

**Report of the Economic Development and Zoning (ED&Z) Committee of the Advisory
Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6A
Sherwood Recreation Center, 640 Tenth (10th) Street NE
June 19, 2019**

Present:

Members: Brad Greenfield (Chair), Missy Boyette, Tim Drake, Nick Alberti

Commissioners: none

Brad Greenfield chaired the meeting.

Community Comment

None.

Previously Heard Cases

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

653 8th Street NE/807 G Street NE (BZA #TBD): Application seeks community input on a proposed 2-story 1-unit addition over an existing garage and to add a mechanical penthouse on the roof. Currently the building contains three (3) dwelling units and an attached garage, with balconies situated above the garage, and this would convert it to a four (4) dwelling unit.

Tom Ahmann, the architect, presented the project, with clients Joshua and Christine Ingber.

Chairman Brad Greenfield clarified that this presentation would not be voted on at this meeting; it is for informal feedback only.

Mr. Ahmann described that the site was once a corner store. It is in a special category, grandfathered-in as a conforming use and structure based on a zoning hearing in which a District-wide decision was made for this type of situation. However, an addition or increase in number of units does require a special exception. This BZA case would request a special exception to create an addition to provide an additional living unit to the current 3 units. He noted that the existing three (3) units are each two (2) bedroom units, the new unit will be a one (1) bedroom.

Mr. Ahmann mentioned that there is some proposed work on the roof; specifically, installation of mechanical equipment. All of the equipment will be under four (4) feet high which is acceptable by-right; the railings will require a special exception since they do not meet the standards for the distance from the edge of the roof.

Mr. Ahmann stated that the existing lot occupancy is 100% and that the lot size is just under 1,200 square feet.

Mr. Ahmann mentioned that he is unclear at this point as to whether there will be a need for a parking exception; the existing enclosed parking garage will remain as a functional garage. Porches above will be enclosed.

Mr. Greenfield inquired as to whether the units are apartments or condos; Mr. Ingber stated that they are registered as condos but he owns all three (3) units and they are handled as rentals. Mr. Greenfield asked how the trash is handled; Mr. Ingber stated that there are two trash cans near the front door with others along the side entry. Mr. Alberti asked for clarification whether the building is zoned RF-1; Mr. Ahmann confirmed that it is RF-1. Mr. Greenfield asked whether there will be a roof deck; Mr. Ahmann responded that there will not be a roof deck. Mr. Ahmann pointed out that the package that was submitted to the ED&Z committee includes a determination letter and letters from neighbors; Mr. Ingber added that the neighbors on Eighth (8th) Street adjacent to the subject property have signed, but that the G Street neighbor has not signed. Mr. Ahmann added that he has prepared a solar study to look at impact.

Mr. Alberti stated that he is concerned about the density; a standard minimum lot size in RF-1 zone is 1,800 square feet (900 square feet per unit); Mr. Ingber responded that part of his motivation to do this project is value but part is having additional space to be used by his family. Mr. Alberti suggested to the Committee that they obtain the history of the zoning order. Mr. Greenfield stated that going from two to three units in RF-1 usually requires a variance and he asked whether there are other multi-unit (3 units or more) buildings in the neighborhood. Mr. Ingber stated that there are multi-unit buildings.

A community member who has lived on Pickford Place for about 30 years stated that there is a multi-unit building, Capitol Hill Towers, but otherwise the neighborhood is not a multi-unit area. She inquired as to when she can give community feedback. Mr. Greenfield responded that today is informal only, no vote will be taken.

Mr. Alberti asked whether the Committee draws the line as to the number of units that are acceptable. Attendees discussed that the applicant could possibly get a Certificate of Occupancy for the space as an extension of one of the existing units.

Regarding parking, Mr. Greenfield inquired as to when the applicant will know whether this will be a zoning issue; Mr. Ahmann stated that since the situation is considered to be conforming to zoning regulations, they do not dictate parking. Mr. Greenfield stated that this case appears to be unusual in terms of precedent and agreed that the Committee will want to see the BZA transcript to understand what the rationale was for how the building was allowed to go from two (2) to three (3) units. Mr. Ahmann stated that the three (3) units were present prior to the BZA hearing; the hearing made them conforming in terms of use and structure. He clarified that the BZA hearing was responding to a community-wide issue, not specific to this building. Mr. Greenfield added that creating additional units that are very small is a slippery slope, in that if the unit is too small no one will rent it, but he realizes that there is a current trend toward micro-units.

The community member in attendance stated that there have been issues with parking related to this property. She stated that there are often cars parked in front of the garage, blocking the sidewalk, and she noted concerns about density and a concern that nothing positive is being provided to the neighborhood. Mr. Greenfield explained that the ANC does not usually ask for provisions for such a small building.

Mr. Greenfield reiterated that there are concerns about density and he suggested that the applicant think about how this can be addressed. He also expressed concerns about the parking issues that were brought up by the community member. Ms. Boyette noted that the trash bins and the driveway are in public space even though they appear to be in the yard; the property line appears to be at the face of the building so the yard is public. Mr. Greenfield stated that he would like to hear how the trash will be stored in a location that is not public space, to understand the history of how the site became conforming with three (3) units, and to get clarification regarding parking requirement issues.

In terms of the proposed project, Ms. Boyette inquired about the rooftop railings. Mr. Ahmann stated that these would be shown in more detail. Mr. Greenfield asked about the materials for the project. Mr. Ahmann stated that they are considering using cement board for the exterior. The community member added that on Eighth (8th) Street there are some consistent additions and some that are not well-integrated. Ms. Boyette stated that she sees the infill porch as consistent with what the back of the building might have been like had it been infilled long ago. Mr. Greenfield asked the applicant to consider other aesthetic options for the treatment of the façade, as the porches will not really be porches any longer.

Attendees discussed the project timeframe. Mr. Ingber stated that he is deferring to his architect. Mr. Ahmann said that he will discuss the Committee's thoughts and concerns with his clients to determine next steps. Mr. Ingber noted that he will take into consideration the community member's concern. Mr. Greenfield reminded the applicants that the ED&Z committee does not meet in August. Mr. Ahmann stated that BZA dictates the process.

**Next Scheduled ED&Z Committee Meeting:
Wednesday, July 17, 2019
7:00 - 9:00 pm
640 Tenth (10th) Street NE
Sherwood Recreation Center, 2nd Floor**