

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Maxine Brown-Roberts, Project Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: July 12, 2018
SUBJECT: BZA Case 20074 - Special Exception review to allow construction of an apartment building at 2604 & 2610 Stanton Road, SE.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

Stanton Road SE LLC (applicant) requests special exception review pursuant to Subtitle U § 421 for the a twenty-two-unit apartment building and from the landscaping requirements of Subtitle C § 715.2 to 715.7 at 2604 & 2610 Stanton Road, SE. The property is zoned RA-1.

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the requested special exceptions pursuant to Subtitle X § 901.2;

- Subtitle U § 421, New Residential Developments (RA-1).

OP recommends **denial** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle C § 715.9:

- Subtitle C § 715.2-715.7, Surface parking lot landscaping requirements.

With regards to the parking lot landscaping relief, the applicant has not made a compelling case for this relief, which, with minimal changes, would appear to be able to be met. While OP is not opposed to the applicant providing more than the required number of parking spaces, this should not be at the expense of other zoning provisions intended to minimize the visual, environmental, and potential stormwater runoff impacts on the neighborhood. Instead, OP feels that the applicant should meet the landscape area and trees and shrub requirements, which would appear to result in one fewer parking spaces (14 spaces instead of 15, where 3 spaces are required).

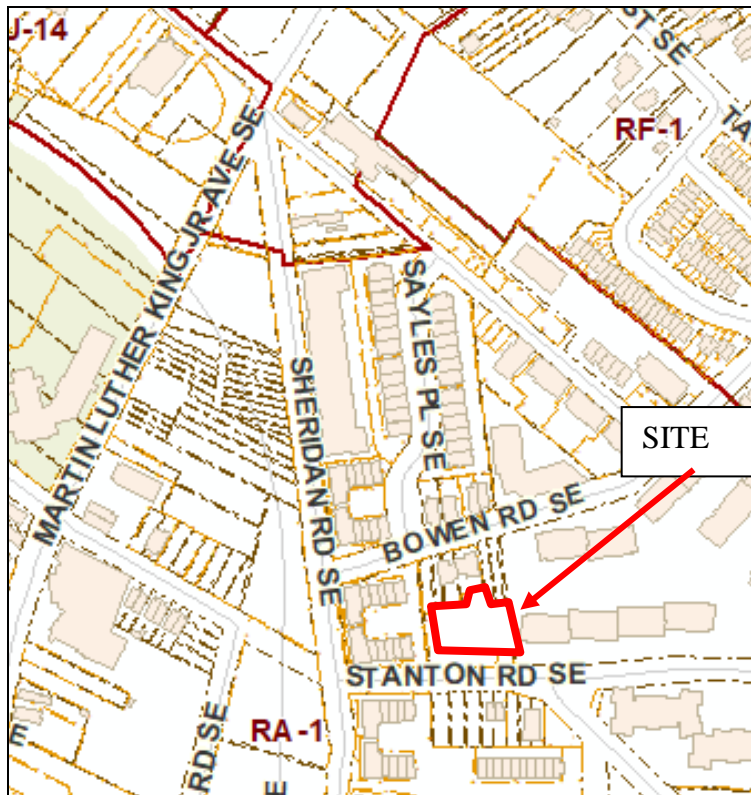
While detailed landscape plans were not provided, the drawings may also indicate that retaining walls, to accommodate the parking lot, may also require relief (special exception relief from C § 1401 pursuant to C § 1402.1). OP requested that the applicant look into this, but the applicant has not made such a request as of the date of this report, so OP has not provided analysis.

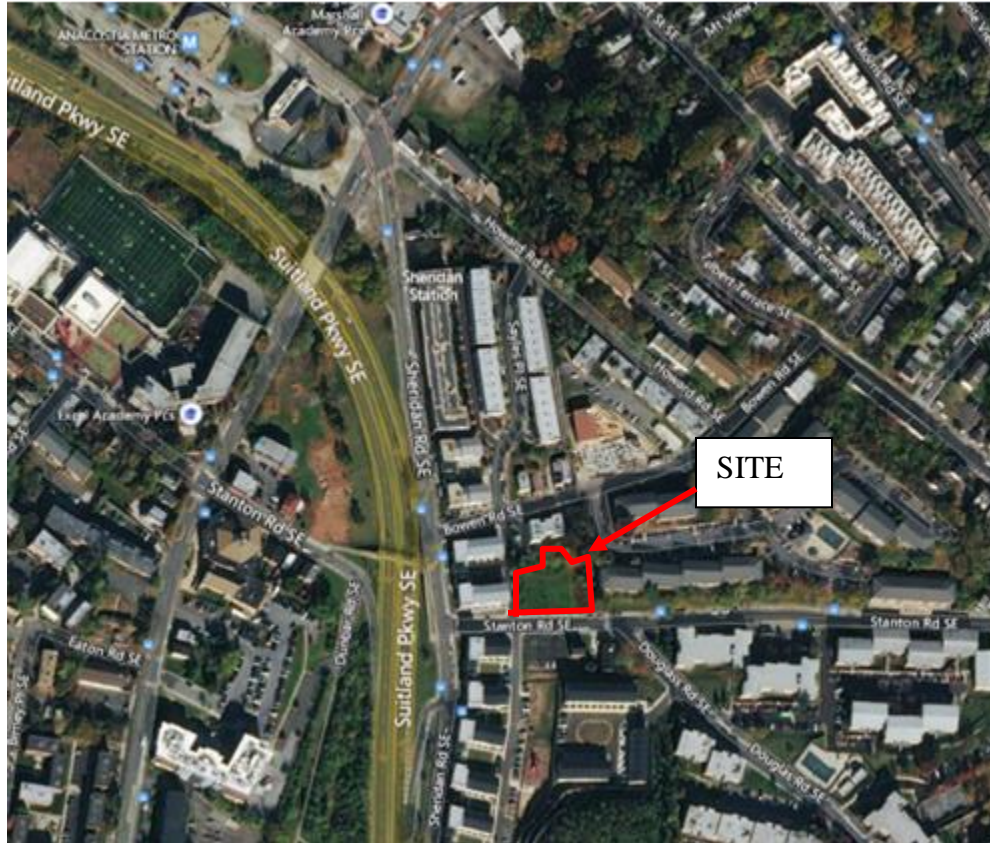
II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	2604 & 2610 Stanton Road, SE
Legal Description	Square 5869, Lots 84
Ward / ANC	8, 8A
Zone	RA-1

Lot Characteristics	An irregularly shaped lot with an area of approximately 20,353 square feet. The property has a rolling topography, raising from the southeast towards the northwest.
Existing Development	The property is undeveloped.
Adjacent Properties	To the north is a 4-story apartment building; to the east, is a vacant property and an apartment complex with 3-story buildings; to the south are the Macedonia Baptist Church and a 2-story duplex; to the west is the 4-story, Sheridan Condominiums. The properties are all within the RA-1 zone.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood is generally a mixture of apartments and single family attached residences in the RA-1 zone. The property is in close proximity to the Anacostia Metrorail Station.

Site Location





III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND RELIEF REQUESTED¹

RA-1 Zone	Regulation	Proposed	Relief
Lot Area (sq. ft.), F § 201.4	As specified by BZA	20,353 sq. ft.	None
Lot Width (ft.), F § 201.4	As specified by BZA	171.47 ft.	None
FAR, F § 302 and C § 1002	0.9+20% IZ = 1.08 max.	1.08	None
Height (ft.), F § 303	40 ft./3 stories max.	40 ft./3 stories	None
Lot Occupancy, F § 304	40% max.	39.1%	None
Rear Yard (ft.), F § 305	20 ft. min.	26.5 ft.	None
Side Yard (ft.), F § 306.3	1 side yard shall be provided unless the building contains 3 or more dwelling units/floor, in which case 2 side yards shall be provided, each with the minimum distance equal to 3"/ft. height but not less than 8 ft.	West side: 10 ft. East Side: 65.13 ft.	None.
GAR F § 307	40%	40%	None

RA-1 Zone	Regulation	Proposed	Relief
Parking, C § 701 and C § 702.1(a)	1 per 3 dwelling units in excess of 4 units; reduced by 50% if within ½ mile of a Metrorail Station = 3 spaces required	15 spaces	None
Surface Parking Lot Landscaping C § 715	10% of parking surface and canopy trees required	Less than 10% No canopy trees	Special Exception
Bike Parking, C § 802.1	Long Term: 1 space/3 units = 8 Short Term: 1 space/20 units = 0	Long Term – 9 Short Term – 4	None
New Residential Development in RA-1 zone, U § 421	Special Exception review	Expansion of structure	Special Exception

¹Information provided by applicant.

IV. PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to construct a new, twenty-two-unit, rental apartment building and consisting of total of 7, two-bedroom units; 7, two-bedroom plus den units; and 8, three-bedroom units. The applicant would be required to provide approximately 2,288 square feet of residential space or two IZ units. The applicant states that two IZ units would be provided. In its filing at Exhibit 30, the applicant indicates that Units 206 and 306 would satisfy the IZ requirement – these are both three-bedroom units fronting the street, so OP supports the applicant’s designation of these as the IZ units.

Although, three parking spaces are required, 15 spaces would be provided. It appears that large retaining walls are required for the larger than required parking area, but detail has not been provided. The building would also have a penthouse and roof deck for the residents only and would meet all setback and height requirements.

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Special Exception for New Residential Development

Special Exception Review pursuant to U § 421, New Residential Developments (RA-1).

421.1 In the RA-1 and RA-6 zones, all new residential developments, except those comprising all one-family detached and semi-detached dwellings, shall be reviewed by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as special exceptions under Subtitle X, in accordance with the standards and requirements in this section.

The property is zoned RA-1 and the applicant is proposing to construct a new, 22-unit residential apartment building.

421.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the relevant District of Columbia agencies for comment and recommendation as to the adequacy of the following:

(a) Existing and planned area schools to accommodate the numbers of students that can be expected to reside in the project; and

The property would be served by the Savoy Elementary School, Kramer Middle School, and Anacostia High School. There are also the Thurgood Marshal Academy, the Excel Academy Public Charter School and the DC Prep Public Charter Schools in the vicinity of the property. The number of students envisioned to be generated from the proposed 22 family sized apartment units should not negatively impact the capacity of these school and should be adequately accommodated in the combination of public and public charter schools in the area. The application was referred to the Office of State Superintendent of Education.

(b) Public streets, recreation, and other services to accommodate the residents that can be expected to reside in the project.

The property fronts on Stanton Road which is in good condition. No new public streets would be necessary to accommodate the new residences.

The property is approximately 0.27 mile southeast the Barry Farm Recreation Center which offers a variety of recreational activities. The application has been referred to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

421.3 The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall refer the application to the Office of Planning for comment and recommendation on the site plan, arrangement of buildings and structures, and provisions of light, air, parking, recreation, landscaping, and grading as they relate to the surrounding neighborhood, and the relationship of the proposed project to public plans and projects.

The proposed building would be 3 stories plus basement and would be nearly rectangular with a modern architectural style articulated with balconies on the façade and large windows to maximize light into the units. The use of brick and siding are similar to those used on other apartment buildings in the vicinity of the property. There would be minimal grade change and the extensive use of retaining walls. The applicant should consider plantings on some of the walls, where appropriate, to minimize the visual appearance of these walls and to allow for additional landscaping on the site.

The proposed building would be separated from the building to the west by the side yard setback on the subject property and a driveway on the adjacent property. Similarly, the building would be set back from the building to the east by the parking lot on the subject property. The building to the north would be separated by a 26 feet setback. Together, these generous setbacks from the adjacent buildings would allow for adequate light, air and privacy to the units as well as to those in the adjacent apartment building.

The property fronts on Stanton Road and access to the parking spaces would be accessed from a curb-cut from the street. The Department of Transportation (DDOT) has requested that the applicant provide a TDM Plan to help minimize the use of cars and help to reduce the effect on pedestrian movements and vehicular traffic. The parking spaces would be partially hidden from view by a gate which is set back from the property line along Stanton Road. Due to the topography of the site, portions of the lot would still be visible from the street. A trash storage area would be located adjacent to the parking spaces in the rear of the lot, in an enclosed area and would not be visible from Stanton Road. Most of the property is grassed, with trees on the northern portion of the

site. Some of the existing trees would be retained and would be supplemented by additional landscaping including trees, shrubbery and grasses.

The property is close to the Anacostia Metro Station, the Sheridan Terrace residential development, the Barry Farm redevelopment and other developments that are occurring along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and should not have a negative impact on those developments. In, fact, the proposal would enhance and increase the supply of housing in the Anacostia Area.

421.4 In addition to other filing requirements, the developer shall submit to the Board of Zoning Adjustment with the application a site plan and set of typical floor plans and elevations, grading plan (existing and final), landscaping plan, and plans for all new rights-of-way and easements.`

The applicant submitted site plans, elevations, floor plans, grading plans, and landscape plan. No new rights-of-way or easements are proposed.

Special Exception for Landscaping Requirements

Subtitle C § 715.1 outlines that landscaping and lighting requirements for parking lots with 10 or more spaces shall conform to the requirements of Subtitle C § 715.2 to § 715.7.

715 LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS FOR SURFACE PARKING LOTS

715.1 Surface parking lots with ten (10) or more parking spaces shall conform to the landscaping, tree canopy cover, and lighting requirements of this section:

715.2 A minimum of ten percent (10%) of the total area devoted to parking, including aisles and driveways shall be covered by landscaped areas planted with trees and shrubs.

The proposed surface parking lot provides five times the zoning required number of spaces. The surface parking lot, according to applicant figures, would be 4,300 sq.ft. total resulting in a requirement for about 430 sq.ft. of landscaped area on / adjacent to the parking lot. About 330 sq.ft. of qualifying landscape would be provided, so the proposal would be deficient by 100 sq.ft. This would be more than met up for with the conversion of just one of the excess, non-required parking spaces to landscaping.

715.3 The landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy, growing condition. Dead or dying plant material shall be replaced.

The applicant should commit to maintaining the landscaping around and within this parking lot.

715.4 The landscaping shall be designed and maintained to accept storm water runoff from the surrounding parking area.

The applicant states that the landscaping around the parking lot would accept storm water runoff from the parking lot. However, given the terrain and the extensive use of retaining walls to accommodate the parking area, this may be difficult to achieve. Additional landscaping on the parking lot, as intended by the regulation, would help to mitigate this concern.

715.5 All end islands of parking rows longer than nine (9) parking spaces, and all areas otherwise not used for ingress and egress, aisles, and parking spaces shall be landscaped.

The rows of parking on this proposed lot do not exceed nine spaces. Areas other than parking and access to the parking and the trash/recycling area would appear to be mostly landscaped, although a detailed landscape plan was not provided.

715.6 The following shall not count towards the landscape area requirements of this section:

- (a) Landscape areas of less than one (1) foot in any horizontal dimension;*
- (b) Landscaping around the perimeter of the parking area greater than a distance of six feet (6 ft.) from the parking pavement area;*
- (c) Moveable planters;*
- (d) Any landscape area with a soil depth of less than one (1) foot; or*
- (e) Permeable surface area used for parking or access to parking, or otherwise incapable of being landscaped.*

The applicant is not proposing movable planters or permeable paving. Although there is landscaping on at least three sides of the parking lot, there are extensive retaining walls that separate the parking lot from most adjacent landscaped area. Even so, the applicant indicates that they would provide approximately 100 sq.ft. of landscaping less than required (430 sq.ft. required; 330 sq.ft. proposed), so it would appear that the conversion of only one non-required parking space to landscaping would make the lot consistent with this provision. OP is unclear why the applicant states that meeting this requirement would result in the loss of multiple parking spaces. The applicant indicates that the community supports the provision of extra parking; OP is not opposed to this and the regulations permit the additional parking spaces, provided other aspects of the regulations, such as parking lot landscaping, are adequately addressed. From the submission, it appears that the applicant could meet this provision and still provide 14 parking spaces.

715.7 The parking area shall be provided with the equivalent of one (1) canopy tree per five (5) parking spaces subject to the following requirements:

- (a) Trees of the species listed in the District Department of Transportation Green Infrastructure Standards shall be planted with the following conditions:*
 - (1) For every tree planted from the list of small trees, a tree from the list of medium or large trees, or a substitute approved by the Urban Forestry Administration (UFA), shall be planted;*
 - (2) All newly planted trees shall have a minimum diameter of two and one-half inches (2.5 in.) in diameter;*
 - (3) All trees shall be planted or retained in a space that provides a minimum of five hundred (500) cubic feet of soil volume per tree;*
 - (4) Trees shall be planted a minimum of four feet (4 ft.) from any protective barrier, such as curbs or wheel stops with no horizontal dimension less than four feet (4 ft.) and a minimum depth of three feet (3 ft.); and*
 - (5) If tree planting areas are located adjacent to vehicle overhangs, trees shall be planted within one foot (1 ft.) of lines extending from the stripes between parking spaces.*

The site plan (Sheet 0A04) does not indicate any canopy trees. At either 14 or 15 parking spaces, three trees would be required. The applicant makes no argument for why this provision would not

be met, and OP does not support relief from this provision intended to help screen parking lots and improve environmental quality overall. As such, the applicant should provide a more detailed landscape plan showing the location of the required canopy trees.

715.9 The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant, as a special exception, a full or partial reduction in the landscape standards for parking lots required by this section if, in addition to meeting the general requirements of Subtitle X, the applicant demonstrates that complying with the landscape standards is impractical because of size of lot, or other conditions relating to the lot or surrounding area that would tend to make full compliance unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable.

The applicant has requested a full deviation from the landscaping requirements, which OP does not support. Although three spaces are required, the applicant is providing 15 spaces. The parking lot would be located to the side of the building, and would be located back from the front property line to minimize its visibility from Stanton Place and in compliance with C § 710.2 (b)(2). The applicant states that, if the required landscaping were to be provided, it would result in a loss of a number of parking spaces. However, the applicant also states that they are deficient in landscaping by 100 sq.ft., which, if accurate, means that the removal of only one of the excess parking spaces would make the lot conforming at least for area. As such, full compliance would not appear to be unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable.

VII. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

As of the date of this filing, comments from other District Agencies had not been provided. The District Department of Transportation is expected to file a report and recommendation under separate cover.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The subject property is within ANC-8A. At Exhibit 29 is the ANC report in support of this application.