




MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM:  Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

DATE: May 5, 2014

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 08-34E: **Final Report** for a Modification to an Approved Consolidated Planned Unit Development in Square 564 – Capitol Crossing

I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Center Place Holdings, LLC and Property Group Partners (collectively, the “Applicant”) is requesting approval of a modification to a Consolidated Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) for development of the North Block as approved in Order No. 08-34 (2011). The approved PUD and map amendment call for the construction of a high density office building with ground floor retail in the North Block of this expansive 3 block project. The approved design split the building roughly in two (hereinafter, the “East Wing” and “West Wing”) flanking a central pedestrian walkway (hereinafter, the “Pedestrian Way”). It would contain 957,700 square feet of gross floor area, or 8.91 FAR, and rise to 130' in height. The current application is for modifications to the approved plans, including:

- Redesign of the 3rd Street pedestrian entrance and lobby;
- Design changes to the Pedestrian Way, including a new elevated pedestrian bridge; and
- Relocation of a parking garage entrance from 3rd Street NW to G Street NW.

Of note, the Applicant has not requested any changes to overall building height, floor area ratio, uses, massing, or project amenities. The Zoning Commission (“Commission”) discussed the application at its regular public meeting on January 27, 2014 and set down the proposal for a public hearing.

The Office of Planning (OP) **recommends approval** of the modification. The proposal is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and incorporates a number of enhancements to advance this dynamic project.

II. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject site (Lots 858 and 859, which comprise Record Lot 59 in Square 564, hereinafter the “Site” or “North Block”) is the northern component of an expansive proposal known as Capitol Crossing. Capitol Crossing consists of three new blocks of development (labeled as the North, Center, and South Blocks) which would occupy terra firma and the air rights above the sunken I-395 freeway between Massachusetts Avenue NW and E Street NW.¹ In particular, the North Block consists of approximately 107,506 square feet of terra firma and air rights. It is bounded by Massachusetts Avenue to the north, 2nd Street NW to the east, the reconstituted G Street right of way to the south, and 3rd Street to the west.

III. BACKGROUND

Order No. 08-34 approved a First-Stage PUD, a Consolidated PUD, and a related map amendment to C-4 zoning for the three block project to be constructed above the Center Leg Freeway. The following elements were approved as part of the Consolidated PUD: (1) construction of the entire platform and base infrastructure; (2) the mix of uses, the height and density of each block; (3) the North Block; (4) the construction of all below-

¹ Capitol Crossing is generally bounded by Massachusetts Avenue to the north, 2nd Street to the east, E Street to the south, and 3rd Street to the west, and includes all lots except 43 in Square 568.

grade parking, concourse, and service levels; and (5) the proposed landscaping and streetscape design for the Overall Project.

IV. PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

After the application was setdown, the Applicant has continued to refine the proposal and also engaged in a broader rethinking of certain project elements. In particular, the 3rd Street entryway, the east-west connection from 3rd Street to the East Tower, and the design of the Pedestrian Way have undergone substantial design evolution. The Applicant proposes the following modifications:

- **Redesign the Entry and Lobby Along 3rd Street Façade:** A more prominent North Block entry point along 3rd Street is proposed, a change facilitated by the planned relocation of the 3rd Street garage entrance to G Street. Since setdown, the Applicant substantially redesigned the appearance of the four-story connector in the West Wing. In place of the earlier limestone and glass façade, the Applicant now proposes a large glass canopy which would extend from the fourth floor roof to the edge of the property line. The building face and entry doors would be set back 10' from the property line to further emphasize the entry point.² The lobby would become a four-story, light-filled glass entry. The application indicates that views could extend through the lobby to the retail activity in the Pedestrian Way and the East Tower. OP is supportive of the creative design approach which provides a more defined front door to the North Block and better connects a major entry to Pedestrian Way retail.
- **Pedestrian Way:** Approved plans called for a 55' wide Pedestrian Way that evoked a linear street design, with sidewalks and a pedestrianized "cartway." The Applicant now proposes several new design approaches to create a pedestrian experience that is visually stimulating. The most significant strategy would be a so-called "kit of parts" intended to allow Pedestrian Way retailers the ability to customize storefronts and entries. The kit of parts, which would be chosen from a menu of options shown in Exhibit B of the April 24, 2014 pre-hearing statement, permits retailers to select enclosures and secondary entries among several material types to achieve a tailored storefront design. Guidelines would control the extent to which the Pedestrian Way could be physically and visually encumbered, such as requirements to maintain a minimum 20' wide pedestrian path and a limit on how far storefronts could extend based on the transparency of the materials used. Since the pre-hearing submission, the Applicant has clarified that canopies could extend no more than 22' from the building face and that canopy supports or pillars would not interrupt the minimum 20' wide pedestrian path. In addition, where canopies face each other across the Pedestrian Way, no more than 40% of the Pedestrian Way (i.e., 22') could be covered by canopies. The Applicant will update the kit of parts guidance to reflect the additional treatment of canopies. Overall, the kit of parts proposal would complement Condition 10(e) in Order 08-34 which allows design flexibility for retail entries. OP is very supportive of the Applicant's strategy to create a more vibrant Pedestrian Way.
- **Eco-chimneys:** At setdown, OP and the Commission requested additional information about the proposed eco-chimney locations. As shown in the originally approved plans, the eco-chimneys, whose purpose is to clean underground garage air, would be located along the edges of the Pedestrian Way. The Applicant now proposes that two eco-chimneys have centered locations within the Pedestrian Way. In the Applicant's February 18, 2014 pre-hearing submission, the Applicant explained the new location choice: "[b]ased on the advancement in the technology since that time [of the original project approval], the further design of the below-grade garage, and the location of the decks, bridges and highway ports, the Applicant has now vetted how the eco-chimneys must work and where they must be located [in the center of the Pedestrian Way] in order to clean the air in the below-grade garage."³ Above grade, the eco-chimneys would be approximately 5'10" wide, 30' long, and 15' tall. Since setdown, the Applicant has provided more renderings of the eco-chimneys, which present them as a visually appealing element in the Pedestrian Way. As a result of the additional information, OP has no objection to the eco-chimney placement.

² The adjacent 3rd Street sidewalk would be about 24' wide.

³ See pre-hearing submission dated February 18, 2014, page 2. See also Tab A for Eco-Chimney Plan and Section.

- **Pedestrian Bridge**: In response to Commission and OP concerns, the Applicant worked to refine the bridge design as well as further integrate the bridge within the greater development strategy. In place of the ground level canopy as originally approved, the enclosed pedestrian bridge would cross the Pedestrian Way at the building's second level. The Applicant proposes a minimalist bridge design, with transparent glass roof and walls and sculptural truss framing. Compared to an earlier design, the bridge has become more slender at its ends, measuring 15' width for the entire length. A public art installation could potentially be placed on the underside of the structure.

From a functional standpoint, the Applicant asserts that the bridge is a critical building component. It would provide for enclosed circulation for pedestrians traveling between lobbies of the East and West Towers as well as direct access (for pedestrians and deliveries) from the East Tower to the below-grade parking garage beneath the West Tower. No underground parking is located beneath the East Tower due to its location above the freeway.

Although it is not typically an approach that OP would support, the latest bridge design appears to mitigate initial OP concerns. First, the design has been further sculpted to reduce the bridge's prominence. New renderings, such as shown on page 2.15A in the pre-hearing submission dated April 24, 2014, show a diminished visual impact. Second, with the proposed modifications to the Pedestrian Way encouraging a more varied and vibrant retail experience, the bridge would be less likely to draw pedestrians away from the retail and ground level activity. Based on the latest submission, along with the Applicant's assertion that the bridge is a critical project feature, OP finds that initial areas of concern have been addressed and does not object to the design.

- **Relocated Parking Garage Entrance**: The application describes how the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA")/Environmental Assessment process has altered the location of portals to the sunken freeway.⁴ Of particular consequence is the shift of the entrance portal to the freeway from southbound 3rd Street just south of Massachusetts Avenue to eastbound Massachusetts Avenue between 4th and 3rd Streets. The application indicates that the relocation created an opportunity to redesign and enhance the prominence of the building's 3rd Street entryway and to improve the pedestrian experience along 3rd Street. As part of the redesign, the North Block parking entrance is proposed to be relocated from 3rd Street to G Street.⁵ According to the application, the new parking entrance location would improve parking and garage circulation while also enhancing 3rd Street's streetscape. The new entry also would be located in a short road stub within the G Street right of way already accommodating access to parking within the Judiciary Square Federal Building (which encroaches into the right of way).⁶ OP is very supportive of the Applicant's intent to create a more pedestrian friendly condition along the building's 3rd Street front. The Applicant has submitted a traffic study to support that the proposed access change would not significantly impact operations of the surrounding roadway network.⁷ OP anticipates that DDOT will submit comments under separate cover.
- **Tech Space** – Following setdown, the Applicant shifted the anticipated location of the technology incubator space from a ground level location to the second floor.⁸ The change requires a modification of Condition No. 23 of Order No. 08-34, which states that the space must be located on the ground floor along G Street. OP understands that an original impetus for the tech space location was to enliven a challenging area of the project's ground floor frontage. However, the Applicant has revisited this commitment in light of the

⁴ The Applicant has indicated that discussions are ongoing concerning the pedestrian crossing at G and 2nd Streets in light of the location shift of the 2nd Street freeway portal.

⁵ An earlier application (08-34C) requested, as part of the Holy Rosary Church building design, to eliminate a third parking entry from F Street. The Applicant also indicated that the new North Block entrance is anticipated to have three vehicle lanes but could be designed with a narrower curb cut, among other design strategies, in consultation with DDOT.

⁶ The Applicant has had discussions with GSA about the use of G Street to access the project's parking.

⁷ Pre-hearing submission dated April 24, 2014, Tab A.

⁸ In the original modification application, the tech space was proposed to be relocated to the East Tower, at the corner of G Street and the Pedestrian Way.

proposed project modifications, such as moving the parking entrance to G Street, the improvement of 3rd Street, and the retail design changes to the Pedestrian Way. Locating the tech space at prominent ground floor space along G Street is now seen as a less appropriate strategy to achieving active street fronts in the project. As such, the Applicant proposes to modify the Order condition to allow the tech space to locate on the second floor of the North Block building rather than the ground level. OP notes that the Applicant also has tweaked the condition language to clarify that the tech space could be occupied by “one or more” technology incubators. Other commitments related to the tech space, such as the minimum square footage, rent, and term length, would be retained. OP is supportive of the relocation of the tech space.

- **Corner Architectural Notches** – At setdown, the Commission requested additional information and renderings of the proposed elimination of the corner notches from the building’s south façade. The application states that the modification would allow more efficient structural design and better public spaces at the corner of each floor. Although filled-in, the corners still would be visually differentiated with “a flush, structurally glazed curtain wall – identical to what is within the notched area along Massachusetts Avenue – is now at the plane of the building faces and contrasts with the revealed mullions shown on the adjacent building faces.”⁹ Corner notches would remain in the building’s Massachusetts Avenue frontage. New renderings are included in the April 24, 2014 pre-hearing submission to better illustrate the proposed design.¹⁰ OP is not opposed to the design change.
- **Roof structures** – At setdown, OP and the Commission requested that the Applicant provide more explanation of the proposed roof structure sizes. The project would contain larger roof structures than shown in approved plans, reflecting the incorporation of atrium skylights into the East Wing design and the placement of additional mechanical equipment on the building’s roofs. As noted in the pre-hearing submission, the roof structures reflect the size needed to house required equipment and functions in light of the limitation of the below-grade space (due to construction above the freeway). A detailed roof structure plan was submitted with the Applicant’s April 24, 2014 pre-hearing submission.¹¹ The newest filing also shows added trellis features.¹² In addition, roof structures on the four-story connector in the West Wing would now be placed on two separate levels in response to changes within the central lobby. A skylight and terrace would be located on roofs at both the 4th and 5th floors. No relief is requested for roof structure heights (which is shown as 18’6”) or setbacks. Based on the submitted roof structure information, OP has no objection to the proposed plans.
- **Reconfiguration of ground floor office/retail space** – Although the proposed square footage of dedicated ground floor retail space has remained unchanged from the original approval, the application shows minor changes to the layout of retail spaces. Plans also show opportunity for additional retail space where flexible retail/office is designated.
- **Modification to Pilaster Design** – Proposed changes to the pilaster design are shown on Sheet 4.10 of the April 24, 2014 pre-hearing application. The primary change is that a vertical reveal (9”w x 6”d) and horizontal reveal (6”x6”) have been added at the building’s cornice and base.

V. FLEXIBILITY

The Applicant requested similar flexibility in the areas of design, materials, and streetscape, as granted in the consolidated PUD in Order No. 08-34. Further, based on a discussion with the Applicant, OP notes that the removal of the word “minor” in flexibility request number 6, as is found in the related provision in Order No. 08-34, was inadvertent and would be restored.¹³ The Applicant further requests to modify Condition No. 23 of Order No. 08-34 to allow one or more tech incubators to be located on the second floor of the North Block.

⁹ Pre-hearing submission dated April 24, 2014, Page 8.

¹⁰ See pages 2.2-2.4.

¹¹ See pages 5.5 and 5.6.

¹² See pre-hearing submission dated April 24, 2014, page 5.6.

¹³ Application dated December 20, 2013, page 12.

VI. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Commission found during its review of the First-Stage and Consolidated PUD that the Capitol Crossing project is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan (“Comp Plan”). OP finds that the modification would not detract from the project’s relation to major tenets of the Comp Plan, including: Policy Central Washington (CW) -2.5.6: I-395 Air Rights Development, Policy LU-1.1.1: Sustaining a Strong City Center, Policy LU-1.4.1: Infill Development, Policy T-2.4.1: Pedestrian Network, Policy E-3.2.1: Support for Green Building, Policy UD-1.1.2: Reinforcing the L’Enfant and McMillan Plans, and Policy HP-2.4.3: Compatible Development, among others.

VII. AGENCY REFFERALS

Subsequent to setdown, the application was referred to the following District government agencies for review and comment:

- Department of the Environment (DDOE);
- Department of Transportation (DDOT);
- Department of Employment Services (DOES);
- Department of Public Works (DPW);
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS);
- Metropolitan Police Department (MPD); and
- DC Water.

MPD and D.C. Water submitted the comments as attached in Exhibits A and B. OP understands that DDOT will submit comments under separate cover. OP has not received any other agency comments.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The Applicant’s pre-hearing submission dated April 24, 2014 indicates that ANC 2C voted to support the modification application at its April 14, 2014 public meeting. The Applicant’s pre-hearing submission further indicates that ANC 6C determined that it did not need to review the proposed modifications given its previous support. To date, OP has not received an official letter from either ANC.

IX. RECOMMENDATION

OP concludes that the proposal also is not inconsistent with the Comp Plan and that the proposed modifications improve the project. OP **recommends approval** of the modifications.

JS/pg
Case Manager: Paul Goldstein



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

MAR 19 2014

Mr. Paul W. Goldstein
Development Review Specialist
D.C. Office of Planning
1100 4th Street, S.W., Suite E650
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Mr. Goldstein:

This is in response to the request that the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) offer comments regarding a proposed development (Zoning Commission Case Number 08-34E). Specifically, the Center Leg Freeway (Interstate 395), bounded by Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., to the north, 2nd Street, N.W., to the east, the G Street right of way to the south, and 3rd Street, N.W., to the west.

The proposal was forwarded to First District Commander Jeff Brown, as the development would be located within the confines of the First District. Commander Brown reviewed the plans and has no objection to the proposed development. I have also reviewed the plans and concur with Commander Brown's assessment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on matters that impact the Metropolitan Police Department, as well as the service that we provide to citizens in the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cathy L. Lanier".

Cathy L. Lanier
Chief of Police



April 22, 2014

Paul W. Goldstein
Development Review Specialist
District of Columbia Office of Planning
1100 4th Street SW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Zoning Commission Case #08-34E
Capitol Crossing (North Block), PUD Modification

Dear Mr. Goldstein:

Please consider this letter as DC Water's response to the Zoning Commission's request for comments on Case #08-34E. The proposed development is generally not representative of the size, floor area, density, and/or use of the existing buildings adjacent to and/or in the vicinity of the project site. Therefore, the water and sewer demands for the proposed buildings will likely be dissimilar to the existing water and sewer demands of the buildings in the vicinity of the project site. There is existing public water and sewer infrastructure located within 250 feet of the project site, therefore, the public water and sewer infrastructure is considered available per DCMR 12.

While the proposed buildings for the North Block of the Capitol Crossing development are considered by DC Water to be non-representative of the existing adjacent area, DC Water takes no objection to Zoning Case #08-34E. As of the date of this letter, DC Water has reviewed and approved the early utility package plans for the overall Capitol Crossing development. The approved plans include the construction of new 8" ductile iron water mains along 2nd Street NW and 3rd Street NW, the relocation of an existing 30" water main along Massachusetts Avenue NW and appropriate interconnections and bypasses. Based on computations submitted to DC Water by the design engineer, the existing storm and combined sewer infrastructure in the vicinity of this project site should be capable of supporting the proposed development.

The response above describes the existing water and sewer infrastructure, and DC Water's evaluation of that infrastructure, as it currently exists per the date of this letter. This information is subject to change.

If you have any questions or need further details, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-646-8611 or email me at Callie.Swingle@dcwater.com.

Sincerely,

Callie Swingle
Supervisor, Permit Operations
DC Water