

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, Development Review Specialist
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: July 8, 2021

SUBJECT: BZA Case 20482, 2805 Jasper Street, S.E. to permit the conversion of a vacant building to an 8-unit apartment house

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception relief:

- Subtitle U § 421.1, New Residential Developments to permit conversion of existing building to an 8-unit apartment house; and
- Subtitle C § 802, Long-Term Bicycle Parking (minimum 3 spaces required; none existing; none proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	2805 Jasper Street, S.E.
Applicant	KAJ VENTURES LLC
Legal Description	Square 5722, Lot 74
Ward, ANC	Ward 8, ANC 8B05
Zone	RA-1
Lot Characteristics	Mid-block rectangular lot with rear alley access and a 16-foot deep building restriction line along the Jasper Street frontage
Existing Development	Three-story building with exposed cellar at the rear, a one-level storage room addition on the west side of the building, a dumpster enclosure and three off-street parking spaces directly off the alley
Adjacent Properties	North: Across Jasper Street, three-story semi-detached dwellings South, East & West: Buildings similar in size and architecture to the one on the subject property in the RA-1 zone
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	Moderate density residential, consisting of small apartment buildings and semi-detached single family dwellings
Proposed Development	Conversion of a vacant building last used as a 13-room rooming house to an apartment house with 8 three-bedroom units. No building additions are proposed, but an existing storage room addition on the west side of the structure would be demolished.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

Zone: RA-1	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Height F § 303	40-foot max.	38 feet	38 feet	None Required
Lot Width	None prescribed	54 feet	54 feet	None Required
Lot Area	None prescribed	5,346 sq. ft.	5,346 sq. ft.	None Required
Floor Area Ratio F § 302	0.9 max.	1.35 ⁱ	1.35	None Required
Lot Occupancy F § 304	40% max.	34%	34%	None Required
Rear Yard F § 305	20-foot min.	28.75 feet	28.75 feet	None Required
Side Yard F § 306	8-foot min.	East: 9 feet West: 0 feet	East: 9 feet West: 9 feet	None Required
Vehicle Parking C § 701	1 space/3 units in excess of 4 or 2 min.	3 spaces	3 spaces	None Required
Long-Term Bicycle Parking C § 802	1 space/3 units or 3- space min.	None	None	REQUIRED
Short-Term Bicycle Parking C § 802	1 space/20 units or 1-space min.	None	3 spaces	None Required
Green Area Ratio F § 307	0.4 min.	N/A	0.4	None Required ⁱⁱ

IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

a. Special Exception Relief from Subtitle U § 421, New Residential Developments

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 application was referred to the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) by the Office of Zoning (Exhibit 20), but to date no comments were submitted to the record.

Public schools assigned to serve the subject property, as identified at enrolldcps.dc.gov, are Garfield Elementary, Johnson Middle and Ballou High.

All were listed as operating at enrollments that were under capacity in the “DC Public Education Master Facilities Plan 2018”.

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

The site would continue to front on Jasper Street, S.E., with rear access to a 16-foot wide public alley. The Naylor Road Metrorail station on the Green Line is located within a twenty minute walk from the site (walkscore.com). The site is located approximately one-half mile from the Douglass Pool, Douglass Community Center, Woodland Terrace Recreation Center and Fort Circle Park. Therefore, OP concludes that there would be adequate services to accommodate the residents of the building.

Comments were requested by OZ from the Department of Parks and Recreation (Exhibit 19), and the District Department of Transportation (Exhibit 23), but none had been submitted to the record at the time of the filing of this report.

- 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.*

Although the application includes a special exception request for a new residential development, no new external additions to the building are proposed. The applicant proposes instead the internal conversion of an existing structure to eight apartment units, including new interior finishes, windows and the relocation of the utility meters from the front to the side of the building. The portico at the main entrance to the building from Jasper Street, similar to porticos on several other similar buildings within the neighborhood, is to be restored and preserved. An existing one-level storage room added to the west side of the basement level of the building would be removed, restoring the footprint of the original building and making it similar to the existing surrounding buildings to the east, west and south. Solar panels and HVAC units for each of the apartments would be added to the roof. Three existing off-street parking spaces would remain directly accessible from the public alley, three short-term bicycle parking spaces would be added adjacent to the off-street parking, and existing concrete paving at the front of the building would be removed and relandscaped.

- 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 a site plan, floor plans for each level of the building and a landscaping plan (Exhibit 36A). The floor plans show the building would contain

eight three-bedroom family-sized units. No new rights-of-way or easements are proposed, and the entire development would be contained within the existing structure.

Planting of trees, shrubs and groundcovers around the site, all native species, including the restoration of portions of the yard where concrete paving is to be removed and new topsoil and landscaping added, are depicted on the Landscaping Plan. Existing and proposed grading are the same, and depicted on the elevation drawings.

b. Special Exception Relief from Subtitle U § 807 Long Term Bicycle Parking Spaces

807.1 The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant, as a special exception, a full or partial reduction in the minimum number of long-term or short term bicycle parking spaces required for a use or structure, subject to the general requirements of Subtitle X, the limitations of Subtitle C § 807.3, and the applicant's demonstration of any of the following:

- (a) Due to the physical constraints of the property, the required bicycle parking spaces cannot be provided on the lot or, in the case of short-term bicycle parking spaces, on abutting public space;*
- (b) The use or structure will generate demand for less bicycle parking than the minimum bicycle parking standards require, as a result of:*
 - (1) The nature of the use or structure;*
 - (2) Land use or topographical characteristics of the neighborhood that minimize the need for required bicycle parking spaces; or*
 - (3) A transportation demand management plan approved by District Department of Transportation, the implementation of which shall be a condition of the Board of Zoning Adjustment's approval, that will result in demand for less short-term bicycle parking than the minimum bicycle parking standards require; or*
- (c) The nature or location of the historic resource precludes the provision of bicycle parking spaces; or providing the required bicycle parking would result in significant architectural or structural difficulty in maintaining the integrity and appearance of the historic resource.*

The applicant proposes to adapt an existing building last used as a thirteen-room rooming house to eight three-bedroom apartments. No building additions are proposed. The proposed design of the interior of the structure is affected by the location of existing load bearing walls, which the applicant cannot reasonably move, resulting in architectural or structural difficulties for the creation of a bike room.

Although an entire bedroom within one the apartments could be converted to a bicycle room, it would result in the conversion of one of the three-bedroom units to a two-bedroom unit, or the elimination of a family-sized unit. However, as each of the apartments would be a three-bedroom unit, the apartments would be large enough to

accommodate the storage of bicycles, providing the opportunity for long-term bicycle storage internal to the units, more convenient and secure for residents. Therefore, OP supports the applicant’s request to reduce the number of long-term bicycle parking spaces from three to zero.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

No comments from other District agencies were submitted to the record as of the date of the filing of this report.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

No comments were submitted to the record from ANC 8B as of the date of the filing of this report.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS TO DATE

No community comments were submitted to the record as of the date of the filing of this report.

Attachment: Location Map



ⁱ Not including storage room on west side of building proposed for removal.

ⁱⁱ The applicant initially requested area variance relief to provide a GAR of 2.0 instead of the minimum required of 0.4. The application has since been revised to provide a GAR of 0.4, as required.