

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: *JL for* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

DATE: October 26, 2015

SUBJECT: **Public Hearing Report for ZC #15-23**
10 Van Street Residential
Design Review Under the Capitol Gateway Overlay

I. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This application proposes an entirely residential building which would meet the Capitol Gateway Overlay goals for providing a preferred use, and would meet requirements for building form and massing. The application successfully addresses most of the evaluation criteria of the Capitol Gateway Overlay and the Office of Planning (OP) recommends approval of the project subject to:

1. Improved environmental design and detail on the amount of green roof;
2. Additional information about illumination on townhouses, and eliminate internal inconsistencies in the plans.

OP also supports the requested lot occupancy and loading relief.

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location	10 Van Street, SE (Subject property extends from South Capitol to Van Street) Ward 6, ANC 6D
Applicant	Square 700 Trust, LLC (Monument Realty)
Zoning	CR / CG (Commercial Residential / Capitol Gateway Overlay)
Site Area	35,558 sf (lot 43 and lot 866) (19,750 sf for residential portion of the property)
Proposed Development	A 130', 176,485 sf, 4.96 FAR residential building (- FAR based on the combined lot area; - entire site w/ office – 300,847 sf, 8.46 FAR; - residential FAR based only on residential portion of lot = 8.94)
Relief	Pursuant to 11 DCMR § 1610.7, the following relief is requested in order to develop as proposed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variance from lot occupancy for floors 1 through 4 (§ 1601.1, 80% maximum for floors with a residential use, up to 88.2% on first floor and > 80% on floors 2 - 4); 2. Variance from loading requirements (§ 2201, 55' berth required, 30' berth proposed).

III. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located on South Capitol Street, between M and N Streets, SE in Square 700. The property is a through lot and also fronts on Van Street, giving the project its name, “10 Van Street”. South Capitol Street is 155 feet wide in this location, and Van Street is 50 feet wide. The subject site has most recently been used for surface parking. It is zoned CR / CG (Commercial Residential / Capitol Gateway Overlay), as are the other properties in Square 700 and 701 to the east. Please refer to the Vicinity Map in Attachment 1. The Navy Yard metro station west entrance is one block to the east at the corner of M and Half Streets.

The subject property would be formed from two existing lots, lots 43 and 866, and the resulting site would be used for an office building and a residential building¹. The office portion of the development, at the corner of M and South Capitol, was approved in case #15-11. This application is for only the residential building, at the south end of the site adjacent to the self-storage warehouse (also zoned CG/CR). West of South Capitol Street are one story commercial uses (zoned CG/C-2-C) and, diagonally to the northwest, a 7-11 (zoned CG/C-3-C). On the north side of M Street is the St. Vincent DePaul church and an office building. Across Van Street is the site of case 08-30, approved by the Commission in 2009. In that application, the developer proposed a mixed use project with office, residential and retail that occupied the entire eastern half of Square 700 in two buildings. The surrounding neighborhood also includes a mix of residential, office, hotel and retail development.

IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The application proposes a 130', 13-story, 176,485 square foot residential building, containing approximately 163 units, including nine townhouse-type units opening directly onto South Capitol and Van Streets. No uses besides residential would be in the building. In addition to the townhouse units, the ground floor would also contain the lobby, which opens onto both streets, and the internal loading and related back-of-house functions. The Van Street entrance to the below-grade parking is combined with the loading entrance. A portion of the residential footprint is also occupied by the parking ramp for the office building to the north.

The townhouse residential units would all be raised from the adjacent sidewalks and accessed by stairs, to be reminiscent of traditional rowhouse design and to provide privacy for residents. The applicant should provide more information about how the front porches of these units are illuminated. Planting areas in front of each unit would also provide a visual cue that the space is transitioning from the public street to a private residence. Please refer to Sheets 34 – 36 in the plan set (Exhibit 11A). OP supports the entrance designs of the townhouse units.

Although the ground floor units are only two stories tall, the townhouse expression on South Capitol Street is four stories on the exterior of the building, including a three-story bay clad in

¹ The entire combined site was the subject of a previous application, 09-22, which proposed an office building but was eventually withdrawn.

“Manganese Artisan Brick” (Sheet 23, for example). The base of the units, along with some accent banding, would be polished granite, and the recessed and upper portions of the façade would be aluminum panels with slight variations in grey color. The Van Street townhouses would be one story shorter in their exterior appearance, with the “Antietam” brick replacing the metal panel (Sheet 24). The second floor plan (Sheet 15) shows a large bay window in the Van Street townhouse units, along with a smaller window also facing Van Street. The elevation, however (Sheet 24) only shows brick in the location of the smaller window. The final submitted plans should rectify this inconsistency.

As opposed to the townhouse appearance at the middle of the building, the “apartment” wings of the structure, perpendicular to South Capitol, would be clad mostly in red brick. OP strongly supports the proposed use of the red brick on the south façade above the self-storage facility, which could be exposed for a number of years. Above the fourth floor, the center of the building would recede and expose a central courtyard, fronted by some units beginning on the second floor. The end units on the upper floors of the building’s wings would have balconies overlooking South Capitol Street. The recessed portion of the building façade would again use the aluminum panel, instead of the brick. Above the 11th floor, the building wings step back to meet the one-to-one stepback requirement of the Overlay. End units on the 12th and 13th floors would have terraces as a result. On the roof the design proposes a pool, lounging areas and a dog walk. The plan on Sheet 22 shows green roof, and the applicant should quantify the amount of green roof provided. The rooftop structure would be clad in a metal panel system. On the Van Street side, some red brick would be used at the north end of the building, but the majority of the façade would use the metal panel system framed on each floor by the Manganese brick.

OP is supportive of the overall design of the building. Since initial meetings with OP, the design has significantly improved, especially the townhouse units and their entrances. The ground floor design of the building provides an opportunity for street-activating residential uses. The Capitol Gateway Overlay, as described in additional detail later in this report, seeks to create an active pedestrian and transit-oriented environment and a vibrant district in the area north of the ballpark. This project should help achieve those aims with a cohesive pedestrian environment, additional residents in the neighborhood, and all parking and loading concentrated in a single curb cut on Van Street.

V. ZONING

The subject site is zoned CR / CG (Commercial-Residential / Capitol Gateway Overlay). The CR district is designed to “help create major new residential and mixed use areas in planned locations at appropriate densities, heights and mixture of uses” (600.3(a)). The Capitol Gateway Overlay is intended to encourage a mix of uses while creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. The proposal as designed requires relief as noted below.

1. Variance from Lot Occupancy (§ 1601.1)

The maximum permitted lot occupancy for any floor containing residential uses is 80%. The design proposes lot occupancies as shown in the following table, with floors one through four requiring relief:

Total Residential Site Area	19,750 sf	
Floor	Area (sf)	Lot Occupancy
1	17,420	88.2%
2	~16,088	81.5%
3	~16,088	81.5%
4	~16,088	81.5%
5	13,982	70.8%
6	13,982	70.8%
7	13,982	70.8%
8	13,982	70.8%
9	13,982	70.8%
10	13,982	70.8%
11	13,982	70.8%
12	13,499	68.3%
13	12,657	64.1%

The proposed design is a response to the functional requirements of the building and their resultant form given the dimensions of the site. First, the building should hold the street edge on both South Capitol and Van Streets. Second, the need to internalize the loading uses up a large portion of the ground floor of the building. And third, the nature of the lobby, which is intended to allow pedestrian access from both South Capitol and Van, also uses up much of the ground floor. The combination of all these factors makes it practically difficult for the design to accommodate additional open space at the ground floor. On upper floors, it is important to provide enough building face to maintain a strong street edge along South Capitol, which is appropriate given the monumental nature of this corridor. The design, therefore, proposes to extend the residential use up to the fourth floor for the full length of the South Capitol frontage. On floors two through four, however, without as many constraints as the ground floor, a central courtyard is possible in the design, bringing light, air and a small amount of open space into the middle of the building.

The proposed design would not impact the public good. A significant amount of open space is provided in the form of the South Capitol Street setback required by the regulations. This area would allow for extra green space as well as a transition to, and a suitable residential entrance to, the townhouse units. The design is similar to the approved project at the south end of the block (ZC #14-15) which included two residential wings connected by a bar along South Capitol. The design would not impair the intent of the Zoning Regulations, but in fact would meet the requirement to provide 60% of the building face along the South Capitol Street setback line. OP supports the requested lot occupancy relief.

2. Variance from Loading (§ 2201)

The building would provide loading per the following table, and the application requests relief from the requirement for a 55 foot berth.

Item	Required	Provided
55 foot berth	1	0
30 foot berth	n/a	1
20 foot delivery space	1	1
100 square foot platform	n/a	0
200 square foot platform	1	1

The narrow dimension of Van Street is an exceptional condition. The application (Exhibit 11, p. 15) references previous DDOT conclusions that a 55 foot truck in Van Street could not access the loading dock without crossing over sidewalks. The narrowness of the street creates a practical difficulty for the applicant since providing a 55 foot berth could result in impacts to either the public space or significant impacts to the ground floor design. Providing only 30 foot berths would not impact the public good or intent of the Regulations. In the District it is typical that residential tenants are only served by 30 foot trucks, and the applicant has proposed a loading management plan on page 13 of the transportation memo (Exhibit 11B).

VI. CRITERIA OF THE CAPITOL GATEWAY OVERLAY

The Capitol Gateway Overlay District lists a number of objectives for the overlay and provides specific criteria for the Zoning Commission review of proposed developments. The following is OP's analysis of these standards as applied to the application.

§ 1600.2 The purposes of the CG Overlay District are to:

- (a) **Assure development of the area with a mixture of residential and commercial uses, and a suitable height, bulk and design of buildings, as generally indicated in the Comprehensive Plan and recommended by planning studies of the area;**

The project proposes a multi-family residential use, which is a use called for by this section. The height proposed, 130', is allowed in this zone, is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and is typical of other approved or built buildings on South Capitol Street and in the neighborhood. The proposed height and design shown in the application are appropriate to an area near the center of the city and accessible by Metro. OP supports the style of architecture. The massing of the building is not inconsistent with Comprehensive Plan direction for the area, nor the regulations of the overlay that govern building form.

- (b) **Encourage a variety of support and visitor-related uses, such as retail, service, entertainment, cultural and hotel or inn uses;**

While the residential use proposed with this application is not directly visitor-related, the addition of residents to the neighborhood would help support uses such as retail, service, food, beverage and entertainment uses.

(g) Provide for the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard;

With an influx of new residents, and because the design calls for residential units to open directly onto the street, the proposed development could help create an active pedestrian character on South Capitol Street. The design would also meet the CG Overlay requirement by providing a 15' setback on South Capitol, maintaining the streetwall as prescribed by the CG regulations, and meeting the one-to-one setback above 110 feet. Overall the architecture would provide an appropriate infill building for this section of the boulevard.

§1605 Buildings, Structures, and Uses on South Capitol Street

§1605.1 The following provisions apply to new buildings, structures, or uses with frontage on South Capitol Street within the CG Overlay.

§1605.2 Each new building or structure located on South Capitol Street shall be set back for its entire height and frontage not less than 15 feet...

The building face would be set back 15 feet from the South Capitol Street property line.

§1605.3 Any portion of a building or structure that exceeds 110 feet in height shall provide an additional one-to-one (1:1) step-back from the building line along South Capitol Street.

The building would provide the one-to-one step back above the 110 foot height along the South Capitol Street façade. See Exhibit 2, page 31.

§1605.4 No private driveway may be constructed or used from South Capitol Street to any parking or loading berth areas in or adjacent to a building or structure constructed after February 16, 2007.

Parking and loading will be accessed from Van Street, and no driveways are proposed for South Capitol Street. The parking and loading would use one curb cut with loading occurring inside the building and allowing trucks to pull head first out onto Van Street.

§1605.5 For each new building or structure located on South Capitol Street, a minimum of 60% of the street-wall shall be constructed on the setback line...

The design proposes that just over 60% of the building face would be on the setback line.

§1610 Zoning Commission Review of Buildings, Structures and Uses

§1610.1 The following provisions apply to properties located:

- (c) **On a lot located within Squares 700 or 701, north of the Ballpark site;**
- (d) **On a lot that abuts South Capitol Street...;**
- (f) **Any lot which is the recipient of density through the combined lot provisions of § 1602.**

§1610.2 With respect to those properties described in § 1610.1, all proposed uses, buildings, and structures, or any proposed exterior renovation to any existing buildings or structures that would result in an alteration of the exterior design, shall be subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission in accordance with the following provisions.

§1610.3 In addition to proving that the proposed use, building, or structure meets the standards set forth in § 3104, an applicant requesting approval under this section must prove that the proposed building or structure, including the siting, architectural design, site plan, landscaping, sidewalk treatment, and operation, will:

- (a) **Help achieve the objectives of the CG Overlay District as set forth in §1600.2;**

The project would help achieve the objectives of the CG Overlay. The project would add residential uses to the area, including ground floor residential units that open directly onto South Capitol and Van Streets. The height and bulk of the building would be appropriate and as prescribed by the Comprehensive Plan. The residential use would help establish the neighborhood as an active mixed use neighborhood with an evening population, even when events are not taking place at the ballpark. The width of the sidewalk along South Capitol and Van Streets would allow for significant pedestrian volumes, and the setback along South Capitol would help establish that street as a monumental civic boulevard.

- (b) **Help achieve the desired mixture of uses in the CG Overlay District as set forth in §§ 1600.2(a) and (b), with the identified preferred uses specifically being residential, hotel or inn, cultural, entertainment, retail or service uses;**

The proposal would provide a residential use as encouraged by § 1600.2(a), and the added residents would help support retail, service and entertainment uses – preferred uses described in § 1600.2(b).

- (c) **Be in context with the surrounding neighborhood and street patterns;**

The proposed development would respect and enhance the surrounding neighborhood and street patterns. The neighborhood has an emerging architectural character with some of the new

buildings on M Street, 1st Street, South Capitol and the baseball stadium sharing a modern vernacular. The design of the proposed building, while certainly more traditional than some other recently approved projects in the area, nevertheless exhibits some contemporary elements such as the townhome unit façades and the main section of the Van Street façade.

(d) Minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians;

The proposed design would minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. All loading and parking would be accessed from a single curb cut on Van Street, which serves as an alley for this square. Trucks could load in a pull-in / pull-out mode, further enhancing pedestrian safety. The design proposes a significant amount of bicycle parking that would encourage more residents of the building to take alternative modes of travel rather than driving.

(e) Minimize unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces through facade articulation; and

The building would have almost no blank walls fronting public space. The ground floor would be lined with townhome-type units that would help activate the streets, and Van Street is not treated as the “back” of the building. A lobby spanning the width of the property would allow residents to enter from either Van or South Capitol, reinforcing this building’s connections to public space and the rest of the neighborhood.

(f) Minimize impact on the environment, as demonstrated through the provision of an evaluation of the proposal against LEED certification standards.

Based on the LEED checklist provided in plan set, the project would definitely achieve the equivalent of 50 LEED points, which would put the project at the very low end of the Silver range. OP has asked the applicant to examine a higher LEED equivalent rating.

1610.6 With respect to a building or structure which has frontage on South Capitol Street, SE:

(a) The building or structure shall incorporate massing, materials, and buildings and streetscape landscaping to further the design and development of properties in a manner that is sensitive to the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard;

The design would meet the provisions of the CG Overlay by providing a 15’ setback on South Capitol, resulting in a wide sidewalk and the ability to transition from the public realm to private residences. The building design and massing would also establish the streetwall and setbacks as intended by the CG regulations and the architecture would be generally appropriate for this location.

- (b) **The building or structure shall incorporate massing, location of access to parking and loading, and location of service areas to recognize the proximate residential neighborhood use and context, as applicable;**

The design uses an appropriate location for access to parking and loading, away from South Capitol Street. The design also provides adequate pedestrian space on the adjacent sidewalks to encourage a walkable neighborhood.

- (c) **The application shall include a view analysis that assesses openness of views and vistas around, including views toward the Capitol Dome, other federal monumental buildings, the Ballpark, and the waterfront.**

The application includes a number of photographs and renderings of the site, including some with views toward the Capitol. The plans also include aerial massing diagrams that help to place this building in its context. The building would help frame the view along South Capitol Street, a major urban boulevard, and would not impact the views of other monumental buildings, the Ballpark, or the waterfront.

§1610.7 The Commission may hear and decide any additional requests for special exception or variance relief needed for the subject property. Such requests shall be advertised, heard, and decided together with the application for Zoning Commission review and approval.

As described in this report, the design of the project would require relief from lot occupancy and loading.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of this writing OP has received no comments on the project from the community or the ANC.

VIII. DISTRICT AGENCY COMMENTS

As of this writing OP has received no comments on the application from other District agencies.

IX. SUMMARY OF OP COMMENTS

The Office of Planning is supportive of the design of the building, and the application generally addresses the criteria of the Capitol Gateway Overlay. OP can recommend approval once the following items have been addressed.

	Comment	Planning and/or Zoning Rationale
1	The applicant should provide more information about how the front porches of the townhouse units are illuminated.	Proper illumination is critical for safety and security, but also important for how the building interacts with the public or quasi-public space.

	Comment	Planning and/or Zoning Rationale
2	Rectify the discrepancy between the plan and elevation drawings for the second floor of the Van Street townhouses.	Internally consistent plans are necessary for an adequate review by staff and the Commission.
3	Provide the amount of green roof shown on the design.	Complete data about the project assists in the evaluation.
4	The applicant should commit to a higher LEED-equivalent rating.	The proposed commitment to the very minimal threshold for LEED Silver is not adequate given the pressing need for the District to achieve a smaller environmental footprint.

X. ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map

JS/mrj

ATTACHMENT 1 VICINITY MAP

