

Government of the District of Columbia

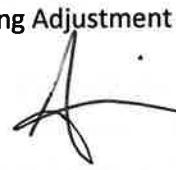
Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Anna Chamberlin
Neighborhood Planning Manager 

DATE: March 22, 2019

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 19960 – 1400 Montana Avenue NE

APPLICATION

MCF Montana LLC MCFI LP (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9, requests special exceptions under the zone boundary line requirements of Subtitle A § 207.2, under the new residential development requirements of Subtitle U § 421.1, and under Subtitle C § 714.3 from the surface parking screening requirements of Subtitle C § 714.2, to permit the construction of a new 106-108 unit apartment building. The site is located in the MU-4/RA-1 Zones at 1400 Montana Avenue NE (Square 4023, Lot 0001). The Applicant proposes to raze an existing church and construct a new building containing:

- 106 -108 apartment units;
- 32 vehicle parking spaces in a surface parking lot;
- One (1) loading berth and one (1) delivery space; and
- 36 long-term bicycle parking spaces and six (6) short-term bicycle 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 project is expected to generate fewer than 25 trips per hour in the peak direction thus a full vehicular capacity analysis was not required;
- Vehicle and loading access is proposed from one 24-ft curb cut which meets DDOT standards for a commercial curb cut;
- Pedestrian access is proposed from Montana Avenue NE through a building entrance that does not meet the public space regulations for step and ramp projections:
 - The Applicant was notified at the project scoping meeting that the ramp and step projections were not compliant and would need revised;
 - The new proposed ramp and step projection still exceeds the requirement, 10-ft (DCMR 12-3202.11.3);
 - Exhibit 5 shows ramping and stepping internal to the structure which suggests the portion of the building at the corner of Montana Avenue NE and Saratoga Avenue is artificially being raised thus impacting public space; and
 - The building entrance may impact the design of the building and relief requested to the BZA and will need revised before public space permitting.
- The Applicant is proposing the required amount of vehicle parking in a surface lot;
- The Applicant is requesting a modification of the screening requirements for a surface parking lot. DDOT has no objection to a 24-ft gap in the screening as it is the width of the proposed curb cut, which complies with public space regulations for a commercial curb cut;
- Per Subtitle C § 901, the Applicant is providing the required one (1) loading berth and one (1) delivery space accessed via a proposed curb cut on Saratoga Avenue NE;
- All loading activities and trash pick-up will occur on private property with head-in and head-out maneuvers;
- Currently, Saratoga Avenue is restricted from truck traffic and the Applicant will need to continue coordination with DDOT to make any signage changes;
- The Applicant is not required to provide a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan but has proposed some modest measures with this application;
- DDOT supports the proposed new crosswalk across Evarts Street NE where it connects to Saratoga Avenue NE and will work with the Applicant on the specific design during public space permitting; and
- It looks like there is a retaining wall around the building at the corner Evarts Street NE and Montana Avenue NE that appears to exceed areaway projections requirements and should not exceed 7-ft from the property line;

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed project will have no adverse impacts on the travel conditions of the District's transportation network. The proposed project may lead to a minor increase in vehicular, transit,

pedestrian, and bicycle trips. In addition, the project has the potential to generate minor impacts to on-street parking conditions in the area. Vehicle parking demand may increase slightly as a result of the project, inducing a higher level of parking utilization in the immediate area.

Despite these minor potential impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested relief with the following conditions:

- The Applicant modifies the building entrance to comply with public space regulations and does not require further BZA relief;
- Implement the Transportation Demand Plan as proposed by the Applicant's transportation memo; and
- Implement the proposed new crosswalk across Evarts Street NE where it connects to Saratoga Avenue NE.

CONTINUED COORDINATION

It is expected that the Applicant will work with DDOT through the permitting process (e.g., public space permitting and EISF) on the following actions:

- Currently, Saratoga Avenue is restricted from truck traffic and the Applicant will need to continue coordination with DDOT to make any signage changes;
- The Applicant may need to provide a crosswalk across Evert Street NE in addition to the one proposed. The Applicant should continue coordination with DDOT to determine if an additional crosswalk is warranted; and
- The Applicant will need to work with DDOT to update the streetscape elements such as curb ramps, sidewalks, and tree boxes to DDOT standard during public space permitting.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access is proposed from Montana Avenue NE through a building entrance that does not meet the public space regulations for step and ramp projections. The building entrance may impact the design of the building and relief requested to the BZA and will need revised before public space permitting. For new construction DDOT prefers at-grade entrances and if that is not possible the Applicant should design an entrance that complies with Public Space regulations. The Applicant was notified at the project scoping meeting that the ramp and step projections were not compliant and would need revised. The new proposed ramp and step projection still exceeds the requirement, 10-ft (DCMR 12-3202.11.3). Exhibit 5 shows ramping and stepping internal to the structure which suggests the portion of the building at the corner of Montana Avenue NE and Saratoga Avenue is artificially being raised thus impacting public space, as shown in Figure 1.

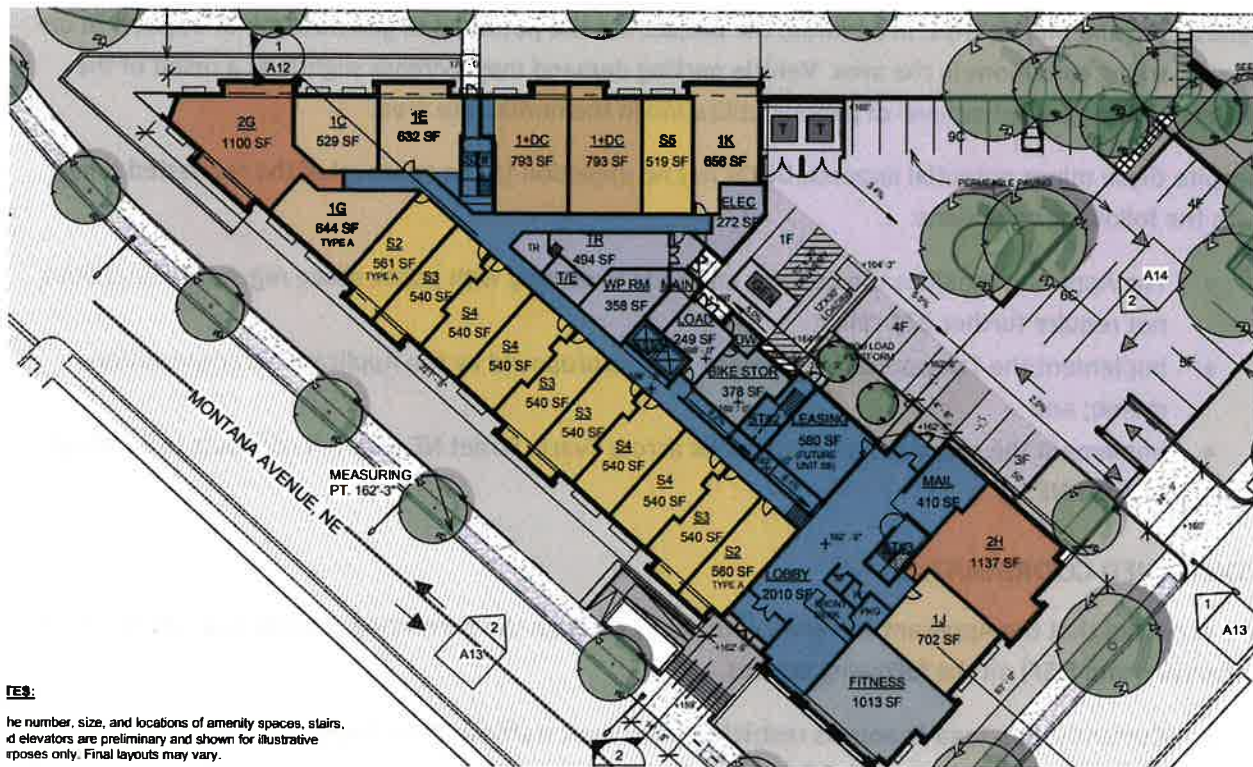


Figure 1. Residential Building Entrance, Source: Exhibit 5 of the BZA Application

Vehicle Parking

On the Self-Certification Form, the Applicant indicates the project is required to provide 34 vehicle parking spaces. The Applicant is proposing to provide 32 surface vehicle parking spaces and one (1) dedicated carshare space which may count as three (3) vehicle parking spaces (DCMR 11-708). Vehicle access to the site is proposed via a 24-ft curb cut on Saratoga Avenue NE.

The Applicant is requesting a modification of the screening requirements for a surface parking lot. Subtitle C § 714 states that gaps are permitted in screening for driveway connection to a street, but those gaps should not exceed 20-ft. The Applicant is proposing a 24-ft curb cut which is permitted for a commercial curb cut. DDOT has no objection to a 24-ft gap in screening.

Loading

Per Subtitle C § 901, the Applicant is providing the required one (1) loading berth and one (1) delivery space accessed via a proposed curb cut on Saratoga Avenue NE. All loading activities and trash pick-up will occur on private property with head-in and head-out maneuvers, consistent with DDOT policy.

Currently Saratoga Avenue is restricted from truck traffic and the Applicant will need to continue coordination with DDOT to make any signage changes.

Bicycle Parking

Subtitle C § 802.1 of the Zoning Regulations requires 36 long-term bicycle parking spaces and six (6) short-term bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant is proposing to meet the requirement by providing 36 spaces in a bike storage room on the first floor and three (3) U-racks near the main entrance on Montana Avenue NE.

Transportation Demand Management

The Applicant is not required to provide a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan but has proposed one with this application. The Applicant proposes a TDM plan which includes the following elements:

- The Applicant will identify a TDM Leader (for planning, construction, and operations) at the building, who will act as a point of contact with DDOT/Zoning Enforcement with annual updates. The TDM Leader will work with residents to distribute and market various transportation alternatives and options;
- The Applicant will provide TDM materials to new residents in the Residential Welcome Package materials; and
- The Applicant will provide a bicycle repair station to be located in the secure long-term bicycle storage room.

PUBLIC SPACE

DDOT's lack of objection to the application should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. If any portion of the project has elements in the public space requiring approval, such as bike racks, ADA ramps, steps, bay windows, areaways, curb cuts, curb ramps, and potential detectable warning signals, the Applicant is required to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process. DDOT notes the following issues with the current public space design:

- Pedestrian access is proposed from Montana Avenue NE through a building entrance that does not meet the public space regulations for step and ramp projections:
 - The Applicant was notified at the project scoping meeting that the ramp and step projections were not compliant and would need revised;
 - The new proposed ramp and step projection still exceeds the requirement, 10-ft (DCMR 12-3202.11.3) and conflicts with the proposed bay window;
 - Exhibit 5 shows ramping and stepping internal to the structure which suggests the portion of the building at the corner of Montana Avenue NE and Saratoga Avenue is artificially being raised thus impacting public space; and
 - The building entrance may impact the design of the building and relief requested to the BZA and will need revised before public space permitting.
- Bay windows and areaways should comply with Section 3202 in DCMR Chapter 12.
- The Applicant is proposing a new crosswalk across Evarts Street NE where it connects to Saratoga Avenue NE which DDOT supports. The Applicant may need to provide an additional crosswalk across Evarts Street NE. The Applicant should continue coordination with DDOT to

determine if an additional crosswalk is warranted. The Applicant will also be expected to update the streetscape elements such as curb ramps, sidewalks, and tree boxes to DDOT standard.

- The Applicant is proposing to close three curb cuts and provide one 24-ft curb cut which meets the requirement for a commercial curb cut.
- Vaults should be located on private property.

The Applicant will need to continue coordination with DDOT during permitting. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A and 24 of the DCMR, DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual, and DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual for public space regulations and guidance.

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