


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

Memorandum

TO: Jamison L. Weinbaum, Director
DC Office of Zoning

FROM: Karina Ricks 
District Department of Transportation

DATE: September 29, 2009

SUBJECT: BZA Application #17337-A (Application of N Street Follies, Ltd.)
1743-1755 N Street, N.W.

APPLICATION

N Street Follies, Inc., (the "Applicant"), seeks a special exception to develop a hotel along the north side of N Street, within the property located at 1743 -1755 N Street, N.W. The property is zoned SP-1 (Special Purpose: Medium Density Residential/Limited Office), and is situated within the Dupont Circle Historic Overlay District. The proposal is to develop a boutique hotel consisting of ninety-eight (98) rooms, supported by 98 off-street parking spaces that would be accessed via the abutting public alley serving Square 158.

RECOMMENDATION IN BRIEF

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) does not recommend approval of the Applicant's request for a special exception. DDOT believes the Applicant's proposal, especially the 98 off-street parking spaces, will have adverse impacts on the surrounding public right of way network. The Applicant's proposal does not meet the Dupont Circle Overlay District requirement of Section 1501.4(g) which states:

*1501.4 The purposes of the Dupont Circle Overlay District shall be as follows:
To encourage greater use of public transportation and the free circulation of vehicles
through public streets and alleys.*

The safety concerns found in DDOT's February 28, 2006 comments associated with the case continue to be relevant. The volume of vehicles entering and exiting the alley on 17th Street, N.W will cause unsafe conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle operators.

DDOT ANALYSIS

The Applicant has provided DDOT an updated traffic impact assessment that concludes with the following, "(The) development of the subject site, per the submitted application, would satisfy the requirements, of the Zoning Regulations, from the perspective of impacts associated with transportation (i.e. vehicular access, parking and loading)" DDOT believes otherwise.

There is a lack of safety, for all users, at the point of access to the alley off 17th Street. This is the only vehicular access the Applicant proposes for the 98 parking spaces located in the rear of the hotel property. The safety concerns include the heavy traffic volumes on 17th Street, heavy pedestrian and bicycle traffic along the sidewalks and the opportunity for vehicle conflicts in the narrow rear alley to the Applicant's parking. For these reasons, DDOT believes the Applicant will provide too many new vehicle trips on N Street, 17th Street and through the alley. The February 28, 2006 DDOT comments include the following, "The addition of 96 parking spaces to this alley would further exacerbate the existing unsafe conditions in this alley." This observation continues to be applicable for the proposed 98 parking spaces associated with the current application. The Applicant has submitted convincing data, to support DDOT's position, with its Alley Usage Survey conducted on February 8, 2006. The survey shows 229 vehicles entering the alley and 204 exiting, during a twelve (12) hour period (7:00AM-7:00PM).

The Applicant has provided no information on how it plans to reduce the number of vehicle trips to the N Street site. The Applicant states in its July 30, 2009 Technical Memorandum, "(The) Applicant proposes to develop a Transportation Management Plan in consultation with DDOT." However, there have been no TMP discussions between DDOT and the Applicant.

The Applicant's proposed truck delivery trips will additionally burden the already heavily used alley.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

DDOT cannot support the Applicant's proposal for 98 off-street parking spaces to be accessed through the alley off of 17th Street. DDOT believes the Applicant should reconsider its parking inventory and significantly reduce the number of parking spaces in the rear of the hotel property.

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