

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

Memorandum

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: *Ellen McCarthy*
Ellen McCarthy, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: April 3, 2006

SUBJECT: Setdown Report for Capitol Place - ZC #05-37
Consolidated Planned Unit Development and Map Amendment

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APPLICATION

Station Holdings LLC has petitioned the Zoning Commission to setdown its request for a Consolidated Planned Unit Development (PUD) and map amendment to construct a new mixed-use building between G, H, 2nd and 3rd Streets N.E. The site is Square 752, Lots 30, 39, 40, 41, 45, 48, 801, 805, 806, 811, 813, 814, 856 & 857.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that the application be set down for public hearing.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The project includes the south side of the 200 block of H Street N.E. and extending along 2nd Street to G Street. It is located at the west end of the H Street N.E. corridor at the eastern end of the H Street (Hopscotch) Bridge. The northern portion of the site is currently a surface parking lot. The portion of the site along 2nd and G Streets contains existing two- and three-story residential structures. Directly to the north across H Street is the Children's Museum property approved as a PUD by ZC order 04-22. Diagonally across the 3rd and H Street intersection is the proposed PUD by Steuart - H Street LLC (ZC #06-01).

The area has been the object of much planning work over the past two years. The H Street N.E. "Revival" Plan and subsequent H Street N.E. Commercial Overlay both incorporated the property. As a part of the zoning overlay much of the property on this site, as well as the property on both sides of the 300 block of H Street was rezoned from C-2-A to C-2-B. The southern half of the site remains zoned C-2-A along with the property along 2nd Street to the south. The remainder of the subject square not incorporated with this application contains two and a half story rowhouses zoned R-4. To the south and east of the site off of H and 2nd Streets is an established R-4 rowhouse neighborhood. To the west of the site is the third stage of the Station Place PUD (ZC #01-09) zoned C-M-3.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia



Figure 1: Aerial View

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to construct a new mixed use condominium building on the site. The building would have its front on 2nd Street with three wings extending to the east. The largest wing would extend along H Street for the entire block to 3rd Street. The G Street wing will extend to the alley in the center of the square. Finally, the center wing would extend the width of one residential unit, or about 60', to the east between the other two wings. The overall project will have an FAR of approximately 5.5. The height of the main structure on 2nd Street would be 90'. The 90' foot height would extend around both corners at H Street and G Street. Along H Street the height would drop to approximately 70' toward 3rd Street to relate to the row house properties along 3rd. The G Street frontage drops to 60' and then to 50' going toward the existing row houses to the east of the site. Finally, the center wing be 70' in height and is set back an additional 25' from the alley and the neighboring properties.

The upper stories of the building will contain slightly over 300 residential units. The main floor of the building and mezzanine level will contain retail uses with the exception of two residential units on the east end of the G Street frontage and five units on the interior courtyard. The proposed building contains three levels of underground parking totaling over 400 spaces.

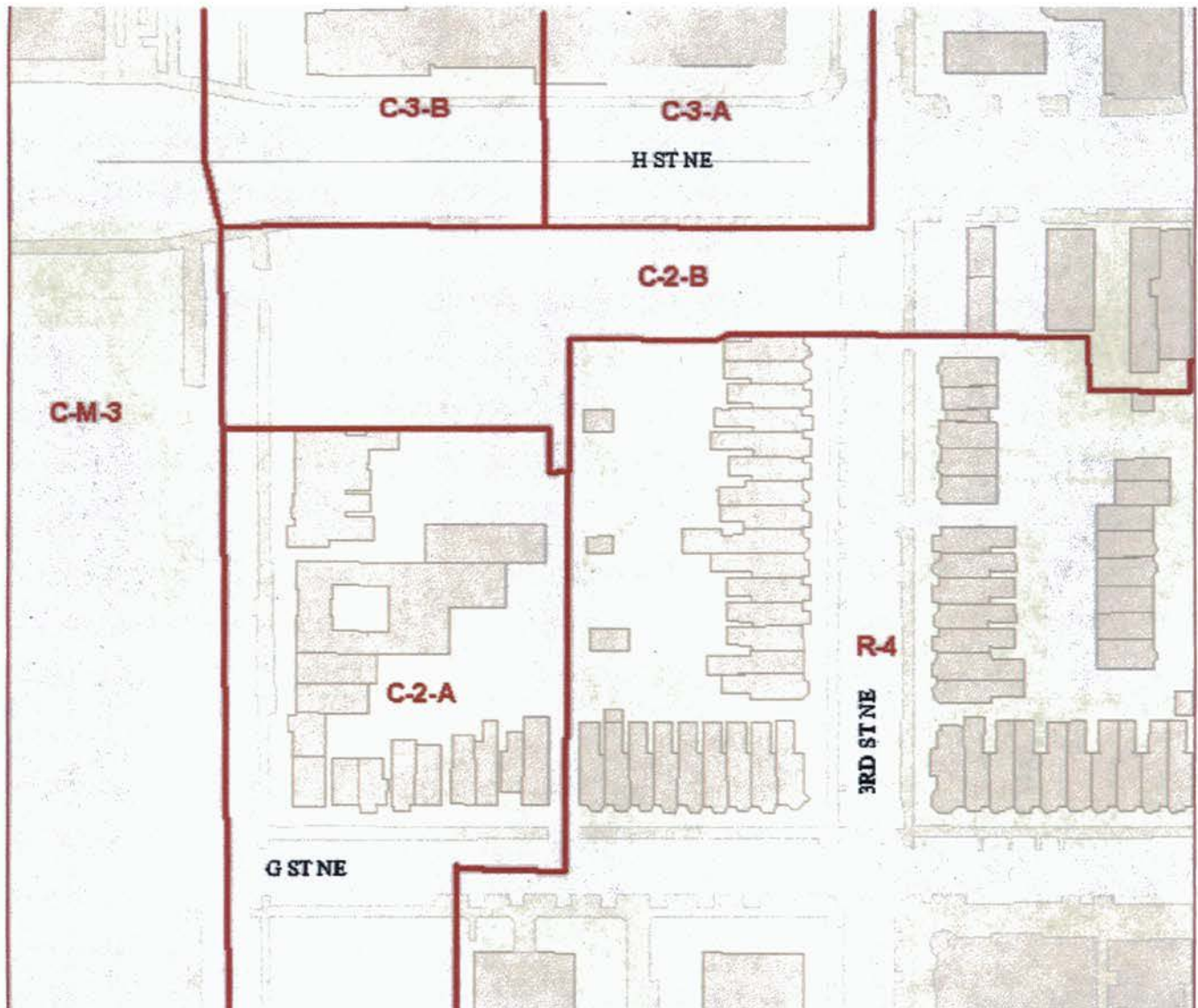


Figure 2: Site Area

ZONING

The site lies in the Housing Sub-Area of the H Street N.E. Commercial Overlay District. The northern half of the site was rezoned in conjunction with the overlay district including all H Street frontage. The remainder of the site was not included in the rezoning and is zoned C-2-A. The applicant is requesting a map amendment to zone the entire site C-2-B and is utilizing the PUD standards of the C-2-B district.

The H Street N.E. Commercial Overlay District extends from 2nd Street to 17th Street N.E. It encompasses the commercial lots fronting on both sides of H Street. The neighborhoods on either side of H Street are mostly R-4 rowhouse neighborhoods. Property to the west is zoned C-M-3.

Zoning Tabulation

	Existing Matter of Right	C-2-B PUD	Proposed
Minimum lot area	N/A	15,000 sf	76,700 sf
FAR	226,194 sf	460,200 sf	421,990 sf
Height	65'	90'	90'
Lot Occupancy	80%	80%	76.5%
Rear Yard	15'	15'	45'
Parking	102 residential 83 commercial	102 residential 83 commercial	305 residential 98 commercial
Loading	Retail: 1-30 ft berth 1-55 ft berth 1-100 sf platform 1-200 sf platform 1-20 ft loading space Residential: 1-55 ft berth 1-20 ft space 1-200 sf platform	Retail: 1-30 ft berth 1-55 ft berth 1-100 sf platform 1-200 sf platform 1-20 ft loading space Residential: 1-55 ft berth 1-20 ft space 1-200 sf platform	Retail: 1-30 ft berth 1-55 ft berth 1-200 sf platform Residential:

FLEXIBILITY

Overall FAR

The applicants are seeking density above the matter-of-right for the subject zone district. The C-2-A portion allows 2.5 FAR, while the C-2-B district allows a matter of right FAR of 3.5. The PUD standards for C-2-B allow 6.0 FAR. The proposal is for a 5.5 total FAR.

Nonresidential FAR

The H Street Overlay limits non-residential FAR in the Housing Sub-Area to 0.50. The proposal for this project is 0.60, or 46,072 square feet. This number is only 8,000 square feet over the matter-of-right and the minimum number necessary to provide commercial uses on the H and 2nd Street frontages.

Roof Structures

The applicant has requested minor relief from the roof structure requirements, specifically the requirements for a single roof structure, equal wall height, and a one to one setback from exterior walls. The proposed roof structures are the result of discussions with OP and the neighborhood. The proposed roof structures have been lowered as much as possible and pushed to the west to limit visibility from the homeowners to the east.

Recreation Space

The C-2-B zone requires residential developments to provide recreation space in the building at a rate of 15% of the total residential gross floor area. The applicant is proposing to create recreation space of approximately 8% of the residential gross floor area. The applicant should provide a residential recreation space plan showing the location of all residential recreation space prior to public hearing.

Loading

The applicant is proposing to combine the loading platform for the neighborhood retail and the residential uses. Instead of one 200 square foot platform and 55 foot loading berth for each, there will be a shared 200 square foot platform and loading berth. In addition, there appears to be no 20 foot loading space.

PUD EVALUATION STANDARDS

The purpose and standards for Planned Unit Developments are outlined in 11 DCMR, Chapter 24. Section 2400.1 states that a PUD is “designed to encourage high quality developments that provide public benefits.” The proposed development will be constructed in a neighborhood that is currently anticipating the development of more housing. In order to maximize the use of the site and be compatible with the surrounding community, the applicant is requesting that the proposal be reviewed as a consolidated PUD. This will allow the utilization of the flexibility stated in Section 2400.2.

The overall goal is to permit flexibility of development and other incentives, such as increased building height and density; provided, that the project offers a commendable number of quality public benefits and that it protects and advances the public health, safety, welfare, and convenience.”

The proposed development brings with it a number of qualities that will benefit the public. The development provides a large amount of ground floor retail, both at the key intersection of 3rd and H Street, as well as along the 2nd Street corridor. The project will add over 300 new residential units in the Housing Sub-Area of the H Street N.E. Overlay that calls for additional residential development. The building will contain ground level neighborhood serving retail that will serve to help solidify and improve the lively H Street retail corridor as well as activate and lighten the 2nd Street frontage near the underpass. In addition, the buildings will provide parking beyond the zoning requirements at above a one to one ratio to prevent additional parking impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Section 2403 further outlines the standards under which the application is evaluated.

2403.3 The impact of the project on the surrounding area and the operation of city services and facilities shall not be found to 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.

The development of the site will contribute to the general improvement of the area, redevelop a currently underused parking lot, and will contribute to the revitalization of the H Street Corridor. City services such as water and sewer are currently available on the site. OP will confirm with WASA prior to the public hearing that there is sufficient capacity for the proposed development.

PUBLIC BENEFITS AND AMENITIES

The community benefits appear generally commensurate with the additional FAR and other flexibility requested.

2403.9 Public benefits and project amenities of the proposed PUD may be exhibited and documented in any of the following or additional categories:

- (a) Urban design, architecture, landscaping, or creation or preservation of open spaces;*
- (b) Site planning, and efficient and economical land utilization;*
- (c) Effective and safe vehicular and pedestrian access, transportation management measures, connections to public transit service, and other measures to mitigate adverse traffic impacts;*
- (d) Employment and training opportunities;*
- (f) Housing and affordable housing;*
- (h) Environmental benefits, such as stormwater runoff controls and preservation of open space or trees;*
- (i) Uses of special value to the neighborhood or the District of Columbia as a whole;*

1. Affordable Housing

The applicant has proposed to provide over 15% of the bonus density granted through the PUD as affordable housing. This amounts to nearly 30,000 square feet. The applicant's statement does not address the level of affordability, but OP would recommend that they be offered at 80% AMI or less. Prior to the public hearing, the applicant should provide a distribution of the proposed affordable units.

2. Alley Easements

The applicant will provide easements equivalent to a 20' alley along the eastern property line and connecting to 3rd Street. The alley will not be used by this project for parking or loading, but will be for the use of the townhouses currently on the square. The alley will be brick paved. The applicant has also proffered to install sewer infrastructure in the alley for use by 3rd Street residents.

3. Site Design & Safety

The site has been designed to separately address each of the street frontages. The H Street façade respects and reacts to the neighboring developments on the H Street corridor. It attempts to anchor the 3rd and H Street intersection and recognize that this is the entrance into the H Street corridor. The applicant will also be providing an easement to DDOT for bridge maintenance as well as constructing a sidewalk and stairway access between the bridge and 2nd Street. The applicant has worked with the Great Streets Initiative to adequately landscape and light the H Street streetscape. The 2nd Street frontage will be the main retail location. Care has been taken to locate uses and lighting to encourage a safe environment near the underpass and the stairwell. The G Street frontage has been designed with the input of OP and the neighborhood to step down in response to the neighboring townhouses. In addition, the east portion of this wing has been changed from commercial to residential to better transition from this project to the neighborhood. Finally, the center wing (labeled as Garden Pavilion) respects the height and bulk of the rest of the project. It sits lower than the main building to avoid overshadowing the neighbors to the east and limits balconies to the north and south sides rather than the east, for the privacy of the neighbors. OP will continue to work with the developer on this pavilion and its relationship to the rowhouse neighbors to the east.

4. Neighborhood Contributions

The applicants have been in discussions with the surrounding neighborhood to provide other public amenities. A major amenity proposed is the contribution of funding for an historic properties survey for the area between F, H, 2nd and 14th Streets. Other contributions include replacing sidewalks on the square along 3rd and G Streets in front of the neighboring properties, replacing the fence at the Senior

Citizen's Community Center parking lot to the south, and providing a construction management plan to limit noise and traffic disturbance to the area.

5. Sustainable Design

The applicant has provided information on environmental features of the project. The project is committed to meet the requirements for LEED certification. Details are available in the applicant's submission.

6. First Source Employment Agreement

The applicant will execute a First Source Employment Agreement with the Department of Employment Services to achieve the goal of utilizing District residents for at least 51% of the jobs created by the project.

7. LSDBE

The applicant will use Local, Small or Disadvantaged Business Enterprises to achieve a minimum of thirty-five percent participation in contracted costs associated with the project.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND PUBLIC POLICIES

The Generalized Land Use Map recommends the subject site for a mix of moderate density residential and commercial uses. In addition, the Generalized Land Use Policies Map includes the site within the Northeast Number 1/Eckington Yards Development Opportunity Area and the Northeast Number 1/Eckington Yards Special Treatment Area. Development Opportunity Areas are defined in Sections 1118.3 and 1118.4 of the Comprehensive Plan and are areas at or near Metro stations that are identified for housing and commercial growth. The sites, like this one, tend to represent underutilized potential for transit-oriented development.

The Northeast Number 1/Eckington Yards Special Treatment Area is described in Section 1121. The Treatment Area designates the area south of Florida Avenue N.E. for new office development and identifies a need for area design standards and development strategies. That need has since been filled through the H Street Northeast Strategic Development Plan and Zoning Overlay. This Plan, discussed in more detail in the next section of the report, creates the design standards and outlines the development strategies envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan.

The PUD is also consistent with other sections of the Comprehensive Plan including the following Major Themes of the Plan:

- Section 102 - Stabilizing and Improving District Neighborhoods,
- Section 103 - Increasing the Quantity and Quality of Employment Opportunities in the District
- Section 106 – Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District
- Section 107 - Preserving and Ensuring Community Input

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan outlines objectives to support residential development and the provision of affordable housing. Policies established in support of housing objective include:

- 202.2 (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;*

The proposal will provide significant investment and a catalyst for further redevelopment in the area. Over 400 new residential units are being provided through this development with over 10% of those as affordable units.

- 202.2 (a) Encourage housing on suitably located public or private properties that are vacant, surplus, underutilized, or unused;*

The northern portion of the site has been underutilized as a surface parking lot for years. The proposal would put an active building face on the H Street corridor at this key gateway location.

Sections of the Ward 6 Plan offer objectives that specifically deal with the redevelopment of this area:

- 1702.1 (c) Ensure that redevelopment of the commercial corridors such as H Street, N.E. ...include neighborhood serving retail.*
1706.1 (f) Stimulate private investment in housing in Ward 6 and expand home ownership opportunities.

The proposed development will meet the above objectives by providing a significant amount of new housing as well as a neighborhood serving retail component including a retail presence on the key intersection of 3rd and H Street. Physically, the proposed development will complement the character of the H Street corridor. The property is located where existing city infrastructure is already in place and is easily accessible.

H STREET “REVIVAL” PLAN & OVERLAY

The proposal is largely consistent with the H Street NE Strategic Development Plan. The Plan calls for development of 6-8 stories in this area with a focus on residential density. Specifically, the Plan envisioned 500-600 new residential units in the five westernmost blocks of the corridor. The increased density called for in the plan was facilitated by the rezoning of most of the subject parcels in conjunction with the H Street NE Commercial Overlay. The proposal would take advantage of the new density to provide over half of the envisioned residential units as well as ground floor retail uses important for a vibrant streetscape.

Further, the proposal is consistent with the design guidelines of the Plan and the H Street Overlay. The street front will be activated by neighborhood serving commercial uses. OP will continue to work with the applicant to ensure that the standards of the Plan and Overlay are incorporated in this project.

Community members have raised the issue of whether the increased density and zoning are consistent with the H Street Plan. OP will continue to work with the applicant and community on this issue.

AGENCY REFERRALS AND COMMENTS

OP and the applicant have worked with DDOT to review the site design, loading, and parking. If this application is set down for a public hearing, it will be referred to the following District government agencies for review and comment:

1. Metropolitan Police Department
2. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department
3. Department of Public Works
4. Water and Sewer Authority
5. Department of Housing and Community Development

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The applicant has had preliminary discussions with community members and made presentations to the ANC. There has been some neighborhood concern expressed about the relation of the building to the neighboring properties to the east. The applicant has made changes to the project to lower the eastern portion of the G Street frontage and limit the perceived height of the main building from the east. OP will continue to work with the applicant and the community to encourage a mutually beneficial and successful project.

RECOMMENDATION

OP believes that the proposed PUD is not inconsistent with the elements of the Comprehensive Plan and recommends that the application be set down for public hearing. OP will continue to work with the applicant towards a more detailed review prior to the public hearing.