

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, AICP 
Associate Director

DATE: September 6, 2024

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 21161 – 465 Mellon Street SE

APPLICATION

Equilibrium 465 Mellon, LLC, pursuant to Title 11 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, requests a Use Variance to the non-conforming use requirements of Subtitle C § 204.1 to construct two (2) additional residential units to an existing 10-unit apartment house. The site is in the R-3 Zone at 465 Mellon Street SE (Square 5993, Lot 34) and is served by a 16-foot public alley.

RECOMMENDATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and has determined that the proposed action may lead to a minor increase in vehicle, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips on the localized transportation network. In addition, the project may result in increased passenger loading activity and slightly reduced availability of on-street parking within the immediate area. Despite these minor impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application with the following condition:

- The Applicant demonstrates that they are meeting the requirement of four (4) long-term bicycle parking spaces.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, price, and supply of parking spaces. However, in urban areas, other factors contribute to the demand for parking, such as the availability of high-quality transit, frequency of transit service, proximity to transit, connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the vicinity of the development, demographic composition, and other characteristics.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia

The Applicant is required by Zoning to provide six (6) vehicle parking spaces. Per the Applicant's Architectural Plans, the Applicant is providing three (3) additional off-street parking spaces accessed from the public alley. There are three existing spaces on the property.

Residential Permit Parking (RPP) Pass Eligibility

The site is located on the 400-block of Mellon Street SE, which is not currently in the DDOT and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Residential Permit Parking (RPP) [database](#). As such, residents on site are not eligible to obtain Zone 8 parking permits from the DMV.

Bicycle Parking

The project is required by Zoning to provide four (4) long- and zero short-term bicycle parking spaces. The materials provided do not show the location of the two required long-term bicycle parking spaces. The long-term spaces should be provided in a storage room in a publicly accessible space. Zoning requires at least 50% of spaces are located horizontally on the floor.

Loading

DDOT's practice is to accommodate loading operations safely and efficiently, while prioritizing pedestrian and bicycle safety and limiting negative impacts to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT requires that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. Access to this building for loading and unloading, delivery and trash pick-up is an important consideration, and DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT's standards for loading.

Per Title 11 of the *DCMR*, Subtitle C § 901.1, buildings with fewer than 50 units are not required to provide a loading berth. As such, future residents should use the rear of the property for move-in/move-outs or obtain "emergency no parking" signs from DDOT to reserve an on-street parking space. Since the site has more than three (3) units, the Applicant must contract a private trash collection service. Trash must be stored entirely on private property, out of the view of the sidewalk, and collected at the rear of the property.

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

DDOT's lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm. All elements of the project proposed within District-owned right-of-way or the building restriction area require the Applicant to pursue a public space construction permit. It is noted that the site has a 15-foot Building Restriction Line (BRL) along the Mellon Street, Wilson Circle, and 5th Street frontages. The area between the property line and BRL is the building restriction area, which is regulated like DDOT public space and should remain "park-like" with landscaping.

DDOT expects the adjacent public realm to meet all District standards. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the *DCMR*, the most recent version of DDOT's [Design and Engineering Manual](#), and the [Public Realm Design Manual](#) for public space regulations and design guidance. A permit application can be filed through the DDOT [Transportation Online Permitting System](#) (TOPS) website.

HERITAGE AND SPECIAL TREES

According to the District's [Tree Size Estimator map](#), the property has three (3) Special Trees. DDOT expects that the Applicant coordinate with the Ward 8 Arborist regarding the preservation and protection of existing Special Trees, as well as the planting of new street trees.

Special Trees are between 44 inches and 99.99 inches in circumference. Special Trees may be removed with a permit. However, if a Special Tree is designated to remain by UFD, a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) will be required.

AC:je