ANC 6C Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee Report

ANC 6C Commission Meeting: May 8, 2019

PZE Meeting Date: May 1, 2019 6:30 pm

Meeting Location: Northeast Library
7th & D Streets NE

Committee Attendees: Mark Eckewiler (Chair), 6C04
Mary Albert
Joel Kelty, 6C05
Bobbi Krengel
Lauren Oswalt
Bill Sisolak
Drury Tallant

Other Commissioners Present: Jay Adelstein, 6C03

Agenda Items

1. 520 Groff Ct. NE (BZA 20027) – Application of Kara Benson,
   a. pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, for special exceptions under Subtitle E §§ 5108.1 and 5204.1, from the rear yard requirements of Subtitle E § 5104.1, and the nonconforming structure requirements of Subtitle C § 202.2, and
   b. pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 10, for area variances from the height requirements of Subtitle E § 5102.1, and the alley centerline setback requirements of Subtitle E § 5106.1
to construct a two-story addition to an existing semi-detached, principal dwelling unit in the RF-3 zone at premises 520 Groff Court NE (Square 779, Lot 0179). Representative: Jennifer Fowler (licensed architect). Hearing date: June 5, 2019. [6C04] (Case file)

2. 520 Groff Ct. NE (HPA 19-311) – Application of Kara Benson for concept approval for a two-story addition to an existing semi-detached row dwelling. Representative: Jennifer Fowler (licensed architect). Hearing date: May 23, 2019. [6C04] (Case file)

3. Logan School, 215 G St. NE (HPA 19-271) – Application of DC Public Schools for concept approval for modernization and addition. Representative: Nathan Morris, DCPS. Hearing date: May 23, 2019. [6C04] (Case file)

4. 111 Mass. Ave. NW (ZC 80-07B) – Application of Jemals Darth Vader, LLC for a modification of consequence, pursuant to 11-Z DCMR § 703, to an approved planned unit development previously modified in 2017 by ZC Order 80-07A. The proposed modification would revise the
building footprint and ground-floor plan; add habitable penthouse space; and modify the exterior façade, including by adding balconies. Representative: Dennis Hughes, Esq. (Holland & Knight). Zoning Commission determination of sufficiency made on April 29, 2019, with decision (and deadline for comments) set for May 13. [adjacent to 6C02] (Case file)

5. **Union Station expansion** – Discussion of draft Section 106 Assessment of Effects report. [multiple SMDs]
Agenda Item #1: Discussion and Recommendations

520 Groff Ct. NE (BZA 20027) – Application of Kara Benson,

a. pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, for special exceptions under Subtitle E §§ 5108.1 and 5204.1, from the rear yard requirements of Subtitle E § 5104.1, and the nonconforming structure requirements of Subtitle C § 202.2, and

b. pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 10, for area variances from the height requirements of Subtitle E § 5102.1, and the alley centerline setback requirements of Subtitle E § 5106.1

to construct a two-story addition to an existing semi-detached, principal dwelling unit in the RF-3 zone at premises 520 Groff Court NE (Square 779, Lot 0179). Representative: Jennifer Fowler (licensed architect). Hearing date: June 5, 2019. [6C04]

Motion  To recommend support with conditions (see below)  
(carried 4-1-2)

Key Discussion Points:

1. The owner/occupant of this very small alley dwelling seeks permission to construct a side addition (which from the front would give the impression of a companion rowhouse).

2. The lot is bounded on the north by a 10’ east-west alley, making it impractical to set the addition back 12’ from the alley centerline. PZE members discussed at length the existing conditions and constraints on the alley, including

   a. the parking pad on the site, which sits on a concrete slab several inches higher than the alley;

   b. the north wall of the property’s rear yard, which is constructed along the property line; and

   c. the 10’-wide east and west entrances to the alley, both of which sit between face-on-line rowhouse side walls.

3. On the east of the lot is a 20’-wide alley, which would normally require the addition to be set back 2’ (so as to put it 12’ from the centerline). However, the façades of 520 and several historic alley dwellings in the row to its south all sit on the property boundary, 10’ from the centerline.

4. Nearby resident Sara Wilson expressed concern that construction on the site would exacerbate the existing chronic problem of Groff Court being obstructed during the day by parked vehicles. The applicant, PZE, and Ms. Wilson discussed various solutions and mitigations, including the possibility that the applicant might arrange to rent the rear yard of one or more houses on 4th St. for construction staging. The PZE chair also suggested the possibility of a construction management agreement (CMA) between the applicant and nearby residents.
5. The PZE’s final vote to support (with two abstentions) recommended that the ANC condition support on the execution of such a CMA.
**Agenda Item #2: Discussion and Recommendations**

520 Groff Ct. NE (HPA 19-311) – Application of Kara Benson for concept approval for a two-story addition to an existing semi-detached row dwelling. Representative: Jennifer Fowler (licensed architect). Hearing date: May 23, 2019. [6C04]

**Motion**  
*To recommend support with conditions (see below)*  
(carried 6-0-1)

**Key Discussion Points:**

1. In this parallel application, the PZE considered the historic-preservation issues for the project above.

2. PZE members were supportive of the proposal to make the addition read as a companion rowhouse. PZE members also noted a number of distinctions (in the fenestration and cornice, for example) serving to indicate that the new “rowhouse” is not part of the historic row.

3. Some PZE members expressed concern that the interior layout for the second-story bath in the addition might result in a blank or frosted window on the primary elevation. Others also questioned the sufficiency of the roof drawings, which do not provide dimensions, materials, profile, or other details for the roof structure adjacent to the addition’s roof hatch.

4. The PZE recommended support subject to two conditions:
   
   a. that the windows on the east (primary) elevation be entirely made of clear glass; and
   
   b. that the applicant submit revised drawings more fully depicting the dimensions and characteristics of the proposed roof structure.
Agenda Item #3: Discussion and Recommendations

Logan School, 215 G St. NE (HPA 19-271) – Application of DC Public Schools for concept approval for modernization and addition. Representative: Nathan Morris, DCPS. Hearing date: May 23, 2019. [6C04]

Motion  To recommend support
(carried 7-0)

Key Discussion Points:

1. As discussed in the April PZE report, which summarized an informational presentation on this project, DCPA proposes to renovate and expand the Logan School. Alterations would include the construction of smaller additions at the rear (south portion) of the existing historic school building, as well as a larger addition on the west edge of the lot set apart from (but connected to) the school.

2. PZE members expressed support for the overall plan. In response to comments about the irregularity (and extreme contrast) of the south additions vs. the existing school, DCPS representatives stated that the current HPRB review is limited to the site plan, proposed building footprint, and general massing. They also promised that the project would come back before the ANC and HPRB for design review.
**Agenda Item #4: Discussion and Recommendations**

111 Mass. Ave. NW (ZC 80-07B) – Application of Jemals Darth Vader, LLC for a modification of consequence, pursuant to 11-Z DCMR § 703, to an approved planned unit development previously modified in 2017 by ZC Order 80-07A. The proposed modification would revise the building footprint and ground-floor plan; add habitable penthouse space; and modify the exterior façade, including by adding balconies. Representative: Dennis Hughes, Esq. (Holland & Knight). Zoning Commission determination of sufficiency made on April 29, 2019, with decision (and deadline for comments) set for May 13. [adjacent to 6C02]

Motion  
**To recommend support**  
(carried 7-0)

**Key Discussion Points:**

1. The applicant seeks to modify this approved PUD as described above. After reviewing the drawings with the applicant’s attorney, the PZE concluded that the requested changes are modest and appropriate, and would not adversely affect the desirability of the project or have negative impacts on the surrounding area.
Agenda Item #5: Discussion and Recommendations

Union Station expansion – Discussion of draft Section 106 Assessment of Effects report.
[multiple SMDs]

Motion  To recommend that the ANC send a letter to the Federal Railway Administration (FRA) disputing the conclusions of the draft report
(carried 7-0)

Key Discussion Points:

1. In connection with the proposed expansion of Union Station, the FRA has prepared a draft report assessing the potential impacts of the project on surrounding section 106 (historic) assets. The draft finds that although there would be limited impact on the Capitol Hill Historic District, it would not rise to the level of “adverse effect.”

2. PZE members disagreed strongly with this conclusion, which is based on the questionable claim that the only impacts of increased traffic (including diverted/spillover traffic) would be noise and vibration. The PZE believes that the draft report substantially understates the impacts, especially from design options that contemplate providing parking access under the railway trestle at 2nd & K NE.