



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur  
Director

April 23, 2015

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #15-0507/ Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling Unit to a 2-Family Dwelling Unit in the R-8 Zoning District – Variances – 1912 West Baltimore Street

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to a 2-family dwelling unit in the R-8 Zoning District on the property known as 1912 West Baltimore Street, as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; and granting variances from certain lot area size and certain off-street parking requirements.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**STAFF:** Martin French

**PETITIONER(S):** Councilmember William "Pete" Welch, at the request of EwinCorp One LLC

**OWNER:** EwinCorp One LLC

#### **SITE/ GENERAL AREA**

1912 West Baltimore Street is located on the north side of the street, approximately 90' west of the intersection with Monroe Street. This property measures approximately 14'4" by 100' and is currently improved with a three-story attached residential building measuring approximately 14'4" by 64'. This site is zoned R-8 and is located within the Operation Reach Out Southwest (OROSW) Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan area.

General Area: This is a predominantly residential area, with scattered uses such as religious institutions, schools, and small commercial uses. One block west of this property is the Bon Secours Hospital complex; the hospital is making contributions to revitalizing the surrounding area which includes this property.

#### **HISTORY**

This property is located west of the Franklin Square Urban Renewal Plan area. The Operation Reach Out Southwest (OROSW) Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan covering this property was adopted in September of 2002.

## **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 allow the petitioner to renovate the existing structure into two dwelling units, providing a new life for this original building. 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 southwestern Baltimore area near Bon Secours Hospital.

Zoning Analysis: This property, due to extended vacancy, has single-family dwelling status under the Zoning Code. This bill would encourage re-use of a structure in need of restoration. The Zoning Code requires, for a property in the R-8 District, 750 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit (BCZC §4-1106). A lot area of 1,500 square feet is required for two dwelling units; this lot has 1,433 square feet, so a lot area variance is needed to reduce this requirement. One off-street parking space is required to serve the newly-created dwelling unit. The existing 10' wide and 12' wide alleys in the rear of this property do not meet the Zoning Code minimum of 15' of width for accessibility of off-street parking, so a parking variance is needed to waive this requirement. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) in this zoning district is 2.0; this premises has a FAR of 1.92, so no variance for that reason is needed.

Variances: §15-101(2) of the Zoning Code provides that variances may be granted as part of an ordinance authorizing a conditional use, by the Mayor and City Council. Staff recommends that the City Council approve this bill including its lot area variance of 67 square feet, or 4.4% of the amount required by the Zoning Code, and its off-street parking variance (as nearby properties have rear yard parking pads using the same alleys). Two-family use of the property will not create any new or increased impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

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).

In addition, the Zoning Code requires review of these considerations, as appropriate:

- the nature of the proposed site, including its size and shape, are adequate for the proposed use;
- there will be no negative impact to traffic patterns in the immediate area;
- development of the proposed use will not impair the present and future development of this lot or the surrounding area;
- there will be no negative impact resulting from its proximity to dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, or other places of public gathering;
- there is adequate accessibility of the premises to fire and police protection;
- there is adequate light and air to the premises and to properties in the vicinity;
- adequate utilities, access, drainage, and other necessary facilities have been or will be provided; and
- the use of the property as two dwelling units meets all other applicable standards and requirements of this article (§14-205).

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 complete constructive re-use of a vacant structure that still retains considerable historic integrity. The site is adequate for the proposed use, would not create a negative impact on traffic patterns in the immediate area, nor impair present or future development of the surrounding area, nor have a negative impact on other dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, or other places of public gathering. The site has adequate fire and police protection, adequate air and light, adequate utilities, access, drainage, and other facilities; and use as two dwelling units meets all other applicable standards of the Zoning Code.

Community Notification: Staff notified the Franklin Square Community Association, Communities Organized to Improve Life (COIL), Operation Reach Out Southwest (OROSW), West Baltimore Coalition, and Councilman Welch of this matter.



**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**