



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

March 12, 2015

REQUEST: City Council Bill #15-0482/ Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a 2-Family Dwelling Unit to a 3-Family Dwelling Unit in the R-7 Zoning District – 3425-3427 Keswick Road

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a 2-family dwelling unit to a 3-family dwelling unit in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 3425-3427 Keswick Road, as outlined in red on the accompanying plat.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

STAFF: Martin French

PETITIONER(S): Councilmember Mary Pat Clarke, at the request of Stephanie Miller

OWNER: Stephanie Miller

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: This property is located in the Hampden National Register Historic District. 3425-3427 Keswick Road is on the east side of the street, approximately 151' north of the intersection with 34th Street. The property measures approximately 35' by 140' and is improved with a two-story semi-detached residential building measuring approximately 15' by 77' and an accessory detached garage-type structure measuring approximately 22' by 20'. 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. Development of the Hampden area occurred primarily in the mid- to late-19th and early 20th Centuries.

HISTORY

This property is located in the Hampden National Register Historic District established in 2004. The structure on this property dates from the first decade of the 20th Century.

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.

ANALYSIS

Project: This legislation would permit the petitioner to renovate the existing structure to provide an additional dwelling unit. This adaptive re-use as a three-family dwelling would facilitate preservation of part of Baltimore's historic architectural fabric while offering a more affordable housing alternative to persons living within the Hampden area.

Zoning Analysis: The Zoning Code requires, for a property in the R-7 District, multiple-family dwellings to have 1,100 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit (§4-1006.a). In this case, for three dwelling units, 2,750 square feet of lot area is required. The lot encloses 4,900 square feet, and so does meet this requirement. The maximum lot coverage permitted in the R-7 district is 60%. The existing structures cover approximately 33% of the lot.

This property has been used as a two-family dwelling for decades. The first floor front (including a front addition to the building) that was used for a nonconforming retail business ceased to be used for that purpose in 2001. The new owner of the property would like to convert this to an additional dwelling unit, hence the bill now before the Planning Commission and City Council.

In this zoning district, multiple-family attached dwellings require one off-street parking space per dwelling unit (§10-405.1.iv). For three dwelling units, three parking spaces are required. The owner has stated that two will be provided in the rear garage and a third would be created on a parking pad next to the garage.

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 3-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 portion of an existing structure in one of Baltimore's historic districts.

Community Notification: Staff notified the Hampden Community Council, Wyman Park Community Association, and Councilwoman Clarke of this action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Stosur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "T" and a stylized "S" at the end.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director