



MEMORANDUM

TO: William Liggins, Director
Revenue Bond-Enterprise Zone Program

FROM: Harriet Tregoning, Director

THROUGH: Rosalynn Hughey, Deputy Director *Rosalynn Hughey*

DATE: June 24, 2009

SUBJECT: Howard Theater Restoration, Inc.
Revenue Bond Application
620 T Street, N.W.

Recommendation

The Office of Planning (OP) completed its review of the above-cited revenue bond application and endorses the request. The following are agency comments on the application.

The Application

Howard Theater Restoration, Inc., et al, (applicant), is a non-profit organization that is involved with the restoration and eventual operation of the old Howard Theater on T Street, N.W. in the LeDroit Park/Shaw neighborhood. The District of Columbia (District) purchased the theater in 1975, but it sat vacant for a number of years except for a short period in the 1980s. In 2006, the District awarded a solicitation for its restoration and redevelopment as a mixed use performance and cultural center. The development team includes Four Points, LLC, Howard Theater Development, LLC, and Howard Theater Restoration, Inc. The applicant expects to enter into a 75-year lease with the District to restore and operate the historic landmark. The renovated facility will include 9,902 square feet of performance space, front-of-house space for the lobby, ticket box office, lounge/bar and museum/gift shop space, administrative office space, back-of-house space for dressing rooms, stage supporting space, and a kitchen area.

Revenue Bond Request

The applicant is applying for revenue bond funding in the amount of \$14,215,000. The revenue bond will be used as one part of a multiple funding package to assist with the restoration and upgrade of the Howard Theater. Other funding sources the applicant intends to draw upon include foundation grants, historic tax credits and direct solicitations.

Location

The project is located at 620 T Street, N.W., in Square 441, Lot 90, and in Census Tract 48.1. The site is in the Mid City Area Element of the Comprehensive Plan and located within the boundaries of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 1B. Notable buildings and assets in the surrounding area include the restored Dunbar Hotel Apartment building, Howard University and Howard University Hospital, Anna J. Cooper Historic dwelling, and the Shaw/Howard University Metrorail Station.

Benefits to the District and Residents

The project will restore a cultural landmark into a new mixed-use cultural and entertainment venue which will house an exhibit space, instructional space for the Washington Jazz Institute, retail establishments, and an artist/recording studio. Additionally, the applicant anticipates hiring eight to 18 new employees within three years of completing the project.

Historic Designation

The Howard Theater is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It was designed by architect J. Edward Storck and built in 1910 in the classical Beaux-Arts style, with a Roman brick façade, columned entrances, stepped parapets and cornices. The facility has national significance as the first purpose-built African American theater in the United States. In December 2008, the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) reviewed the conceptual design for proposed alterations and expansion, including façade restoration, interior rehabilitation and construction of a rear addition. On December 18, 2008, the HPRB approved the project (H.P.A. case number 09-006) as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegated final construction approval to Historic Preservation Office staff.

Alley Closing

The Office of Planning reviewed a request for a proposal to close a public alley in Square 441 where the applicant is planning an addition to the facility (which is included in this revenue bond application). The Office of Planning noted no objection to the requested alley closing (Case S.O.09-8516, memorandum dated May 18, 2009).

Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates the area as mixed-use medium density development. Two Council-approved small area plans provide supplemental guidance to the Comprehensive Plan: Uptown Destination District Framework Plan and Convention Center Area Strategic Development Plan. Key Comprehensive Plan policies supporting this revenue bond project are:

- Neighborhood Conservation: Retain and reinforce the historic character of Mid-City neighborhoods ...particularly historic districts. The area's rich architectural heritage and cultural history should be protected and enhanced. *(Policy MC-1.1.1)*
- Uptown Destination District: Encourage the redevelopment of U Street between 6th Street and 12th Street, N.W., and Georgia Avenue/7th Street between Rhode Island Avenue and Barry Place, N.W. as a mixed use residential/commercial center with "restored theaters", arts and jazz establishments, restaurants, and shops, as well as housing serving a range of incomes and household types. *(Policy MC-2.3.1)*
- Arts and Culture, Enhancement of Existing Facilities: Preserve existing District-owned neighborhood arts and cultural spaces. Assist in the improvement of arts organizations' facilities in order to enhance the quality and quantity of arts offerings. *(Policy AC- 1.1.1)*
- Rehabilitation of Historic Structures: Promote appropriate preservation of historic buildings through an effective design review process. Apply design guidelines without stifling creativity, and strive for an appropriate balance between restoration and adaptation as suitable for the particular historic environment. *(Policy HP-2.4.1)*
- Protecting Historic Building Integrity: Protect historic buildings from demolition whenever possible, and protect the integrity of whole buildings. Discourage treatments like facadism or relocation of historic buildings, allowing them only when there is no feasible alternative for preservation, and only after finding that the treatment is necessary in the public interest. *(Policy HP-2.4.5)*

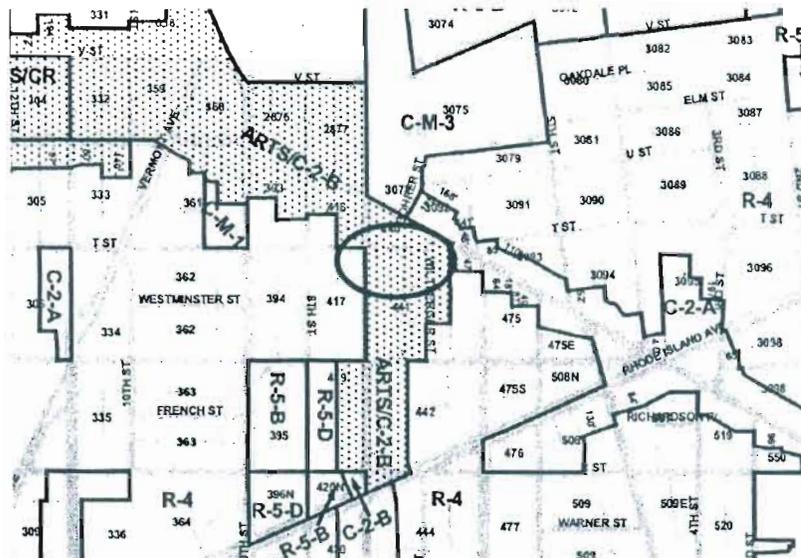
Sustainability Initiatives

The applicant has offered the following sustainability initiatives:

- Design, construct and operate the facility in an environmentally responsible manner
- Restore and reuse the majority of the original building structure
- Implement a sustainable waste management practice during construction for existing and new materials and divert construction demolition debris from the landfills
- Select building materials for the project based on durability, low toxicity and recycled content, i.e., Marmoleum, ceramic tile and recycled content carpet, and
- Select energy efficient appliances and implement on-site recycling programs.

Land Use and Zoning

The site is designated as mixed-use medium density development. The site is zoned Arts/C-2-B. Uptown Arts (ARTS) Overlay District provides incentives for housing, arts and retail uses in designated areas to a maximum FAR of 2.5 to 4.5, and a maximum height of seventy-five (75) feet depending on the underlying district and sets design standards for new development. This overlay district is mapped in combination with other base zone districts.



Community Support

The applicant does not include documentation from Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 1B regarding its position on the bond request. The applicant should provide this documentation prior to a decision on the application.



Revenue Bond Site -- Howard Theater
620 T Street, NW

Office of Planning Endorsement

The Office of Planning endorses the request for revenue bond funding and recommends the following:

- The applicant provide documentation on the official position of ANC1B prior to a decision on the application, and
- H.P.A. Number 09-006 (conceptual design approval) and S.O.09-8516 (alley closing) be incorporated and made part of this revenue bond application record.

The bond application is not inconsistent with the requirements of the District Elements of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, DCMR Title 10. It satisfies the evaluation criteria of the D.C. Office of Planning. Should you have any questions, please contact MonaCheri McCoy of my staff at 442-6707 or monacheri.mccoy@dc.gov.

