

VERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



Memorandum

TO: Zoning Commission

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, *AS*
Development Review and Historic Preservation

DATE: March 9, 2008

SUBJECT: Setdown Report for Zoning Commission Case 08-08
3910-3912 Georgia Avenue, NW
(Square 2906, Lot 848 and 849)

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 08-08-27
EXHIBIT NO. 27

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Office of Planning requests that the Zoning Commission waive its rules and accept the report into the record less than ten days prior to the requested action

The Office of Planning recommends that the case be setdown for public hearing

The Office of Planning also requests that the Commission authorize the immediate advertisement of the text.

The Department of Housing and Community Development is also requesting a waiver of hearing fees pursuant to §3042 11DCMR.

OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The project is proposed to be a mixed use, LEED ND development that will include about 130 affordable housing units with a day care and primary care medical clinic on the ground floor. The project is consistent with the requirements of the proposed Georgia Avenue Commercial Overlay District and the Comprehensive Plan and would help to continue the revitalization of the Georgia Avenue corridor and would provide affordable housing.

BACKGROUND

In July 2007 the applicant applied for and received approval from the Board of Zoning Adjustment for variance relief from parking and loading and special exception approval to construct a building in excess of 12,000 square feet in the GA Overlay.

The project always anticipated using the provision of the Inclusionary Zoning regulations for a final project with a lot occupancy of 80% (5% over that allowed in the GA/C-3-A district), a height of 70' (5' over the GA/C-3-A district) and a floor-area-ratio of 4.23 FAR (0.23 FAR over that allowed in the GA/C-3-A district). Due to the fact that the IZ regulations are within their administrative regulatory comment period and not yet final, the applicant has decided to proceed and request a consolidated PUD in order to gain the extra affordable units, lot occupancy and FAR within the timeframe of their funding requirements.

ZONING COMMISSION
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PROPOSAL

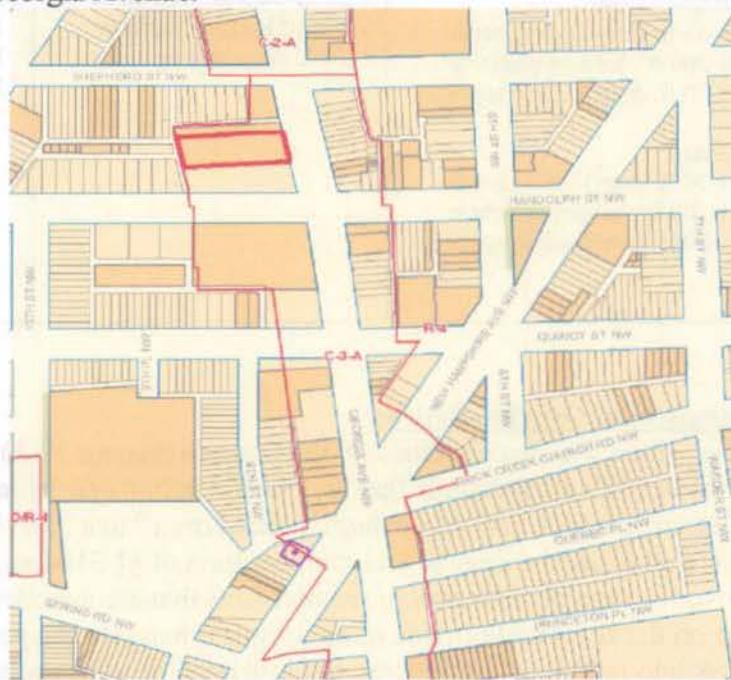
The applicant proposes to demolish the existing one-story building and replace it with a six-story apartment building consisting of 130 dwelling units and 21,283 square feet of ground floor retail. The dwelling unit mix would include studios, one-, two-, and, three-bedrooms with loft. To complement the residential use there would be shared outdoor residential space in the second floor courtyard and on the rooftop. The proposed first floor retail will be occupied by a primary care medical clinic.

The applicant has stated that the building would contain all affordable units, of which 62 will be aimed at 60% AMI utilizing the federal tax credit and the remaining units will be aimed at 80-100% AMI (i.e. workforce housing). The project will also pursue LEED ND certification for the building and has proposed to use environmentally sensitive stormwater management and heating/cooling systems and will include a green roof.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is located at 3910-3912 Georgia Avenue, NW (Square 2906, Lots 848 and 849) in the Petworth neighborhood of Ward 4 and is approximately 31,000 square feet in area. The property is generally bounded by Shepherd Street to the north; Georgia Avenue to the east; Randolph Street to the south; and Kansas Avenue to the west. A fifteen foot wide public alley abuts the property on the northern and western property lines. The property is currently improved with a vacant commercial building, which would be demolished to make way for the proposed building.

The subject property and the others fronting on Georgia Avenue in this area are developed with predominantly commercial buildings and some residential units in the C-3-A district. They are within the proposed Georgia Avenue Commercial Overlay District. The area abutting the commercial district is developed with a mixture of rowhouses and apartments in the R-4 district. The Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro Station is two blocks or approximately 690 feet south of the property along Georgia Avenue.



ZONING REQUIREMENTS

The subject site is within the proposed Georgia Avenue Commercial Overlay District and the C-3-A district. The purposes of the proposed Georgia Avenue Commercial Overlay District is to implement the objectives of the Georgia Avenue – Petworth Metro Station Area and Corridor Plan; implement the goals of the Great Streets Framework Plan for 7th Street – Georgia Avenue; encourage additional residential uses along the Georgia Avenue corridor; encourage improved commercial uses; provide uniform building design standards; set guidelines for development review through PUD and special exception proceedings; and establish vertically-mixed uses (ground floor commercial and residential above) within a quarter mile of the Georgia Avenue – Petworth Metrorail Station along Georgia Avenue, from Park Road to Shepherd Street.

The C-3-A district permits medium density residential development with incentives for residential use within a general pattern of mixed-use development. The districts are compact in area and are along arterial streets, in uptown centers, and at rapid transit stops.

Table 1

Item	Required/Allowed	Proposed	Deviation / Relief
Lot area	PUD: 15,000 sf Matter-of-Right: None	3,100 sq. ft.	None
Lot Occupancy	PUD: 80% Matter-of-Right: 75%	80%	5 %
Rear yard	Not less than 12 ft.	76 ft.	None
FAR	PUD: 4.5 Matter-of-Right: 4.0	4.7 (requesting 5% per 2405.3)	0.7
Height	PUD: 90 ft. Sp Except (GA Overlay): 70 ft. Matter-of-Right: 65 ft.	75 ft.	10 feet
Parking	Residential – 65 Retail - 45 Total - 119	Residential – 65 Retail - 45 Total - 103	Residential – none Retail - ?? Total - 16
Loading	Residential: 1-55 ft. deep loading berth 1-200 ft ² loading platform 1-20 ft. deep loading space Retail: 1-30 ft. deep loading berth 1-100 ft ² loading platform 1-20 ft. deep loading space	2-30 ft. deep loading berth 2-100 ft ² loading platform 1-20 ft. deep loading space	Residential: 1-55 ft. deep loading berth 1-200 ft ² loading platform 1-20 ft. deep loading space

Georgia Avenue Commercial Overlay District

The subject property is within the area governed by the Georgia Avenue (GA) Commercial Overlay District. Section 1329.2(b) requires that the “*Construction of a building on a lot that has twelve thousand square feet (12,000 ft.²) or more in land area*” that is within the overlay district should be reviewed under the Special Exception criteria of §§ 3104 and 1304.

Section 1328 of the overlay recommends design requirements that are intended to improve the pedestrian experience on the street and provide more openness between the pedestrians and buildings, direct access into individual businesses, minimization of solid walls, and vehicular access across sidewalks. The project is generally consistent with the design guidelines.

The proposed development would feature a building that has a cast stone base and upper floors of metal panel and cementitious siding. The architecture would be of a modern style consistent with the newer buildings but complements the older brick buildings in the area. The proposed building would be located along the property line abutting Georgia Avenue with more than 75% of the building wall along the property line. There would be two areas that are recessed to highlight the entrances into the building. A detailed analysis will be provided as part of the hearing report.

The parking and loading areas would be accessed through the 15 foot wide public alleys to the west and north of the site. The north alley is off Georgia Avenue while the west alley is off Randolph Street, therefore, there would be no conflicts with pedestrian access to the building along Georgia Avenue. The proposed on-site parking would be adequate to serve the residents and patrons of the retail uses. . Traffic movements would be further addressed in the Department of Transportation (DDOT) report.

PUBLIC BENEFITS AND AMENITIES

Affordable and Family Housing

The project will provide 62 affordable units at 60% of the Washington Metropolitan Area Median Income (AMI). The 2008 AMI is equal to \$99,000 for a family of four. Households earning 60% of AMI currently range from \$41,580 for a single member household to \$59,400 for a family of four. The remaining 68 units would be initially marketed at households earning between 80% of AMI to 100% of AMI, but would float with market conditions. This would allow higher income households to live in the project and create a greater mix of incomes. Finally, the units would include not only studios, one and two-bedrooms, but up to five three bedroom units as well, one of which would be affordable at 60% of AMI. Multi-family, three-bedroom, family sized units are rarely developed under current market conditions making it increasingly difficult for families to find housing in the District. The combination of both affordable units, mixed with market rate, and family sized units all near a metro station means this project delivers significant public benefits toward the District's housing goals articulated in the Comprehensive Plan.

The project will also include a primary care facility to serve the medical needs of the community.

Comprehensive Plan

The Generalized Land Use Map identifies the site for mixed use medium density residential and moderate density commercial. The proposed uses and development density is not inconsistent with this designation

The Generalized Policy Map includes the site as part of a Main Street Mixed Use Corridor. This designation recognizes a pedestrian-oriented environment with traditional ground floor storefronts, upper story residential and a desire to foster economic development and housing opportunity to serve the neighborhood needs. The proposed uses and development density furthers the goals of this designation.

The site is within the Mid-City Area Element of the Comprehensive Plan which calls for affordable housing (§MC-1.1.7), redevelopment of infill sites “especially along Georgia Avenue” (§MC-1.1.3) providing local services and small businesses that service the neighborhoods (§MC-1.1.4).

The inclusion of several three bedroom units is rare within new construction and is particularly consistent with housing policy:

Policy H-1.3.1: Housing for Families

Provide a larger number of housing units for families with children by encouraging new and retaining existing single family homes, duplexes, row houses, and three- and four-bedroom apartments. 505.6

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

On June 12, 2007 ANC-4C voted to recommend approval of the requested variances and special exception approval before the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) supports the redevelopment of the subject property with a mixed use development that is consistent with the requirements of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, Georgia Avenue Commercial Overlay District and the standards of the inclusionary zoning regulations. The redevelopment would help to continue the revitalization of the Georgia Avenue corridor and would provide affordable housing and a primary care medical facility. The applicant is facing a very tight funding timeframe due to the involvement of public funds from the Department of Housing and Community Development. In order to facilitate the project moving forward with the greatest public good and the maximized number of affordable units, the Office of Planning recommends the case be set down for a public hearing and that the Commission authorize the immediate advertisement of the text.