


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



**d.** Policy, Planning, and Sustainability Administration

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**FROM:** Samuel Zimbabwe  
Associate Director 

**DATE:** May 3, 2016

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case No.19254 – 1612-1616 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW

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**APPLICATION**

1612 Seventh Street NW LP (the “Applicant”), requests variances from lot occupancy requirements under § 772.1, and the rear yard requirements under § 774.1, and special exceptions from the off-street parking requirements under § 2101.1, and the historic structure parking requirements under § 2120.6, to allow the rehabilitation of an addition to a contributing historic structure for conversion of a mixed-use building with eight residential units and 10,221 square feet of retail space in the C-2-A District at premises 1612-1616 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW (Square 420, Lot 38). The Applicant is requesting relief from 14 zoning required parking spaces.

**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 one 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 finds:

- The Applicant is required to provide 28 parking spaces by zoning (four parking spaces for residential and 24 parking spaces for retail);
- The property is considered a historic resource and has a parking credit of 12 parking spaces;
- The Applicant is providing two parking spaces and seeking relief from 14 spaces;
- The site is located in a Residential Parking Permit (RPP) eligible zone; and
- The Applicant did not submit a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan.

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia

DDOT has no objection to requested variances and special exceptions with the following conditions:

- Designate four long-term bicycle parking spaces for use by retail employees;
- Provide a shower and changing facility with lockers that can be accessed by all retail tenants; and
- Provide six short-term bicycle parking spaces located within public space.

### **Continued Coordination**

The Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT outside of the Board of Zoning Adjustment process on the following matters:

- Public space, including proposed short-term bicycle parking spaces, curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks and lead walks, and other features within the public rights of way, are expected to be designed and built or maintained to DDOT standards.

## **TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS**

### Site Design

Site design, which includes site access, loading, and public realm design, plays a critical role in determining a proposed action's impact on the District's infrastructure. While transportation impacts can change over time, the site design will remain constant throughout the lifespan of the proposed development, making site design a critical aspect of DDOT's development review process. Accordingly, new developments must provide a safe and welcoming pedestrian experience, enhance the public realm, and serve as positive additions to the community.

### Site Access

The site is bounded by 7<sup>th</sup> street NW to the east, a public alley to the west, and commercial properties to the north and south. Primary pedestrian access is from 7<sup>th</sup> Street and secondary pedestrian access is proposed from the public alley. Access to the two proposed parking spaces is from the public alley.

### Off-Street Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, and price/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, and proximity to transit.

The Applicant is required to provide 28 parking spaces by zoning (four parking spaces for residential and 24 parking spaces for retail). The property is considered a historic resource and has a parking credit of 12 parking spaces; resulting in 14 parking spaces that the Applicant is seeking relief from.

Typically, DDOT requires Applicants seeking parking relief of five or more spaces to provide a parking occupancy study to determine if the streets surrounding the site have the capacity to meet parking demands generated by the requested relief; however, a cursory review of the streets surrounding the site shows that the area has low capacity to meet parking demand generated by requested relief.

In lieu of requiring a parking occupancy study, DDOT requested that the Applicant provide a robust TDM plan that focuses on retail employees, due to the retail component of this development triggering the largest portion of required parking spaces (24 parking spaces). Though TDM measures have been discussed with DDOT, the Applicant has not submitted a TDM plan for record. Of note, the site is located in a Residential Parking Permit (RPP) eligible zone.

### Transit Service

The District and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have partnered to provide extensive public transit service in the District of Columbia. DDOT's vision is to leverage this investment to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes so that economic development opportunities increase with minimal infrastructure investment.

The site is located approximately 0.1-mile, approximately a three-minute walk, from the Shaw-Howard Metro Station that serves the Green and Yellow lines.

In addition, the site is served by the 70s high-frequency bus route that connects Silver Spring, MD and Chinatown, Washington, DC via Georgia Avenue/ 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The closest bus stop is located approximately 187 feet, roughly a one-minute walk, at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Rhode Island Avenue. Additional bus routes include:

- 79 – Georgia Avenue Limited Line
- G8 – Rhode Island Avenue Line

### Bicycle Facilities

The District is committed to enhancing bicycle access by ensuring consistent investment in bicycle infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including bicycling trips.

Nine long-term bicycle parking spaces are proposed within the property; however, the Applicant has not designated which are for residential or retail. Two long-term bicycle parking spaces are required for residential by zoning. To serve bicycling needs for retail, DDOT requires that the Applicant provide at least four long-term bicycle spaces and a shower and changing facility with lockers designated for all retail employees and accessible to each retail tenant. In addition, DDOT requires the Applicant to provide six short-term bicycle parking spaces located within public space. The Applicant will be required to pursue approval of short-term bicycle parking in public space through DDOT's permitting process.

The closest Capital Bikeshare Station, with 14 docks, is located approximately 427 feet from the site at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and R Street.

### Transportation Demand Management

DDOT requires the Applicant to produce a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan to help mitigate an action's transportation impacts. TDM is a set of strategies, programs, services, and physical elements that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length in order to help achieve highly efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities. In the District, this typically means implementing infrastructure or programs to maximize the use of mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods.

As discussed, the Applicant has not submitted a TDM plan for record. Since the retail component of this development generates the highest amount of required parking spaces, DDOT requires the following measures to be included in the Applicant's TDM plan:

- Designate four long-term bicycle parking spaces for use by retail employees;
- Provide a shower and changing facility with lockers that can be accessed by all retail tenant employees; and
- Provide six short-term bicycle parking spaces located within public space.

#### Streetscape and the Public Realm

In line with District policy and practice, any substantial new building development or renovation is expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines. This includes curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site. As part of this process, the Applicant must work closely with DDOT to ensure that the design of the public realm meets current standards and will substantially upgrade the appearance and functionality of the streetscape for public users needing to access the property or circulating around it. The Applicant may refer to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space.

This review pertains only to zoning issues and does not consider potential impacts to District owned public space. DDOT's lack of objection to these zoning variances should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. The proposed short-term bicycle parking spaces located within public space is required to be approved through DDOT's permitting process. The Applicant may refer to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space. A summary can be found in the Public Realm Design Manual.

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