

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR



NOVEMBER 4, 2015

Cary Kadlecek, Esq.
Goulston & Storrs, P.C.
1999 K Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006

Re: 1772 Church Street NW – Conversion and Addition for new Church and Residential Building

Dear Cary:

This letter confirms our discussion on June 9, 2015 about a proposed new building located at 1772 Church Street NW (Sq. 156, Lot 369) (“**Property**”). The Property is zoned DC/SP-1 and is included in the Dupont Circle Historic District. The Property is a corner lot bound to the north by Church Street, to the south by a public alley, to the east by a flat, and to the west by 18th Street. The Property is the site of St. Thomas Church. The east side of the Property is improved with a building, the Parish Hall, which is a contributing building in the historic district. The Parish Hall has a setback at its front along Church Street and a nonconforming side yard to its east. The west side of the Property, to the west of the Parish Hall, contains a private park open to the public with the Church’s permission.

The proposed new project on the Property will be a combined church and residential building. The project will retain the Parish Hall and will add to it vertically and horizontally. The church portion of the building will be on the west side of the Property. The residential portion of the building will be on the east side of the property and will include the Parish Hall. Parking will be provided in an underground garage accessed off the alley.

In particular, I made the following conclusions based on the attached site plan:

1. The proposed setback on the Church Street façade of the addition to the existing structure, identified as “B,” is permitted as a single, irregularly configured court niche. This setback is an architectural feature that continues the front setback of the Parish Hall. The ANC requested the setback for the new structure as an important architectural feature. The HPRB agreed that the setback is an important historically-compatible feature for the project and stated that the residential bays should align more with the setback along Church Street since the church building is the “bookend” landmark of that particular block.
2. The setback on the Church Street façade of the Parish Hall, identified as “D,” is an existing condition; therefore, it is permitted to remain.

3. The proposed setback at the northwest corner of the building, identified as “C,” is a permitted court niche. This niche is an architectural feature that is important to the church design and its main entrance.
4. The proposed triangular setback from the alley at the southwest corner of the proposed addition, identified as “F,” is a permitted court niche. This niche, originated by the ANC’s request to widen the alley from 18th street to the garage entrance to minimize 2-way traffic congestion, is an architectural feature important to the church design.
5. The existing nonconforming side yard along the eastern side of the Parish Hall, identified as “A,” may remain. However, the addition above the Parish Hall must provide a side yard. Based on a wall height of 50 feet, under section 535.5, the required side yard is 8’-4”. The proposed side yard will be 7’-4”, which I permit under the minor flexibility authorized in section 2522.1(c). The minor deviation is justified because any larger side yard would create significant structural challenges for supporting the addition above the Parish Hall. This deviation will not impair the purpose of the side yard regulations because it still allows a sufficiently wide side yard in a zone where a side yard is not required.
6. The proposed open court at the southeast corner of the building, identified as “E,” is an irregular court provided in lieu of a rear yard, as permitted under section 534.4. Based on a bounding wall height of 59 feet, this court has a minimum required width of 19’-8” and a required area of 773.6 square feet. The provided court area will be 1085 square feet. The provided court width will be 18 feet, which is the diameter of the largest circle that may be inscribed. I permit this width under the minor flexibility authorized in section 2522.1(c). The minor width deviation is justified because enlarging the court would require removing more of the historic fabric of the Parish Hall, which is disfavored, and because it would result in internal circulation challenges. This deviation will not impair the purpose of the court regulations because the area of the court is much larger than required and it will open onto an alley; thus, adequate light and air will still be provided.
7. The proposed building is an addition to the historic Parish Hall. Therefore, under section 2200.5, no loading is required for the entire proposed building.
8. The height of the building may be determined and measured from 18th Street, but the front of the building may be Church Street for purpose of determining side yards and rear yard.

Sincerely, Matthew Le Grant

Matthew Le Grant
Zoning Administrator

Attachment - Court Analysis