GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the Director

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Jerrily R. Kress
Director

FROM: Kenneth Laden
Associate Director

DATE: July 1, 2002

SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 16892—10th and F Street, NW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application and other material accompanying your memorandum about BZA case No. 16892. The application was filed by Holland and Knight, LLP, on behalf of Douglas Development Corporation. The Subject Property is located at the southeastern corner of 10th and F, NW and will be a mixed-use development, with ground- and belowground-level retail, offices, and a few high-end residential units.

Title 11 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, Section 1701.4, prohibits street frontages on 10th Street NW from E to F Streets, and on F Street NW from 7th to 15th Streets, from constructing driveways. This property fronts both 10th Street and F Street along the stretch affected by this regulation.

The regulations notwithstanding, continued use of an existing curb cut and driveway on 10th Street will be required in order for the property to provide access to a planned underground parking garage. Thus, the applicant is requesting a variance that will allow it to continue using the curb cut and driveway to access the parking garage.

BZA
Case No. 16892
Exhibit No. 34

DDOT Opinion Summary

Because driveways are prohibited on both of the property's street frontages, and alternate access through the public alley is impractical, without a variance the Subject Property will not have access to a parking garage. In addition, the proposed streetscape plans for 10th Street NW have already made allowance for the curb cut and driveway, which are

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longstanding. For these reasons, the Department of Transportation has no issue with the variance requested by the applicant, and recommends that the BZA approve the variance request.

Variance request

As an historic building, this site does not have any parking or loading berth requirements. However, the building is proposing to construct an underground garage that will hold up to 220 vehicles. There are two possible access points for this garage—off of 10th Street and off of the public alley.

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow for the continued use of the curb cut and driveway that currently exist on 10th Street NW. The applicant previously requested a variance that would allow for a loading berth off of the same driveway, but has since withdrawn this request. Instead, the applicant will use the driveway as an entrance to the building's parking garage only, and will not construct a loading berth. The curb cut and driveway are longstanding.

Use of the public alley on F Street for garage access would allow the building to conform with the regulations that prohibit driveways on 10th Street. However, this would mean that all of the vehicles would have to use the alley to access the garage. The F Street alley, which is narrow at 15' across, serves the entire alley system for the block, and would frequently see truck traffic that would conflict with vehicular traffic.

It seems generally preferable for vehicles to avoid the public alley and potential truck conflicts and access the parking lot from 10th Street. The existing curb cut and driveway would have to remain. Provisions for the curb cut have been made in the proposed 10th Street streetscape plans.

Loading area

The applicant had previously requested a variance for the construction of a 55' loading berth on 10th Street that would utilize the same curb cut and driveway as the parking garage. The loading berth would primarily be used by the neighboring Fords Theatre. However, the applicant subsequently retracted this request. This is unfortunate, for it appears that there is a need for this size of loading berth along 10th Street and the current state of affairs is anything but ideal.

As the applicant described to DDOT, 55' trucks delivering to Fords Theatre currently do not have access to a loading berth. Instead, they arrive, park in the street outside the Theatre, and transfer their goods to 30' trucks. These 30' trucks then go through the alley to unload in the back. With a neighboring loading berth, this procedure would no longer have to happen, and 10th Street could be left free of 55' trucks. However, DDOT has been told that this option is no longer being pursued.

Instead, the Subject Property will use the public alley for access by trucks with a maximum length of 30'. As stated earlier, the property is subject to no loading berth requirements, because it is historic.

Conclusion

Because driveways are prohibited on both of the property's street frontages, and alternate access through the public alley is impractical, without a variance the Subject Property will not have access to a parking garage. In addition, the proposed streetscape plans for 10th Street NW have already made allowance for this curb cut. For these reasons, the Department of Transportation has no issue with the variance requested by the applicant, and recommends that the BZA approve the variance request.