


FROM	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET, 8 TH FLOOR		
	SUBJECT	BMZA / 208-210 East Redwood Street		

TO Mr. David Tanner, Executive Director
Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
417 East Fayette Street, 14th Floor

DATE: October 14, 2015

REQUEST

The Department of Planning has received Nate Pretl's Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) application, on behalf of VFC Properties 26 LLC, to use the premises as twenty dwelling units and a commercial space. The Zoning Administrator has determined that a variance of off-street parking requirements is needed for approval. We understand that this appeal is scheduled for hearing on October 20, 2015.

SITE

208-210 East Redwood Street is located on the north side of the street, approximately 158'8" east of the intersection with Calvert Street. This property measures approximately 48'3" by 88'8" and contains approximately 0.094 acre, and is currently improved with a six-story semi-detached commercial building covering the entire lot. This site is zoned B-4-2 and is located within the Central Business District Urban Renewal Plan area and the Business and Government Center National Register Historic District.

ANALYSIS

Use: In this zoning district, dwellings and numerous commercial uses are permitted uses, and so are allowed (§6-506). In this case, the property was last authorized for use as business and professional offices, which is a permitted use in this B-4 Central Business District. The applicant proposes to retain approximately 4,430 square feet of office space in the basement and front of the first floor levels, and convert the rear of the first floor and the upper floors to five efficiency units, twelve 1-bedroom units, and three 2-bedroom units.

Urban Renewal Plan: This property is located in the Central Business District Urban Renewal Area, where the Urban Renewal Plan does not prohibit or further restrict the proposed use in this district. The Plan designates this property as part of the East Redwood Street Special District, in which development activity should maintain and enhance the unique and historic context of the District through preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures. This proposal is consistent with this Plan objective.

Off-Street Parking: ... whenever the existing use of a structure is changed to a new use, off-street parking facilities must be provided, as required by this title, for that new use (§10-203.a). If the structure was lawfully erected before April 20, 1971, additional off-street parking facilities are mandatory only in the amount by which the requirements for the new use exceed those for the existing use (§10-203.b). In this zoning district, multiple-family dwellings require one off-street parking space per 4 dwelling units and one space per 8 efficiency units (§10-405.1.iv). For 15 dwelling units, 4 parking spaces are required; for 5 efficiency units, one parking space is required; none are or can be provided due to the historic development pattern of this historic business area that was rebuilt after the 1904 fire.

Off-Street Parking Variance: ... the Board may grant a variance to reduce by no more than 75% the number of off-street parking spaces otherwise required by the applicable regulation (§15-208.b). In this case the reduction proposed is 100%, which is greater than the variable amount the Board ordinarily may authorize. The previous office use of this property was exempted from off-street parking requirements (§10-405.17.i). Due to the intense development pattern of this portion of downtown Baltimore, there is a practical difficulty in meeting the off-street parking requirements of the Zoning Code; and due to the historic importance of this Special District, the Planning Department would be opposed to any demolition for purposes of creating new off-street parking.

Historic District: The property is located in a designated historic district, and so may be eligible for historic tax credits for restoration and renovation. The appellant is encouraged to contact the Baltimore Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation before proceeding with any improvements which may be authorized as a result of this appeal.

TransForm Baltimore: This property would become part of the C-5-TO (Traditional Office) District (Proposed Zoning Map Area 14-B) in which multi-family dwellings and offices would be permitted uses (Table 10-301). The C-5 Districts would be exempt from off-street parking requirements (§10-503 (I)).

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Planning recommends approval of this appeal subject to the condition that the proposed conversion of the existing structure meets all design standards contained in the Central Business District Urban Renewal Plan, including standards for properties within the East Redwood Street Special District designated by that Plan.

TJS/wya/mf

cc: Nate Pretl, Appellant