

October 25, 2006
1600 North Capitol Street, NW – Zoning Commission Case No. 06-04
Narrative of Alternate Schemes

Background

As requested by the Zoning Commission at their last public meeting, we have further developed and submit herein 3 revised architectural design schemes for this project. As the basis for this work, we have reviewed the meeting notes and comments made by commissioners during the July 27 and September 25 Zoning Commission meetings and have studied examples of successful solutions to residential buildings on similar sites, with similar street and geometrical conditions. Many of the images are prominently located within the nation's capital, and are provided herein as a reference.

We believe the architectural comments made by the Commission have led to an appropriately enhanced design of the building. The fundamental approach, characterized by the use of a vertical tower element anchoring the building to the ground at the corner, along with a series of projecting rectangular bays stepping appropriately towards the north and west, remains a feature in all schemes. This tower, a clear reference to the cylindrical shape of the Capitol dome directly to the south, is flanked by secondary masses announcing the building entry and forming the "hinge" about which the building turns the corner. These forms make the necessary transition from both main street planes and reflect the curving property line, which is a remnant of the original Truxton Circle. The remaining building massing, characterized by successive masonry planes that layer back from the street, along with the introduction of a mansard roof with dormers on Scheme A and B and projecting bays juxtaposed with the main façade behind, breaks down the scale of the building and its interface with its adjacent neighbors.

We made a few key changes to the alternate schemes submitted herein. First, all schemes show a cylinder dimension reduced by 16 feet and in some cases moved forward from its original location thereby increasing the verticality of the element. We believe the cylinder is now better proportioned to the site. Second, we de-emphasized the massing at the 'floating' corner bays flanking the cylinder. Schemes A and B show the bays extended to the ground, eliminating the heavy overhang and deep shadows at the courtyard. Scheme C retains the 'floating' bays but substantially reduces the width of the bay and the depth of the overhang, creating some interest and depth while minimizing the shadow. Third, all rooflines were simplified by both moving guardrails back beyond site lines, or eliminating them all together by raising the parapet wall. Finally, all schemes show a reduced width of the main stairs and more green space at the building entry. The quantity of railings is greatly reduced while the handicapped ramp remains screened by the landscaped areas along the curved public sidewalk.

Scheme A

Reference Images 1,2,3

This is the most conservative architectural solution. This scheme fundamentally reduces the monumentality and commercial appearance of the original design and makes it more "residential" in character. For this scheme, we have eliminated the strong precast vertical "columns" and "piers" along the upper levels of the building and created masonry façades with punched single and paired double-hung windows on all faces. These windows, although remaining larger to afford greater views and sunlight, are a more residential scale. The cylinder, clad in a slightly contrasting brick to set it apart from the rectilinear forms of the remainder of the building, uses single double-hung windows split by vertical brick pilasters to maintain its verticality. The original steel cornice at the top of the tower has been transformed into a solid panel cornice supported on ribbed brackets. The flanking bays to each side of the cylinder are extended to the ground from their original raised position and the setback "pavilions" above have been integrated into a secondary mass which forms a transition to the cylindrical entry element as well as a setback penthouse feature. The projecting bays and façade rhythm of the original design remain, as well as the playful use of masonry at the base of the building and "ribboning" through the beltline of the facades. In order to make the entry more inviting, we have eliminated the recessed

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doors, which are now brought out to the face of the building to reinforce the tower form and reduce shadows. In this scheme, as in all the revised schemes, we have significantly reduced the width of entry steps from the sidewalk, improved the area of green space at the raised entry plaza, and have reduced the visual impact of the rooftop railings by setting them back a greater distance from each building face.

Scheme B

Reference Images 4,5,6

Maintaining the overall massing of Scheme A, Scheme B takes the residential building vocabulary a step further. The cylindrical tower, pulled out towards the corner, is articulated as a series of horizontal brick "bands" which contrast with the punched window facades along each street. Although we have maintained the same field brick color with accent bands throughout, we have created a more contemporary pattern of windows at each exposure and a continuous horizontal band of glass at the tower. At the top, the cornice is now punctuated by openings to appear to "float" above the cylinder below, and create a visual transition of the building to the sky.

Scheme C

Reference Images 7,8

Decidedly the most contemporary of the 3 schemes, Scheme C is characterized by a sleeker cylinder that is topped by a more open frame of steel, and the repositioning and reportioning of the projecting bays against the main brick facades. With the exception of the retail entry, the bay widths and heights are now consistent, creating a more uniform appearance to the three building facades. The mansard roof with dormers along both facades has been eliminated and the masonry facades have been raised a half floor. The projecting bays on the North Capitol Street façade are one story taller to create a greater verticality, uniformity and a stronger façade rhythm. The cylindrical tower and the projecting bays are faced with light colored metal panels and aluminum glazing systems; all creating a contemporary counterpoint to the masonry facades fronting each street. The playful masonry facades maintain the same level of detail and richness as Schemes A and B, utilizing horizontal accent banding at the base, and soldier coursing above windows. Exterior balconies with metal railings along each bay have been added to allow access to private outdoor space and reinforce the residential vocabulary of this scheme.



1600 North Capitol Street, NW - Representative Images - 1



1600 North Capitol Street, NW - Representative Images - 2



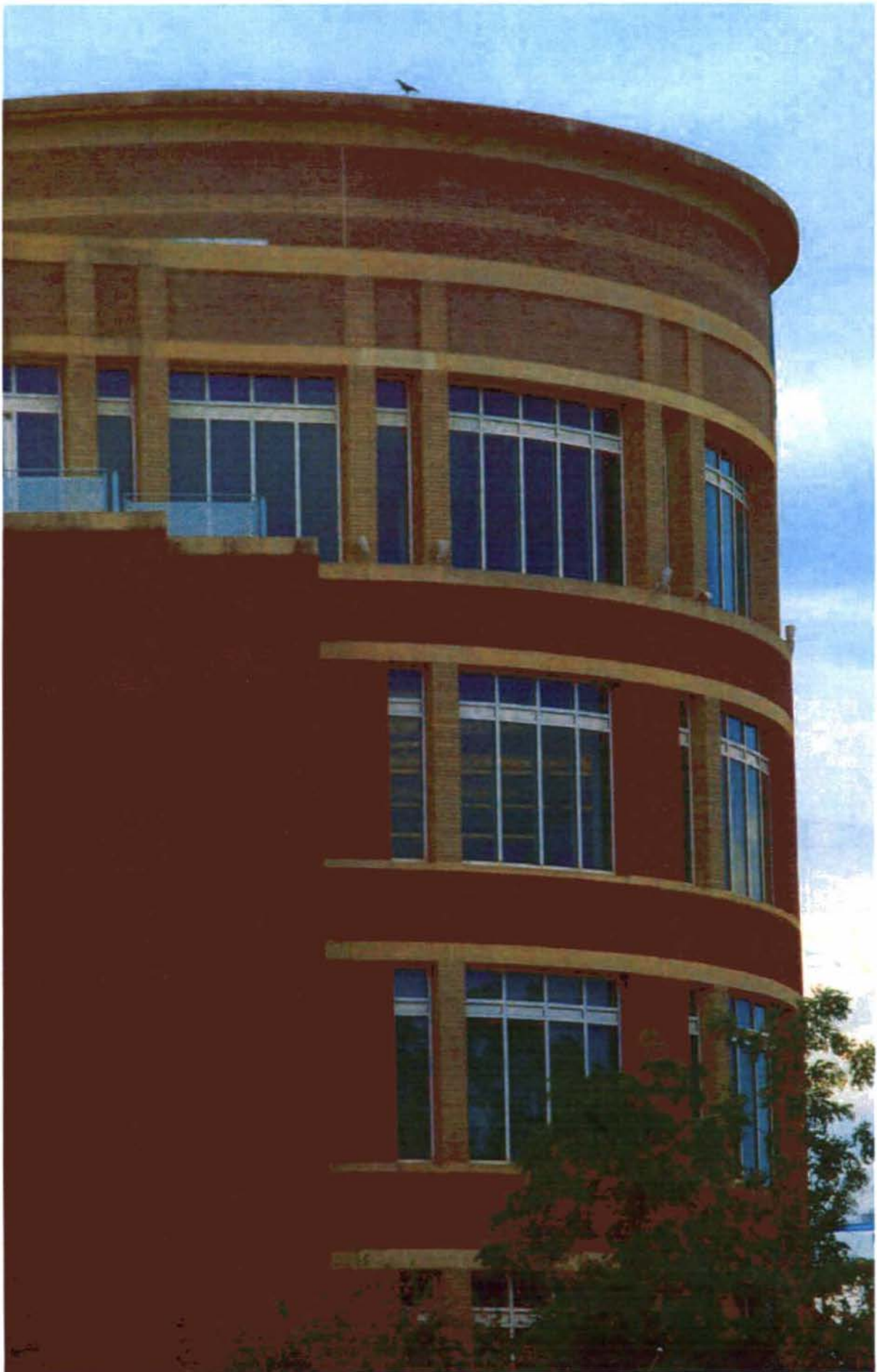
1600 North Capitol Street, NW - Representative Images - 3



1600 North Capitol Street, NW - Representative Images - 4



1600 North Capitol Street, NW - Representative Images - 5



1600 North Capitol Street, NW - Representative Images - 6



1600 North Capitol Street, NW - Representative Images - 7



1600 North Capitol Street, NW - Representative Images - 8