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

January 11, 2016

Jennifer Wisdom
1848 5th St NW
Washington DC 20001

RE: 1850 5th St NW, Washington DC

Dear Ms. Wisdom:

I am writing this determination letter to confirm our conversation at the Preliminary Design Review Meeting on September 9, 2015, regarding your plans to restore the house at 1850 5th St NW. We reviewed the attached Memorandum dated September 1, 2015 that you sent to me at the Division of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. As we discussed and in answer to the questions you raised on your memo dated September 1:

- I confirmed that you will need to request a variance from the Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA) for building height, as you are planning to build a 4-story home in an R-4 zone where the Zoning regulations set forth a 3 story limit.
- Since you plan to construct a flat use [two dwelling units, in the form of a studio dwelling unit on the first floor and a 3-floor dwelling unit on floors 2-4], you will also need to request from the BZA a variance from providing a parking space, which is required for a flat use.
- You also will need to request from the BZA a variance for lot occupancy as you are planning to exceed the 60% maximum for lot occupancy in the subject R-4 zone.

- Regarding your question about a process for separating the lots legally since they were purchased under one mortgage, the legal ownership of the lots is not relevant for DCRA, the historic district, or the BZA, and I suggest you speak with the mortgage holder and/or an attorney.

- I understand you have completed some research to attempt to have the exterior front of the house match as closely as possible the other homes in the row (originally built in 1890). I recommend you work with the historic district to ensure your plans are in keeping with the style of LeDroit Park and can be approved by the historic district.

I advised that you will need to apply to the BZA with conceptual plans, and I suggest if possible letters of support from your Area Neighborhood Commission [ANC], neighborhood association, and any neighbors who are willing to support you. The next step is to work with the Historic District to ensure your plans are approved.

If the BZA approves the requested zoning variances at the required public hearing, I will work with you on the permitting process in order to secure a building permit. I am pleased to hear you are working to restore a home in LeDroit Park.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Matthew Le Grant
Zoning Administrator

Attachment: Memo dated 9-1-15 with drawings and photos

File: Det Let re 1850 5th ST NW to Wisdom 1-11-16

TO: Matt LeGrant, DCRA (matt.legrant@dc.gov)

FROM: Jennifer Wisdom, DC Homeowner (jpwisdom@gmail.com)

DATE: September 1, 2015

RE: Consultation re: homebuilding

I am writing to provide materials for our consultation regarding my plans to rebuild a house on the vacant lot I own in LeDroit Park.

The properties are legally described as: Block/Square 3093, Lots 47 and 46 in LeDroit Park.

Please see attached the following items:

Figure 1. View of lots (dated 1896) with my current residence in Lot 47 and the proposed rebuild in Lot 46

Figure 2. Original Building Permit Data for Lot 46 (Provided by Washington Historical Society)

Figure 3. Recent Survey of Lots 47 and 46

Figure 4. Photograph of Lots 47 and 46

I purchased a home on Lot 47 and the adjacent Lot 46 where a home that was originally part of a row (Lots 47-46-45-44; See Figure 1) had burned down. I am now inquiring regarding rebuilding a home on Lot 46.

I would like to build a four-story house on Lot 46 that would be consistent with the LeDroit Park Historic District's specifications for the house to be recreated consistent with the exterior of the three remaining homes on the row. I would like the house to have a first-floor single (studio) unit, and a second unit that is on floors 2-4.

Mr. Brendan Meyer, Historic Preservation Specialist at the DC Office of Planning, Historic Preservation Office, provided the following information: "*Based on our permit database though we can safely speculate its general appearance. It was built on permit #1335 issued on 1/24/1890. The neighboring buildings at 1848 [Lot 47], 1852 [Lot 45] and 1854 [Lot 44] were on the same permit, so the row of 4 was built as one project. W. E. Brown was listed as the owner, architect and builder. 1850 was 15 x 35 feet and 4 stories tall.*" (email dated May 26, 2015)

I would like to discuss with you the following issues:

1. I understand several zoning variances will be required and would like your advice on these issues:

a. The home is zoned R4. I believe a zoning variance is needed for height (since the rebuilt house obviously will need to be four stories to match the others) and possibly lot width.
b. I understand a two unit building has a requirement to provide a parking space. Given that the house is three blocks from a subway and there is clearly no space on the property for a parking space, I would like to request a waiver from this requirement.
c. I understand there is a requirement that only 60% of the lot is used for a structure. It is not possible to build a house to 2015 standards given the small lot size, and I would like to request a waiver from this requirement.

2. Can you advise regarding the process for separating the lots legally since they were purchased under one mortgage? I understand this step needs to happen in a certain order.

3. Could you please advise regarding steps to obtain approvals to build this house? If possible, I would like to obtain a determination letter that indicates you have reviewed the process and have no outstanding issues with these plans.

I look forward rebuilding a house on this lot to restore the character of the historic neighborhood, and I look forward to discussing with you at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Figure 1. 1896 Plat. Current home in Lot 47; Proposed rebuilding of Lot 46

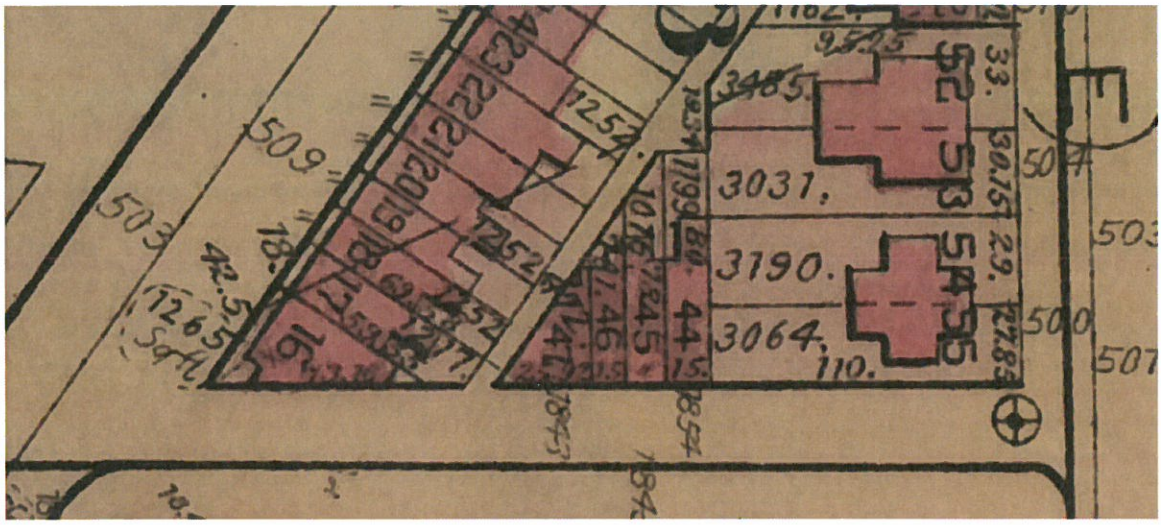

Figure 2. Original Building Permit Data for Lot 46 (Provided by Washington Historical Society)

This project has been funded in part by a U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund grant administered by the District of Columbia's Historic Preservation Office.

Permit Number	*1335*	***Date***	*1/24/1890*
Owner	*Brown, W. E.*	***Roll of Microfilm***	*0134*
Architect	*Brown, W. E.*		
Builder	*Brown, W. E.*		
Quantity	*4*		
Stories	*4*	***Material***	*brick*
Width	*15*	***Depth***	*35*
Purpose	*dwelling*	***Number of Families***	*1*
Store?			
Solid/Filled	*solid*	***Material of Foundation***	*brick*
Front Material	*pressed brick*	***Type of Stone***	
Type of Roof	*mansard*	***Roof Material***	*tin & slate*
Heat		***No Plumbing or Gasfitting***	
No Electric		***Roughing In Only***	
Estimated Cost	*$16,000*	***No Sewer Available***	
Notes	*1 is 26'x24', plans on file*		

Updated	***Extant***	***Square***	***Lot***	***Address***				***House Type***
		3093	0046	1850	5th	Street	NW	Rowhouse

Figure 3. Recent Survey of Lots 47 and 46.

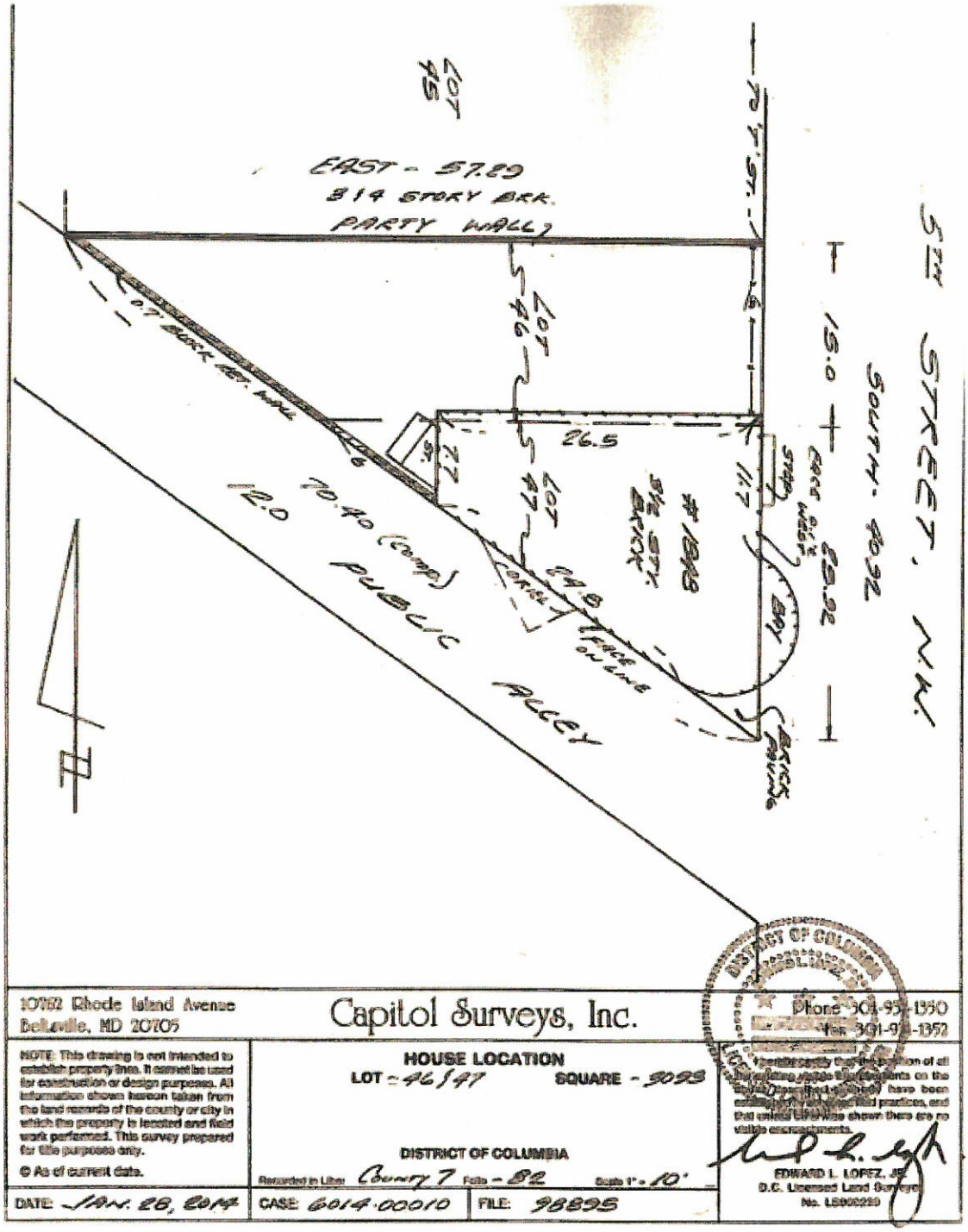

Figure 4. Photograph of Lot 47, 46, 45, and 44.