



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

February 26, 2015

REQUEST: City Council Bill #15-0476/ Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a 1-Family Dwelling Unit to a 2-Family Dwelling Unit in the R-7 Zoning District – 2515 Brookfield Avenue

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a 1-family dwelling unit to a 2-family dwelling unit in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 2515 Brookfield Avenue, as outlined in red on the accompanying plat.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

STAFF: Martin French

PETITIONER(S): Councilmember Nick Mosby, at the request of Darrien Demps

OWNER: Darrien Demps

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: This property is located in the Reservoir Hill National Register Historic District. 2515 Brookfield Avenue is approximately 20' by 142'6" (Block 3461, Lot #37F), is currently improved with a three-story end-of-row dwelling measuring approximately 16'6" by 65', and is approximately 425' south of the intersection with Druid Park Lake Drive. It is zoned R-7.

General Area: This is a predominantly residential area, with scattered uses such as religious institutions, schools, and small commercial uses. Two blocks to the north is Druid Hill Park, a major Baltimore City recreation amenity dating from 1860. Development of the Reservoir Hill area occurred primarily in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

HISTORY

- This site is part of the Reservoir Hill Urban Renewal Plan area established by Ordinance no. 33 on April 10, 1972. This Urban Renewal Plan was last amended by Ordinance no. 187 dated November 10, 1988.
- This property is located in the Reservoir Hill National Register Historic District established in 2006. (The structure on this property dates from 1917.)

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed action is consistent with LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, the Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore, Live Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods, Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents; and Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties Throughout the City.

ANALYSIS

Project: This legislation would permit the petitioner to renovate the existing structure into two dwelling units, providing a new life for this original building. This adaptive re-use as a two-family dwelling would allow preservation of part of Baltimore’s historic architectural fabric while offering more affordable housing alternatives to persons living within the Reservoir Hill area.

Zoning Analysis: The Zoning Code requires, for a property in the R-7 District, 1,100 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit (BCZC §4-1006). A lot area of 2,200 square feet is required for two dwelling units; this lot has 2,850 square feet. One off-street parking space is required to serve the newly-created dwelling unit. The existing house occupies less than half of the lot, and since the property is bordered on its east or rear lot line by a 20’ wide alley, two parking spaces can be provided that would meet Zoning Code requirements. The maximum lot coverage permitted in the R-7 district is 60%. The existing structure covers approximately 37% of the lot.

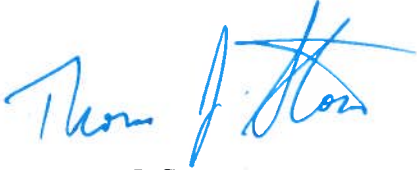
This property, due to extended vacancy, has reverted to single-family dwelling status under the Zoning Code. This bill would encourage re-use of what has become a blighting structure that has been subject to foreclosure proceedings.

Conditional Use – Required findings: In accordance with §16-304 of the Zoning Code of Baltimore City, the Planning Commission must base its recommendation to the City Council to approve a conditional use on these considerations required by Title 14 {“Conditional Uses”} of the Zoning Code:

1. the establishment, location, construction, maintenance, and operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, security, general welfare, or morals;
2. the use is not in any way precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
3. the authorization is not otherwise in any way contrary to the public interest; and
4. the authorization is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this article (§14-204).

The proposed use as a 2-family dwelling would be consistent with residential use in the area; would not be detrimental to or endanger public health, security, general welfare, or morals; and would enable constructive re-use of a vacant structure that still retains some historic integrity as a contributing structure in one of Baltimore’s historic districts.

Community Notification: Staff notified the Brooks Lane Community Association and the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council of this action.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director