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2012 OCT 25 PM 3:49

1800 Eye Street was constructed in 1915 as an apartment house. It was later converted to office use, the predominant use in this neighborhood. In recent years the building's physical and engineering deficiencies have become increasingly acute. This has negatively impacted property operations, prompting new ownership's proposal to redevelop the building into a first class office and retail project.

The process of exploring the redevelopment of the building began with an analysis of the existing building from a functional, code, and zoning point of view.

Functionally, the split level entry to the building, with retail space located one-half level below grade and one-half level above grade, creates completely dysfunctional retail space that is neither desirable for quality retailers, nor accessible by the handicapped. Since the "at grade" entrance is split between the basement and the first floor, ADA access to the elevators is not possible. Also, the building's small utility windows at grade level are not designed for retail use and don't have adequate storefront street presence necessary for thriving retail establishments.

The main office lobby is on the basement level and is also not compliant with handicap and ADA Guidelines. The two existing elevators are too small to meet ADA requirements. Also, the existing toilet rooms do not meet ADA. The one internal fire stair does not meet code, and its existing location materially impairs efficient core design and office layout. The second means of egress is via an external fire escape that drops into a walled-in non-conforming court at the rear of the building. The only possible egress path from this court requires reentry through the building's basement level to gain safe access to the street. Additionally, the building's outdated structural design depends largely on the perimeter walls, elevator shafts and fireplaces to support the existing floor slabs. These structural elements will require extensive work to the interior slabs of every building level.

Proposed Solutions

To provide both a code compliant and efficient floor design, all the existing core elements (elevators, fire stairs, and restrooms) are being demolished and relocated to the rear portion of the site currently occupied by the vacant court. This eliminates the non-compliant court condition through use of an additional 435 GSF on each typical floor level, or a total of 3,075 GSF for the entire project.

The additional benefit of "filling in" the court space is that it creates more functional "at grade" retail space that will be ADA accessible and more visible and inviting from a pedestrian perspective. To achieve this end, the existing first floor will be removed, and a new first floor will be created at grade. The existing basement will be lowered to create a new cellar level below grade. The resulting loss of GSF in the basement is being reallocated to a new partial floor to be built on top of the existing roof. Because this area is a smaller than the typical floor, it will be set back from the existing perimeter façade to comply within the 45-degree bulk plane guideline.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18493

EXHIBIT NO. 4

core group, pc

Dale A. Stewart, AIA
I. Guyman Martin, AIA

1010 wisconsin ave. nw suite 405
washington, dc 20007

t 202.466.6116
f 202.466.6235

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District of Columbia
coredc.com
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