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Special Exception for 1800 Kenyon Street NW

Resolved, that ANC 1D urges the Board of Zoning Adjustment to approve the special exception relief for case number 20119 at 1800 Kenyon Street NW.

Why: This matter relates to the setback and guardrail requirements under the penthouse regulations in Subtitle C §§ 1502.1 of the DC Zoning Regulations. The applicant wishes to construct a roof deck on a single story garage located off the alley. Such roof decks are not uncommon in Mount Pleasant. In the design, the floor of the deck will be well below the height of the existing structure, so the absolute height above ground level is not so great and has been minimized. Given the small size of the structure, adherence to the setback requirements would make construction of the roof deck infeasible, and therefore relief should be granted under 1504.1(a) and 1504.1(f).

As the structure falls within the Mount Pleasant Historic District, alterations are subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Office and the Historic Preservation Review Board. ANC 1D fully considered the proposed design as part of this review, and notes that the applicant revised the design in concert with HPO recommendations and won approval from HPRB. As such, concerns about visibility, light and air, materials, and other design elements have been satisfied with great care.

With the 2016 Zoning Code revisions, the term penthouse now applies broadly. The application of these setback requirements to the proposed roofdeck on this structure came as a surprise to the applicant, architect, and ANC, and it seems likely their applicability to this structure is an unintended consequence of the 2016 revisions. As such, ANC 1D has asked the Zoning Commission to clarify the applicability of these regulations and raised the matter with both the Office of Planning and the Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Administrator has reported to ANC 1D that the Office of Planning is preparing a relevant text amendment. However, the revision process takes time, and approval of a special exception by the BZA is needed.

Resolution passed, 4 to 0 vote, at the legally noticed, public meeting of ANC1D on September 24, 2019, with a quorum present. Voting "yes": Commissioners Stewart, McKay, Sandenburgh, Allinger. A quorum for this commission is three; four commissioners were present.

Jack McKay, Secretary, ANC1D

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