

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
MARINA VIEW RESIDENTIAL SITE**



ESOCOFF & ASSOCIATES - ARCHITECTS  
ZION BREEN & RICHARDSON - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

BY  
MARINA VIEW TRUSTEE, LLC

SUPPLEMENT TO THE APPLICATION TO THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ZONING COMMISSION FOR  
CONSOLIDATED REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF A  
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT  
AND ZONING MAP AMENDMENT IN  
CASE NUMBER 05-38

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**ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia**

CASE NO. 05-38  
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EXHIBIT NO. 21  
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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This document supplements the original application of Marina View Trustee, LLC (“Applicant”) to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia (“Commission”), dated November 30, 2005, for the consolidated review and one-step approval of a Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) and a corresponding amendment to the Zoning Map. The project site consists of Lots 50 and 853 in Square 499 (the “Subject Property”). Revised plans, elevations, and drawings of the modified PUD project, highlighting changes that were made in response to concerns raised by the Zoning Commission at the March 13, 2006 Public Meeting, are attached to this supplemental statement as Exhibit A. This supplemental statement and the materials submitted to the Zoning Commission on November 30, 2005 satisfy the filing requirements for a PUD and Zoning Map Amendment application.

## **II. REVISIONS TO THE PROPOSED PUD PROJECT**

The centerpiece of the project remains the construction of two new residential structures at the north and south ends of the Subject Property, replacing existing surface parking lots. The two new buildings will hold approximately 300 residential units and the existing structures, designed by well-known architect I.M. Pei, will include approximately 260 units. At the center, the existing central park, which was designed by the landscape architecture firm Zion Breen (now Zion Breen & Richardson), will be renovated by that firm to accommodate the new project. The new south building will provide approximately 8,300 square feet of ground floor retail along M Street with a 14-foot ceiling height. This retail space provides an incredible opportunity for a restaurant at the intersection of M and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, facing the Arena Stage. The southern building will

transform this block of M Street from a bleak walk alongside a parking lot into a bustling urban streetscape for both residents and visitors alike.

The new buildings will now rise to approximately 102 feet, with an additional top floor set back at one-to-one ratio on the M, K and 6th Street sides of the new structures, for a total building height of 112 feet.<sup>1</sup> Approval of the 112-foot tall buildings allows for a ground level clearance height of approximately 14 feet in the new south building to allow for more marketable, and ultimately more successful, retail space. On the northern building, the greater clearance height at the ground level allows for taller residential units (which will help with the marketing of units that will have bedrooms at the grade level) and the opportunity to allow these units to be converted to commercial, arts-related, or other community service use if the market exists for such uses along K Street.

The loss of a floor and changes in shape of the proposed new buildings, in order to address their height and their relationship with the existing Pei buildings, results in a decrease in the gross floor area of the project of approximately 56,408 square feet. The Applicant has been able to make this significant reduction in the size of the project, while not impacting the quality of the new buildings, the degree of rehabilitation of the existing potentially historic structures, or the scale of the remarkable landscape plan that is proposed by Zion Breen & Richardson, a noted landscape architecture firm that created the original landscape plan for this site as well as the garden at the Museum of Modern Art and Paley Park in New York City.

#### A. Reduction in Building Height

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<sup>1</sup> The measuring point used for this calculation of building is the midpoint of the Subject Property's frontage along M Street.

In response to the Commissioners' concerns about the proposed 120-foot height of the new structures in the original proposal, the Applicant has removed one story from each new tower, reducing the height of the two new structures to 112 feet. Further, the Applicant will continue to provide a one-to-one setback on the top floor. This type of setback, which is an established and effective method for diminishing the apparent height of buildings in the District, provides a layered façade that sets up a cornice line at approximately 102 feet. As noted previously, plans, elevations, and sections of the two new structures are attached as Exhibit A.

The Applicant believes that this height is both necessary and appropriate for the PUD project. When seen in their urban design context, the height and massing of the proposed new buildings permits them to define urban spaces and reinforce the original street-oriented L'Enfant plan for the Federal City. The new structures must differentiate themselves from the existing Pei buildings, which rise to approximately 90 feet. Careful shaping and architectural detailing, combined with the reduction in height, provide adequate scaling effects that make the new structures compatible with the existing Pei buildings. Further, the new structures must relate to the neighboring Waterside Mall office tower, which rises to 130 feet. The stepping down in height from the 130-foot Waterside Mall office tower to the 112-foot proposed residential height (with setbacks at 102 feet) to the 90-foot height of the existing Pei buildings, is typical of the stepping skyline arrangements of mid-twentieth century Modernist urban design, as well as other architectural eras.

The height of the new buildings will be the same as the 112-foot tall residential and office structures at the adjacent Waterside Mall complex, which were granted first-

stage PUD approval by the Commission in Case No. 02-38. In that case, the Zoning Commission noted:

25. The height of the buildings will range from renovations with additions at 56 feet; new construction at seventy-nine (79) and 112 feet; and renovation of two (2) existing office towers at 130 feet. **The new residential buildings are proposed to be 112 feet high, as are the two (2) office buildings on M Street. The reason for the height of 112 feet is to allow for extra height (12 feet) at the ground floor level to make the space optimal for retail establishments.** (Z.C. Order No. 02-38, p. 5, emphasis added.)

Moreover, the draft Comprehensive Plan that is currently being prepared and reviewed by the Office of Planning includes an action item which requests that the Zoning Commission and the Office of Planning:

Determine the feasibility of zoning amendments which would permit higher ground floor retail ceiling heights in commercial and mixed use districts. The current building height limits preclude the development of ground floor space in keeping with national standards without reducing overall gross leasable building area or placing a portion of the ground floor below the street level. (Action ED-2.2-B: Retail Ceiling Heights.)

Copies of Zoning Commission Order No. 02-38 and the pertinent portion of the draft Comprehensive Plan are attached as Exhibit B. The proposed building height of 112 feet for the new structures is entirely consistent with the Zoning Commission's first-stage approval of Case No. 02-38 and with ideas being put forth in the Comprehensive Plan review process. Indeed, the 14-foot slab height for retail provides the potential for true Class A retail space. Within the same 112-foot high building envelope, this project has achieved an additional 2 feet of retail height as compared to the proposed structures at Waterside Mall.

The Applicant also believes that the 112-foot height is consistent with the historical character of urban development and design in Southwest Washington and

future plans for the Southwest Waterfront. The proposed 112-foot tall buildings are consistent with other 9-10 story residential buildings in the immediate area, including towers in Tiber Island across M Street to the south and Waterside Towers across 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. The two new buildings will also be shorter than the proposed 11-12 story towers envisioned at the intersection of M Street and the Southwest Waterfront, as proposed in the Southwest Waterfront plan (which has been approved by the City Council as a Small Area Plan to the DC Comprehensive Plan).

The new structures respond to the width of M Street, which is 120 feet wide at the intersection with 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, which is 100 feet wide. The Applicant believes, in particular, that the 112-foot tower along M Street is appropriate to anchor and define this major L'Enfant boulevard.

B. Design Revisions and Maintenance of Enhanced Open and Landscaped Spaces

The Applicant has reshaped the footprint of the two new buildings, particularly along the sides that face the existing Pei towers, in order to enhance the scale relationship between the proposed and existing buildings. As a result of the design changes, the existing I.M. Pei buildings will read more properly as “buildings in the round,” consistent with Pei’s original design for the two towers. Most significantly, the two new buildings now feature a contraflective “S” curve that creates a more slender, graceful, and delicate three-dimensional building form. This change, when coupled with the reduction in height, creates a more dynamic relationship between the new and existing buildings. Further, the sinuous curve serves as a lively counterpoint to the flat, highly ordered, regular grid of Pei’s facades. Like the stepping heights of the buildings, this contrast is also an element of Modernism.

A key component of the Modern development pattern that characterizes Southwest Washington is the “tower in the park” rhythm of tall residential structures with generous and varied open space. The Subject Property features a significant open space at its center which was designed by the noted landscape architecture firm, Zion Breen. The Applicant has brought that firm, now known as Zion Breen & Richardson, back to renovate and update its original landscape plan to accommodate the new project.

Zion Breen & Richardson will also design two new ‘vest pocket’ parks located between the existing Pei buildings and the Applicant’s proposed residential buildings. Zion Breen designed Paley Park in New York City, broadly regarded as the definitive example of such urban retreats. Lastly, Zion Breen & Richardson will design a new linear garden flanking 6<sup>th</sup> Street between the Pei buildings that will be a quiet oasis, open to the public during the day. Two small pavilions that define the ends of this space will allow for vending of light refreshments.

Given the central role that open space played in the planned design of Southwest Washington, the Applicant believes that significant attention should be given to the preservation and renovation of this feature of the original Marina View site plan. The resulting composition of five buildings (three existing, including the 130-foot Waterside Mall tower, and two new), surrounding a central garden, is therefore completely compatible with the theoretical planning and architecture principles which underpin the mid-century redevelopment of Southwest Washington. The introduction of new landscape areas is further in keeping with these design principles.

C. Historic Preservation Component

As noted previously, the existing Marina View Towers, along with the two structures on the east side of the Waterside Mall complex known as Town Center Plaza, were designed by I.M. Pei. While they are not among his most well-known designs, the structures are important because they contribute to the greater pattern of Modern architecture and urban planning that characterizes Southwest Washington. These buildings are currently not designated as individual historic landmarks, nor are they deemed to be contributing buildings in a historic district. The Applicant, representatives of the Historic Preservation Office, and members of the District of Columbia Preservation League (“DCPL”) have engaged in discussions regarding whether these buildings should be the subject of a historic landmark application or whether they should be included in a new Southwest Historic District. All parties consider these buildings to represent a significant contribution by I.M. Pei to the Modern architectural character of Southwest Washington.

The Applicant intends to renovate the exterior of the Pei buildings by replacing the exterior glass walls and windows with insulated glass panels and windows in the same geometric configuration.<sup>2</sup> The Applicant also intends to repair the exposed concrete so that the renovated buildings should appear as they did originally. The Applicant proposes to expand the lobbies in each structure by replacing the existing glass walls with new curved glass walls that are sympathetic but clearly new interventions. This modest expansion will allow for a functional attractive lobby, while maintaining the arcade as an open and attractive loggia, consistent with the original design. The Applicant also proposes to create new penthouse levels in simple volumes at the top of each tower. The

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<sup>2</sup> Given Washington’s brutal summers and cold winters, Pei’s single-paned, glass-walled buildings stand apart from those designed by local firms that perhaps better understood the local climate. The new glass panels help adapt Pei’s original design to the D.C. climate.

penthouses would enclose, or screen, the building's major mechanical components and the remaining area would be used as residential space. These will be sympathetic, yet distinguishable, in keeping with good preservation practice. Illustrations of the proposed restoration program are included in Exhibit A.

Finally, it should be noted that the two new buildings do not negatively affect the contributing historic aspects of Marina View Towers. Rather, they replace surface parking lots which detract from the tower-in-the-park model, with new residential uses and additional greenspace. Further, construction of the new structures enables the proper restoration of the existing Pei structures and integrates the historic buildings into an attractive and active residential community. The Applicant believes that it is entirely appropriate to consider this aspect of the project to be consistent with Section 2403.9(d) of the Zoning Regulations that "historic preservation of private and public structures, places, or parks" are to be considered public benefits and project amenities.<sup>3</sup>

#### D. Project Data

The total gross floor area included in the modified PUD project is approximately 604,661 square feet for a total Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") of 4.47. As mentioned previously, both new buildings will have a height of 112 feet, with the top floor set back at a ratio of one-to-one along the M, K and 6<sup>th</sup> Street frontages of each structure. The proposed project will have a lot occupancy of approximately 50% and will include approximately 568 parking spaces. The proposed project has a height and FAR that is

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<sup>3</sup> The Applicant notes that the Zoning Commission's approval of a PUD application for the former Capital Children's Museum site, Z.C. Order No. 04-22, acknowledged that the renovation and rehabilitation of the historically significant portions of the Capital Children's Museum building was a project amenity, despite the fact that the former Capital Children's Museum building was not a designated historic landmark, nor was it located in a historic district.

significantly less than what is permitted under the C-3-C District PUD Guidelines (maximum FAR of 8.0 and a maximum building height of 130 feet).

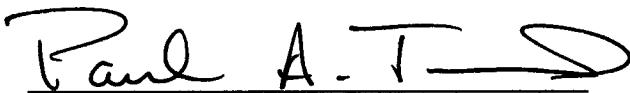
### III. CONCLUSION

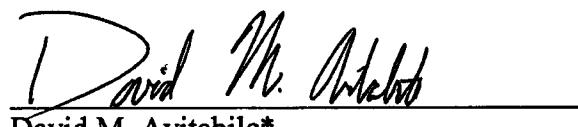
The Applicant believes that this document and the attached materials fully and completely addresses the issues raised by the Zoning Commissioners at the March 13, 2006 public meeting. The Applicant believes that this information, along with the materials that were submitted in the initial application package, support a decision by the Zoning Commission to schedule a public hearing for this PUD and Zoning Map Amendment application.

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the Zoning Commission to set the PUD and accompanying Zoning Map Amendment applications down for a public hearing at the earliest possible date.

Respectfully submitted,

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