GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
03-30
28

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 27, 2004

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Andrew Altman, Director OP

SUBJECT: **Zoning Commission Case No. 03-30, 734 1st Street S.W.**

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I. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Applicant: Square 643 Associates LLC

Location: Square 643, Lot 830
Ward 6; Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D.

Proposal: A consolidated Planned Unit Development and Zoning Map amendment to permit the construction of a 60-unit condominium apartment building.

II. RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning Commission set down for public hearing a consolidated Planned Unit Development and Zoning Map amendment for Square 643 from R-4 (row dwellings and flats) to R-5-D (medium to high density residential).

OP notes that additional detail related to the amenity package and potential heritage status of the existing building on the site is necessary prior to OP making a final recommendation regarding the merits of this proposal.

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This rezoning (from R-4 to R-5-D) and consolidated PUD application would permit the construction of a new 9 story condominium development with 60 units in the Southwest Waterfront neighborhood. Although the application has many merits, particularly the provision of additional housing in a neighborhood in need of renewal, concerns remain relating to the demolition of a potentially significant historic church on the site (historic status is yet to be fully determined) and the value of the amenity package. OP feels that it is acceptable to set this proposal down for a public hearing, but resolution of these issues is required.

IV. CONTEXT – refer also to Context Map Attachment I and Photos Attachment II

The subject property is located on Square 643 in Ward 6 in the Southwest Waterfront neighborhood. It fronts onto H Street SW which dead ends directly to the east of the site. Early maps show Delaware Avenue SW open to the US Capital Building; H Street SW and 1st Street SW were also open, through streets. Currently, Delaware Avenue SW terminates in a circle directly to the southwest of the site. The Southeast-Southwest Freeway is a few blocks to the north of the site, and South Capitol Street is a block to the east. The Waterfront metro station is located less than ½ mile to the southwest of the site.

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The area has a diverse housing stock, including townhouses and low and high-rise apartments. Much of this housing was constructed as part of the Southwest Urban Renewal Plan of the 1950's – 1970's, so has a more uniformly modern character than most other DC neighborhoods. The Capital Park apartments and townhouses complex is to the north and west. To the south is the former Randall Junior High School, with the Millennium Arts Center, the Randall Recreation Center, a homeless shelter, and a drug rehabilitation center. To the east of the site are play fields associated with the recreation center.

The site is developed with a church constructed in 1886-87 (Scott, Pamela - *Places of Worship in the District of Columbia, Third Edition,* 2003 - see Attachment II). 1904 maps show the Virginia Avenue Baptist Church (with "furnace heat and lights electric"), surrounded by mostly 2 story town houses to the north and east. The Friendship Baptist Congregation sold the structure to another congregation many years ago, and currently holds services in a church building two blocks away. The Redeemed Temple of Jesus Christ Congregation was the last user of the site in question. According to the applicant, they attempted to sell the building to another congregation, but did not receive any offers so eventually sold it to the applicant. The structure is now vacant.

V. PROPOSAL

The applicant has submitted a consolidated PUD and map amendment application, to facilitate the development of a 9-story condominium building. The existing church structure would be demolished. The new building would be partially raised above grade, in reference to the surrounding 1950's apartment building design. Access to ground level and below grade parking would be from H Street SW. The building would consist of 60 one and two bedroom apartments.

VI. GENERALIZED LAND USE MAP

The area is designated on the Generalized Land Use Map as "*medium density residential – multiple-unit housing and mid-rise apartment buildings are the predominant uses; may also include low and moderate density housing*"...". All of the land adjacent to the site, and most of the land in close proximity, has the same designation. The proposed zoning and the proposed development are not inconsistent with this designation.

VII. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposal would appear to further the following major themes of the Comprehensive Plan, as listed in Section 101.1:

(a) Stabilizing and improving the District's neighborhoods

(e) Respecting and improving the physical character of the District

(i) Promoting enhanced public safety

However, although the existing church is not currently a landmarked historic structure, its demolition may be considered contrary to the following major theme:

(g) Preserving the historic character of the District

although OP notes that the potential significance of the building is its relevance to the history of Southwest Waterfront area, rather than the current character of the area.

The Comprehensive Plan includes a number of specific objectives and policy statements which support the proposed residential development with its associated amenity package, and the proposed design of the building, including:

CHAPTER 3 HOUSING ELEMENT

302 Housing: General

302.2 (a) Encourage the private sector to provide new housing to meet the needs of present and future District residents at locations consistent with District land-use policies and objectives ...;

(e) Encourage housing on suitably located public or private properties that are vacant, surplus, underutilized, or unused, and encourage adaptive reuse of surplus schools and other available public buildings as housing, with particular emphasis upon the needs of low- and moderate-income residents;

CHAPTER 7 URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

707 Built Environment

707.1 The built environment objective is to strengthen and enhance the distinguishable physical qualities of the District.

707.2 (e) Strengthen and enhance the design of the distinguishing physical qualities of neighborhoods;

708 Buildings

708.2 (a) Design residential, commercial, and all other buildings to complement or enhance the physical character of the District;

709 Streetscape

709.2 (e) Encourage the use of the public space for arts and cultural activity;

712 Areas In Need Of New And Improved Character

712.2 (a) Encourage well-designed developments in areas that are vacant, underused, or deteriorated. These developments should have strong physical identities;

(b) Encourage in-fill development of attractive design quality in deteriorated areas to stabilize the physical fabric and to encourage renovation and redevelopment;

CHAPTER 17 WARD 6 PLAN

1705 Ward 6 Objectives For Housing

1705.1 (b) To stimulate production in Ward 6 of new and rehabilitated housing ... to provide housing opportunities to accommodate and allow for residential growth and stability according to area needs ...

1706 Ward 6 Policies In Support Of Housing Objectives

1706.1 (c) Stimulate private investment in housing in Ward 6 and expand home ownership opportunities;

1721 Ward 6 Objectives For Urban Design

(c) To encourage a high quality of architecture consistent with the styles and characteristics of buildings in Ward 6.

1722 Ward 6 Policies In Support Of Urban Design Objectives

1722.1 (d) Provide streetscape improvements, trees, signs, lights and other such elements to enhance the environment in Ward 6;

The proposal to remove the existing church structure may (pending resolution of the historic status of the building) be contrary to aspects of the following Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives related to housing and historic preservation in Ward 6:

1706 Ward 6 Policies In Support Of Housing Objectives

1706.1 (d) Provide new housing in Ward 6 area through the conversion of appropriate non-residential structures that have outlived their current use, such as churches, warehouses, schools and other public facilities.

1725 Ward 6 Objectives For Preservation And Historic Features

1725.1 (c) To encourage new development and renovations of structures that are sensitive to the character of the historic districts in Ward 6; and

(d) To monitor the use, modifications, and proposed demolitions of buildings to ensure preservation and compatibility with historic districts in the Ward 6 area.

Chapter 8 of the Comprehensive Plan – Preservation and Historic Features Element includes criteria for the recognition, landmarking, and preservation of historic resources. The goal is "*for the District is to preserve the important historic features of the District while permitting new development that is compatible with those features.*" No application for Historic Landmark or Historic District Designation Application has yet been submitted to the Historic Preservation Office, although the Program Director for the Syphax Community Center Historic Restoration Society has, in a letter to the Commission, indicated an intention to do so.

VIII. SNAP – CLUSTER 9

The SNAP planning process identified near-term goals for individual neighborhood clusters, and documented the tracking of issues to ensure that they are addressed through to completion. The subject property is within Cluster 9. Cluster workshop participants were asked to identify priorities for additional action planning. Residents of this cluster agreed to the following priorities:

- **Affordable and Diverse Housing** –retaining low- and moderate-income residents that live in the community, and increase the number of homeowners by providing a mix of housing options;
- **Public Safety** – strategies to reduce drug activity and other types of crime; and
- **Public Schools and Community Development** - expanding and improving academic programs, providing additional extra-curricular activities, and updating public school buildings.

The proposal would further these goals in that it would add to the variety of owned housing in the neighborhood; would likely add to perceived safety by providing residents and "eyes on the street" in a section of the neighborhood which is perceived by residents to be troublesome; and would, through the amenity package, provide improvements to neighborhood public spaces such as the traffic circle at the

terminus of Delaware Avenue and Capital Park IV playground equipment and open space.

IX. PURPOSE OF A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

The purpose and standards for Planned Unit Developments are outlined in 11 DCMR, Chapter 24. The PUD process is "*designed to encourage high quality developments that provide public benefits.*" Pursuant to Section 2402.3, the applicant has elected to file a consolidated PUD. Through the flexibility of the PUD process, a development that provides amenity to the surrounding neighborhood can be achieved.

X. STANDARDS FOR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

The application meets the minimum 15,000 square foot area requirements of Section 2401.1 (c) to request a PUD, for a property zoned R-5-D. The PUD standards state that the "*impact of the project on the surrounding area and upon the operations of city services and facilities shall not be unacceptable, but shall instead be found to be either favorable, capable of being mitigated, or acceptable given the quality of public benefits in the project.*" Based on the information provided, OP believes that the project could be generally favorable, although details regarding the amenity package and the streetscape character of the development have not been fully addressed, and the historic status of the church that currently occupies the site has not been fully assessed.

XI. PUBLIC BENEFITS AND AMENITIES

Section 2403.5 through 2403.13 discusses the definition and evaluation of public benefits and amenities. In its review of a PUD application, §2403.8 of the Zoning Regulations states that "*the Commission shall judge, balance, and reconcile the relative value of the project amenities and public benefits offered, the degree of development incentives requested, and any potential adverse effects according to the specific circumstances of the case*". To assist in the evaluation, the applicant is required to describe amenities and benefits, and to "*show how the public benefits offered are superior in quality and quantity to typical development of the type proposed...*" (§2403.12).

Amenity package evaluation is based on an assessment of the additional development gained through the application process. Additional development, in this case, is difficult to determine exactly, because the existing R-4 zone does not establish a maximum FAR. To estimate the R-4 development potential, the site would yield 9 rowhouse lots fronting H Street SW, with a maximum square footage of about 3,300 sq.ft. each, for a total of 29,700 sq.ft. of development[1]. The additional FAR, therefore, is at least 37,116 sq.ft., roughly equal to 4 levels of development (32 units).

	R-4	R-5-D PUD
Proposed Sq. Ft.:	66,816 sq.ft. total	66,816 sq.ft. total
Max. Sq. Ft.:	approx. 29,700 sq.ft.	74,894 sq.ft. max
Difference:	+37,116 sq.ft.	-8,078 sq.ft.

[1] Based on maximum size of rowhouse development on an average lot size of 1,840 sq.ft.; with 3 story buildings at 60% lot occupancy. OP notes that a second option permitted under the zoning, to convert the existing structure to residential units, may yield a greater square footage.

The applicant states that the project provides benefit to the neighborhood by supplying housing in a building, which, in scale and design, is in character with surrounding development, on a site that is vacant and therefore a "negative force on the immediate neighborhood". OP agrees that the provision of housing and the form of the building are of benefit to the community.

The amenity package as offered by the applicant includes:

1. The provision of "**new landscaping and a sculptural focal point for the traffic circle** at the terminus of Delaware Avenue, adjacent to the PUD site is proposed". The applicant has, in the submission to the Commission and in a presentation to the ANC, indicated a willingness to work with local area residents to choose an appropriate design for the sculptural element. OP agrees that this is an amenity, but notes that the applicant has not indicated a value associated with this item.
2. The applicant indicates that they are in discussions with the adjacent Capital Park IV board of directors regarding **improvements to playground equipment or open space** on that property. Again, OP feels this may be a desirable amenity, but details have not been submitted.

A common amenity in recent PUD applications is the provision of **affordable or subsidized housing**. OP regularly, in PUD applications, recommends the provision of affordable housing units. Within this project, affordable housing in the amount of approximately 15% of the density gained through the PUD / rezoning process would be about 5,570 sq.ft. As the units vary from 662 to 1,125 square feet, this would translate into 5 to 8 units. OP would recommend that the affordable units consist of larger, two bedroom units.

XII. Zoning Regulations – refer to Project Profile, Attachment III

The property and directly adjacent land are zoned R-4, which permits a moderate density residential row dwelling or flat development. The zone also permits the conversion of an existing building to an apartment building. Land in the general vicinity has a mixture of zone designations, including R-5-C, R-3, C-3-A, R-5-A, C-3-C, and R-5-D.

As noted in the Project Profile, the project would conform to the R-5-D height restriction, as well as to the R-5-D PUD height and FAR maximums. Relief would be required for the following zoning regulations:

Section	Description	Required	Proposed
404.1	Rear yard:	29.5 ft. min.	**13 to 28 ft.**
405.6	Side yard:	22.1 ft min.	24' east side; **10' west side**
411.3	Roof structure, number of enclosures:	1 max.	**2**
400.7(b)	Roof structure setback:	= to height (13.6')	**0 ft.**

OP notes that the building provides desirable front yard landscaping, and that the rooftop enclosures are designed to be in character with the building and should not negatively impact views or contribute significantly to a sense of bulk.

XIII. ANC 6D

The applicants made a preliminary presentation on the project to ANC 6D at its September, 2003 meeting, and returned to the ANC in October, 2003. ANC members did not vote on the project, but there was an indication of opposition to the demolition of the existing structure, and an intention to pursue landmark designation of the structure.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The applicant notes that the Capital Park IV Condominium Association has indicated support for the proposal. A number of letters from area residents and members of the Friendship Baptist Church (former occupants of the existing church on the site) have also been submitted, indicating opposition due to the height and scale of the proposed building, and the demolition of the church structure.

XV. AGENCY REFERRALS

This application will be referred to the following District government agencies for review and comment:

1. Historic Preservation (HP) Office;
2. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA);
3. Department of Parks and Recreation;
4. Department of Public Works (DPW);
5. DPW Tree and Landscape Division;
6. District Department of Transportation (DDOT);
7. Environmental Health Administration;
8. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department;
9. Metropolitan Police Department; and
10. Water and Sewer Agency (WASA).

XVI. OP RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends that this application for a consolidated PUD and map amendment from R-4 to R-5-D be set down for public hearing. The proposed condo apartment building is designed to be generally in character with other development in the Southwest area, is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Generalized Land Use Map (with the possible exception of historic preservation related objectives), and should add stability and security to this area. As such, the application warrants discussion at a public hearing. However, OP notes that additional information related to the amenity package and the heritage status of the existing structure is necessary prior to OP making a final recommendation.

ATTACHMENTS:

I. Context Plan
II. Photos
III. Project Profile

AA/jl



ZONING COMMISSION CASE # 03-30
734 1st STREET SW
CONTEXT PLAN



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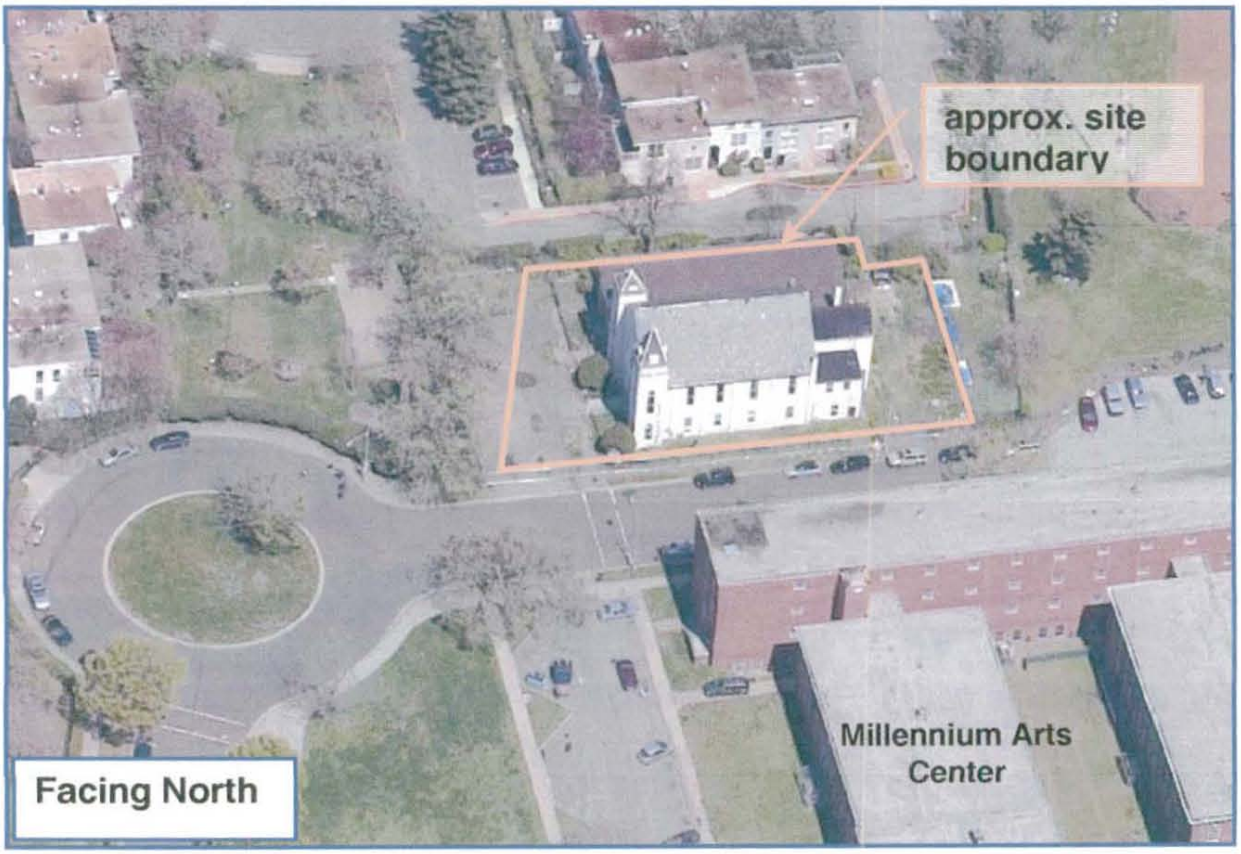
★ ★ ★ Government of the District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

Office of Planning – February, 2004

This map was created for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

ATTACHMENT I


Rec. Center
Playfield
Millennium Arts Center
SITE
Delaware Ave
Facing East


approx. site boundary
Millennium Arts Center
Facing North

Project Profile

Standard	Existing Zone R-4	Proposed Zone R-5-D	Proposal[1]
Lot Area:	1,800 sq.ft.	n/a	16,643 sq.ft.
Uses:	row dwelling, flat	medium to high density residential	60 unit condominium apartment building
Height:	40' max. 60' with PUD	90' max. 90' with PUD	88.6'
Stories:	3 max.	not prescribed	9 + 1 underground parking level
Floor Area Ratio:	not prescribed	3.5 max.; 4.5 with PUD	4.015
Square Footage:	approx. 29,700 sq.ft. max.[2]	58,251 sq.ft. max. 74,894 sq.ft. w/ PUD.	66,816 sq.ft. total
Ground Level Open Space:	n/a	n/a	conforming
Lot Occupancy:	60% max.	75% max.	56%
Rear Yard Setback:	20' min.	29.5 ft. min.[3]	**13 to 28 ft. – relief required**
Side Yard Setback:	3" / ft. of height; 8' min. if provided	22.1 ft min[4]	24' east side; **10' west side – relief required**
Roof Structure: # enclosures (§411.3): Height (§400.7c.): Setback (§400.7b.):		 1 max. 18.5' max. = to height	 **2 – relief required[5]** 13.6' max. **0 ft.[6] – relief required**
Parking:	1/3d.u.	1/3d.u. = 20 min.	45 total

1 Information provided by applicant.

2 Based on maximizing rowhouse development on 9 lots with average lot size of 1,840 sq.ft.; with 3 story buildings at 60% lot occupancy.

3 Rear yard not required, but a minimum of 4" / foot of building height if provided.

4 Side yard not required, but a minimum of 3" / foot of building height if provided.

5 The 2 enclosures are for the elevator penthouse, and for a stairwell to the roof; neither access public space.

6 Neither roof top enclosure provides