

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



Memorandum

TO: Roland Driest, Surveyor

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

DATE: May 23, 2008

SUBJECT: Large Tract Review Report 2008-01: 1325 W Street, N.W.
Square 234, Lots 18-20, 120-121, 160-161, 828 and 825

On January 23, 2008, pursuant to 10 DCMR, § 2300, Perseus FLGA LLC submitted an application for Large Tract Review (LTR). The applicant seeks to develop a mixed-use building consisting of 256,900 square feet of gross floor area within the ARTS/C-3-A zone district and the Greater U Street Historic District. LTR is required under 10 DCMR § 2300 because the zone district in which the subject property is located is not exempt from LTR review, and because the project would produce 50,000 or more square feet of commercial or mixed use space.

The property is located three blocks from the U Street/African-American Memorial Metrorail Station on the Green Line. The applicant proposes to demolish the existing Bowen YMCA building and construct a seven-story mixed use building in its place. Incorporated into the new building will be the five historic commercial structures fronting on 14th Street and the historic stable in the northeast corner of the property. The new building will include 229 residential units, including 18 that will be set aside for families earning between 50 and 80 percent of the area median income (AMI), 12,183 square feet of retail space, a 49,766 square foot YMCA facility and two levels of underground parking accessible from the public alley. Loading will be from W Street. The historic stable building will be incorporated into a playground for the YMCA on the east side of the property.

The location of 270,000 square feet of new retail, recreational and residential space within three blocks of a Metrorail station will contribute to the creation of a transit oriented environment. In addition, the restoration and adaptation of the stable building for use by the day care center, and the restoration of the historic facades facing 14th Street, contribute to the sustainability of the project.

On March 17, 2008 the Office of Planning submitted a list comments to the applicant, including comments from the DDOT. The Office of Planning met with the applicant concerning those comments on March 31, 2008. The applicant responded to the comments in writing on May 8, 2008 and responded to requests for clarification during the second half of the month of May. The following is a summary of each comment and the applicant's response.

A. 14th Street:

1. Relocate street tree spacing to comply with 40-foot distance from intersection and 30-foot spacing between trees.

Dwg. No. L101, revised March 24, 2008, substantially complies with the thirty-foot distance between trees. In an attempt to ensure that no trees are located within forty-feet of an intersection, the spacing between two of the trees is 27 feet, 6 inches.

2. Increase the width of tree boxes to 6 feet.

Dwg. L101 depicts all of the tree boxes on 14th Street at a width of six feet.

3. Projections on 14th Street will need a waiver since they are not allowed in commercial zones.

The applicant filed a modification request of Section 3202.10.1.2 of the Building Code to permit bay window projections within a commercial zone district. The bay window projections are a part of the restoration of the commercial facades of the historic buildings fronting on 14th Street and have been approved by HPRB.

4. There should be two handicap ramps at the corner, not one.

The applicant has indicated that the reason for providing one ramp instead of two is because of the location of an existing traffic light pole on W Street and an existing street light pole on 14th Street, both of which are proposed to remain. As a result two ramps cannot be provided. Instead the applicant proposes to provide one wider ramp at the corner, between the poles, to accommodate pedestrian traffic crossing either 14th Street or W Street, as shown on Dwg. L101.

5. Sidewalk material – need to discuss. DDOT standards say concrete but adjacent development has used London Pavers.

The applicant is proposing concrete in conformance with DDOT standards.

6. Where are the PEPCO vaults?

No PEPCO vaults are proposed along the 14th Street side of the building.

B. W Street

1. Increase tree box to 6 feet.

Five of the tree box widths along W Street are 6 feet in width and the remaining five are proposed to be 5-feet 3-inches in width, or a reduction of 9 inches. This is necessary to

accommodate the 6-foot sidewalk that is located between either the PEPCO vaults or landscaped beds and tree boxes.

2. Narrow sidewalk to 6 feet.

The sidewalk is 6 feet in width.

3. Maintain 10-foot landscaped building yard.

The landscaped building yard varies between 7 feet, 8 inches, the maximum extent to which the building yard is impacted by the bay windows, to a maximum of 15 feet, 3 inches between the bay windows. These bay windows on the residential portion of the building establish a residential appearance to this section of the structure.

4. Include 6-foot paved walkway between each street tree.

The 6-foot paved walkway has been provided.

5. Increase number of street trees from 10 to 13, spaced 30 feet apart.

Dwg. No. L101 depicts 11 trees along W Street, an increase of one. Four of the trees are located 29 feet apart, slightly less than the 30-foot Urban Forestry Administration guideline. Additional trees cannot be located along the street frontage of W Street without locating trees to the front of the main entrance of the YMCA, or the lobby entrance to the apartment building above.

6. Contain specialty paving at building entrance to building yard and maintain consistent sidewalk paving all along W Street.

See No. 7 below. No specialty paving is proposed on Dwg. No. L101.

7. Change paving materials to red brick (consistent with DDOT Design and Engineering Manual for the Greater U Street Historic District).

Dwg. L101 depicts the brick only in front of the residential entrance to the building. As W Street is a residential street it should have brick sidewalks. The Office of Planning recommends that the brick be extended from the loading entrance on the east side of the building up to the YMCA entrance. From the YMCA entrance west the sidewalk may be scored concrete, as proposed, because it better relates to the commercial uses at the corner of the building at 14th Street than the residential use on the east side of the structure. The proposed scored concrete for the loading access is appropriate as the loading access is adjacent to the public alley, which will also be surfaced with scored concrete, alerting pedestrians that they are entering an area traversed by vehicles.

8. Projections will need a waiver since they are not allowed in commercial zones.

The applicant filed a modification request of Section 3202.10.1.2 of the Building Code to permit bay window projections within a commercial zone district. The bay window projections are a part of the restoration of the commercial facades of the historic buildings fronting on 14th Street and have been approved by HPRB.

9. Where are the PEPCO vaults?

No PEPCO vaults are located within the sidewalk. Three PEPCO vaults are shown along the W Street frontage, adjacent to the base of the building. One exists, and will be located within a landscaped area. Two others are proposed east of the residential entrance, on either side of an emergency exit.

10. Relocate loading dock from W Street to alley. Alley on W is being widened, so possibly reorient entrance to alley. Not clear that loading dock for 55-foot trucks is necessary for a residential building of one-bedroom apartments or for the YMCA. Smaller loading dock may be enough for the building, so turning radius will not be so great. Also, plan includes parking for YMCA buses off of alley, so delivery trucks should be able to navigate the alley too.

The loading facilities as proposed are as was approved by DDOT in 2007 as a part of alley closing application S.O. 07-7717.

The Development Review Division of the Office of Planning commented that variances were necessary pursuant to § 770.6 of the Zoning Regulations for the proposed roof structures. In response the applicant revised the proposal to conform to that provision, eliminating the need for variances. The proposal appears to conform to other regulations of the C-3-A District and the ARTS Overlay District; detailed review of the design by DCRA will happen at the Building Permit stage.

AGENCY REFERRALS

In accordance with the Large Tract Review procedures, the Office of Planning provided copies of the submission to the following for review and comment.

- DC Department of Transportation (DDOT);
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS);
- Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA);
- Metropolitan Police Department (MPD);
- Office of the Attorney General (OAG); and
- Department of Public Works (DPW).

Many of these agencies had previously reviewed the project's alley closure application and commented on the proposed development at that time.

DPW, in an email dated March 13, 2008, responded that “[t]he proposed development will not affect services.”

FEMS, in a memorandum dated March 10, 2008, stated that it *“has no objection to this request as long as construction is in compliance with the International Fire Code (2000 Edition) and all applicable D.C. Laws.”*

The Third Police District of **MPD** concluded in a memorandum dated March 7, 2008, that *“the Third District and the MPD a whole welcomes this development and will plan to be prepared for this positive growth in our city.”*

No other agencies responded.

The applicant is encourage to initiate early discussions with the District Department of the Environment (DDOE) on issues under is purview, such as storm water management, green building, and water and energy use, issues which may be raised at Building Permit stage.

COMMUNITY REIEW

In accordance with the Large Tract Review procedures, the Office of Planning provided copies of the submission to the following for review and comment:

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1B; and
- Cardozo-Shaw Neighborhood Association.

Notification of the filing of the application was sent to all property owners within 200 feet of the subject property. One comment was received from a resident of the community expressing a desire that garage parking on site not utilized by tenants of the building be made available for sale to residents of the neighborhood.

No comments were received from either ANC 1B or the Cardozo-Shaw Neighborhood Association.

FINDINGS

The project proposed by this Large Tract Review Application is consistent with the purposes and goals of the LTR regulations, subject to the following condition:

Brick pavers, as required by DDOT Design and Engineering Manual for the Greater U Street Historic District, be provided along W Street between the entrance to the YMCA on the west and the loading access on the east.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum from the Metropolitan Police Department
2. E-mail from DPW
3. Memorandum from FEMS