

By E-Mail

Memorandum

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Date: November 17, 2006

To: Monte Edwards
Stanton Park Neighborhood Association

From: Norman M. Glasgow, Jr. *NMG*
Steven E. Sher *SES*
Director of Zoning and Land Use Services

Re: 601-645 H Street, N.E.

You have asked us to describe why the site at 601-645 H Street, N.E. (Square 859, lot 177) is unique in ways that would support a building having nine stories within the permitted height and why, therefore, it would not serve as a precedent for other developments to seek the same number of stories and total density as that proposed for the site. We suggest that the site is unique for the following reasons:

1. It is the only lot along the H Street corridor from 2nd Street to Florida Avenue that is zoned C-2-C. When the Zoning Commission went through the H Street Overlay District proceeding and made some changes to the underlying zoning, this lot was left with the zoning that it had: C-2-C along the H Street frontage and C-2-A to the rear. See the portion of the Zoning Map, attached.
2. It is the only site along the H Street corridor where the height permitted as a matter-of-right is 90 feet.
3. It is the only single lot along the H Street corridor where the depth of the commercial zoning exceeds 200 feet and where the lot extends far enough away from the H Street frontage that the rear portion of the lot is surrounded on three sides by rowhouse type residential development in the R-4 zone, which the applicant has addressed by limiting height in certain areas to 40 feet rather than the permitted 50 feet.
4. It is the only site along the H Street corridor containing existing office towers, which flank the block at either corner. See the aerial photos attached.

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CASE NO. 17521

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The combination of the factors listed in items 2, 3 and 4 are exceptional and extraordinary and have a direct bearing on the need to include nine stories on the C-2-C portion of the site, extended 35 feet into the C-2-A portion. The C-2-A area, even with the extension of the zoning line, will be limited to eight stories. The envelope into which the building must fit is squeezed by: (1) the amount of the footprint taken up by the existing office towers; (2) the limitation on height along the rear portion of the site to address community concerns; (3) the setbacks from the property line on the sides facing residential development across the alleys caused by the desire to accommodate community concerns about potential impact from the development; (4) the lot occupancy provisions in the Overlay, which reduce what is permitted from 80% under the C-2-C District to 70% under the Overlay, where for this type of site under the Design Guidelines 100% lot occupancy is permitted; and (5) the lowered height of the building along the south side. When all these factors are taken together, it is clear that there is no other site along the H Street corridor which possesses the same attributes and characteristics as the subject property and where achieving nine stories permits some recapture of density and FAR lost elsewhere on the site to address a number of community concerns and where an existing office building limits the ability to reallocate the ninth floor area along H Street.

Let us know if you have any further questions or if we may be of further assistance.

Attachments

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