Goulston & Storrs

NOVEMBER 18, 2026

BZA Case No. 21517

9 Hillyer Court, NW

BZA Public Hearing

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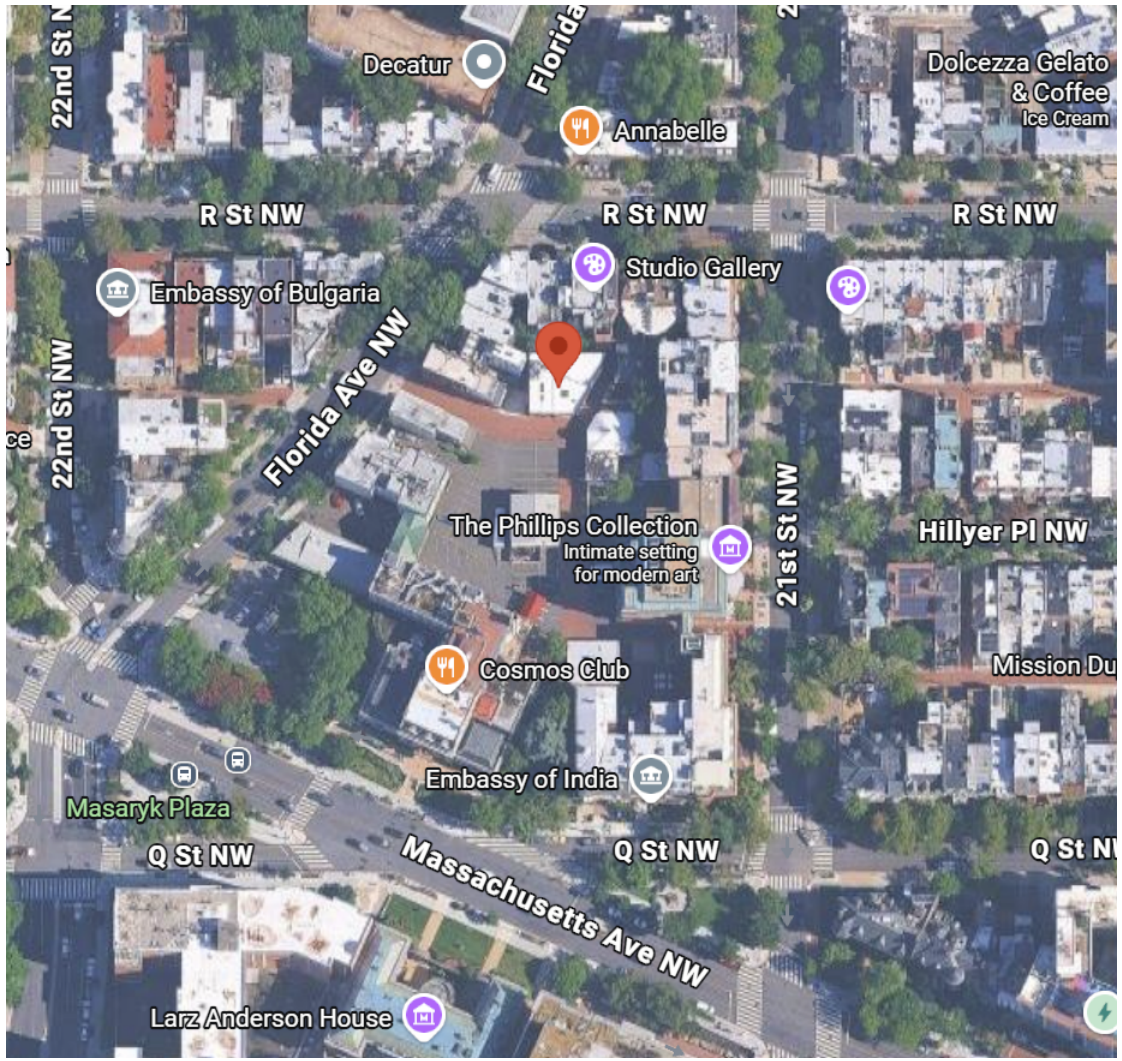
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 21517
EXHIBIT NO. 25



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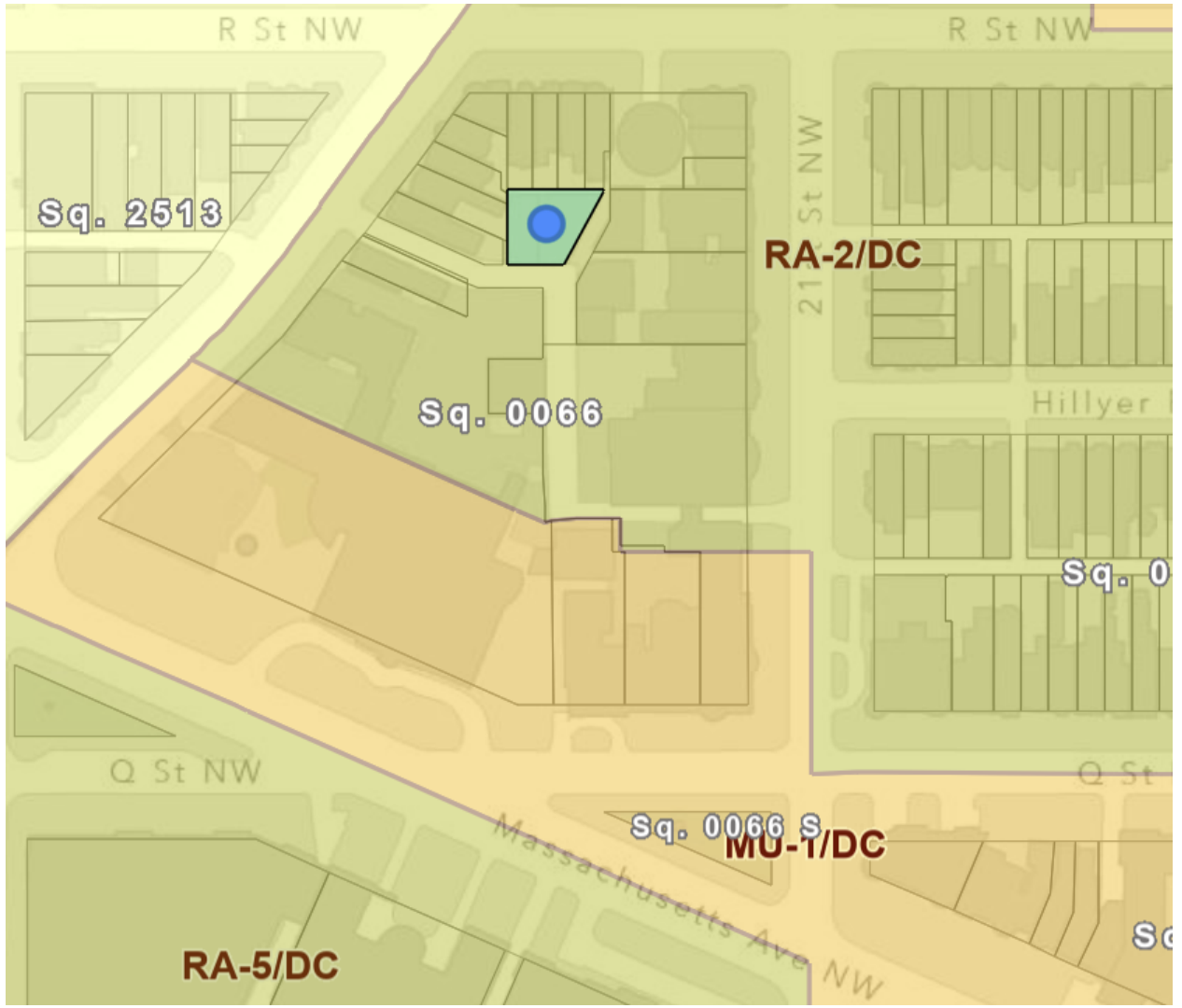

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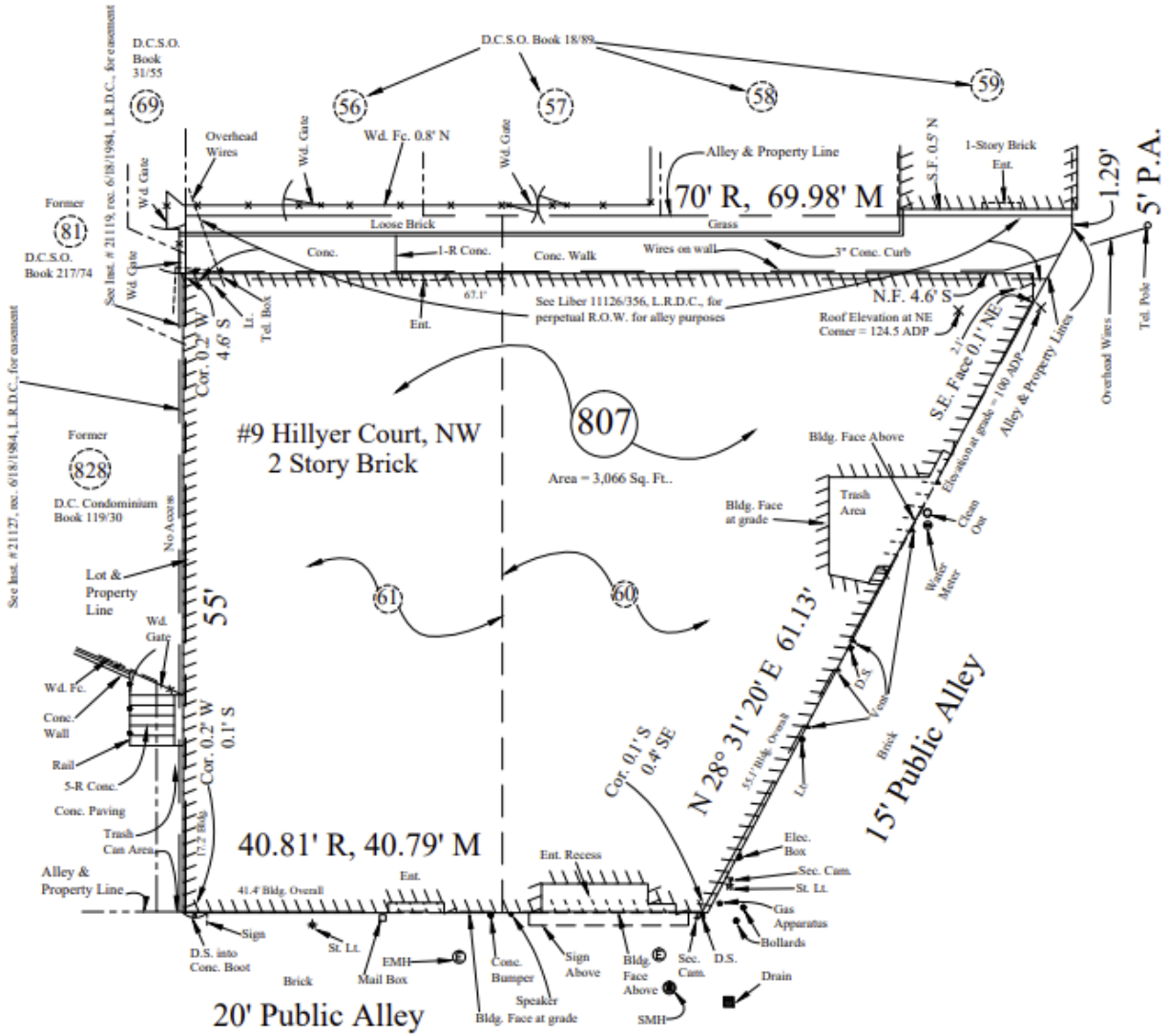

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Background

- The alley lot is improved with a two-story brick building constructed in 1892. It was initially designed for use as a large private stable.
- Contributing building in the Dupont Circle Historic District.
- The Cosmos Club is under contract to acquire the building from IA&A, a non-profit arts service organization that has owned the building since 2004.
- The Cosmos Club plans to expand its operations in the space, including potentially a café and meeting space as well as ancillary office use.



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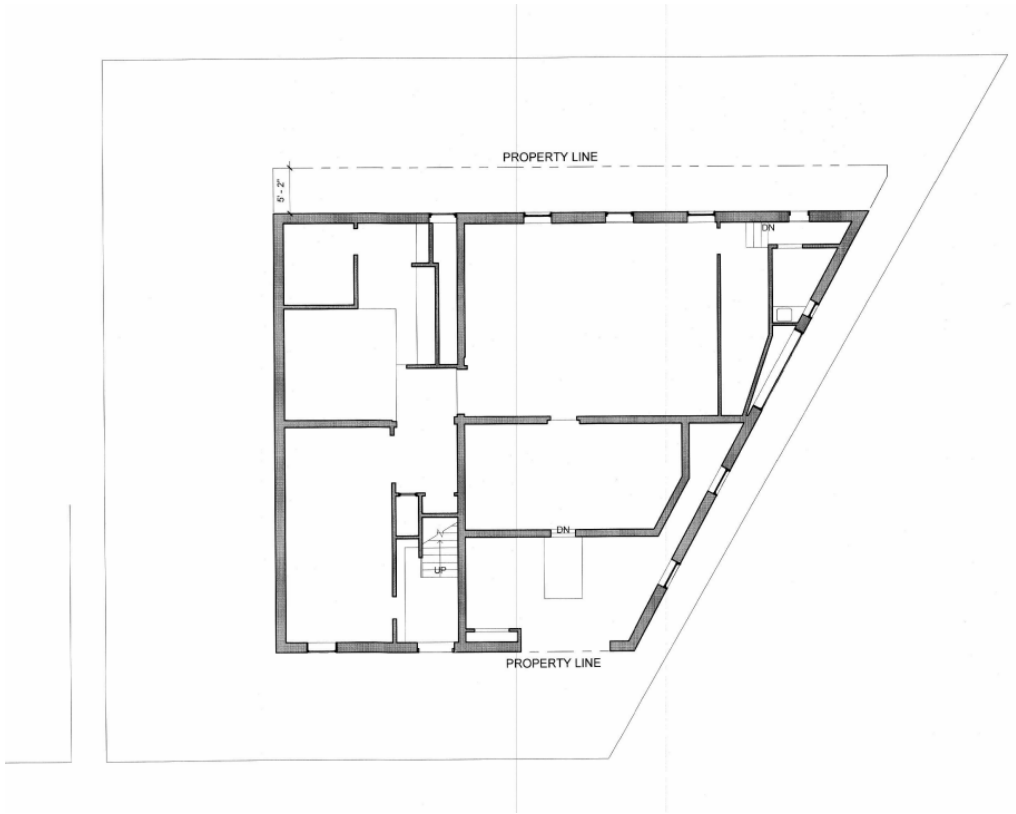
Constraints

- Building no longer fits IA&A's program
- Lack of exposure to surrounding streets ill-suited for museum/gallery use
- Lack of pedestrian traffic
- Lost relocation opportunities due to length of marketing



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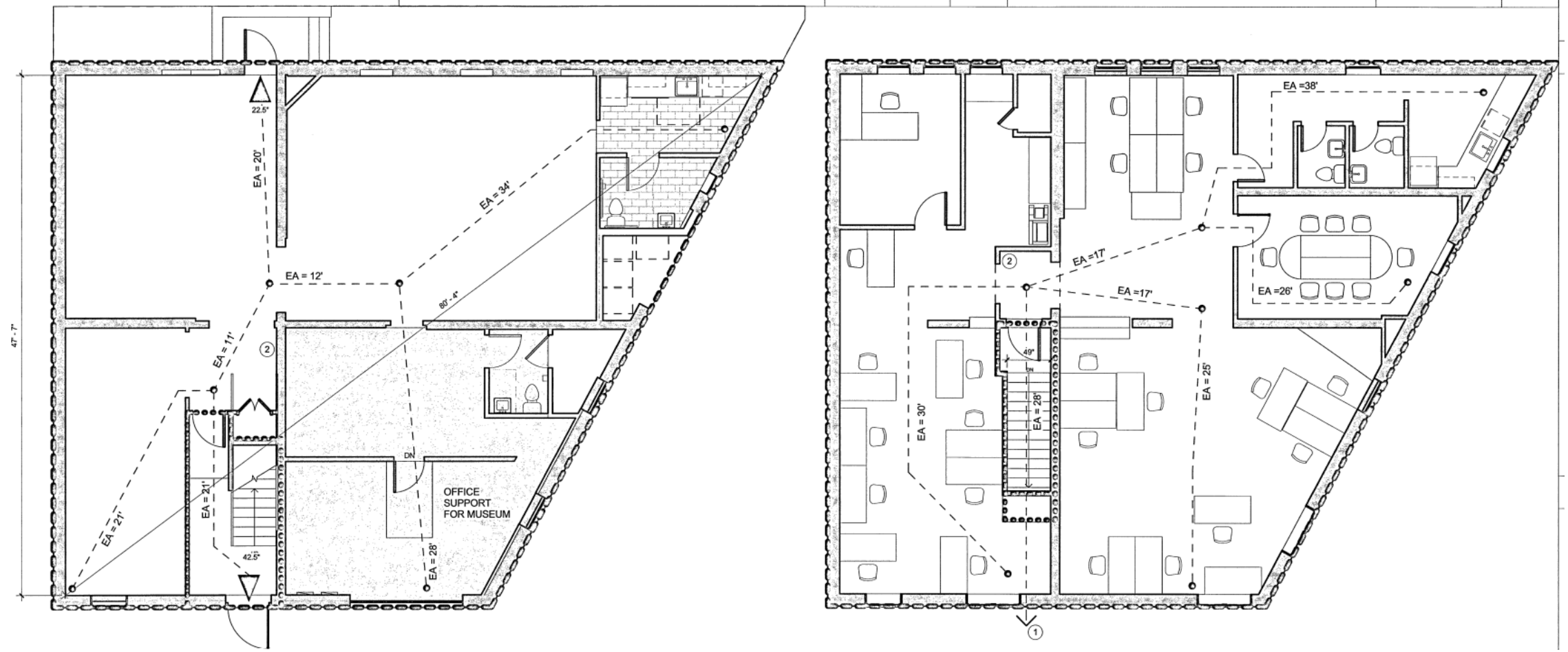
ASSEMBLY - EXISTING STAIR ENCLOSURE	3" = 1'-0"	4	ASSEMBLY - EXISTING FLOOR	3" = 1'-0"	3



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Use Variance

1. The property is affected by an exceptional or extraordinary situation or condition
   - *Only alley lot in the square, unique trapezoidal shape, unusually broad floorplate, position within an active alley network, historic nature of the building, long history of non-residential use, proximity to the existing Cosmos Club allows for efficient co-location of activities.*
2. The strict application of the Zoning Regulations will result in an undue hardship to the Applicant
   - *The Property cannot reasonably be used for matter-of-right alley lot uses. The building is historic and cannot be razed. The broad floorplate and minimal windows makes conversion to residential use infeasible. Residential use would also pose operational and safety concerns given the building's position at the center of an active alley with surface parking.*
3. The granting of the variance will not cause substantial detriment to the public good or substantially impair the intent, purpose, or integrity of the zone plan
   - *The proposed use is a mere extension of the existing Cosmos Club use. Remainder of block includes similar institutional uses. The Cosmos Club, an established steward of historic resources, will maintain and preserve the historic building.*

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Undue Hardship

- Very Restrictive Use
  - Only a one- or two-dwelling residence
  - At ~5,400 sf, this would make for a very large single-family dwelling or two very large flats
- Expensive to Convert
  - Building designed for non-residential use and has been used as such for over a century
  - No interior residential rooms, fixtures or infrastructure
- Not marketable
  - Limited windows; no yards or open spaces
  - No parking and abuts active alley on two sides

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THANK YOU!

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