the pedestrian and bicycling environment on W Street. However, OP defers to DDOT and Public Space review for a final evaluation of the applicant’s vehicular access design.

813.2 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment may impose requirements pertaining to design, appearance, signs, size, landscaping, and other such requirements as it deems necessary to protect neighboring property and to achieve the purposes of the zone districts.*

Overall OP supports the project and has no particular recommendations for design conditions. The design will also be evaluated by HPRB and HP staff.

III. ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 – Zoning Map

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