



TORTI GALLAS AND PARTNERS · CHK

Architects of Community

November 2, 2004

Ms. Ellen McCarthy
Ms. Toni Griffin
Government of the District of Columbia
Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Re: Office of Planning Proposed Mount Vernon District
5th and K

Dear Ellen and Toni,

We are writing this letter as a follow up to our October 15, 2004 meeting to review our September 7, 2004 letter regarding our concerns about the impact of the proposed Mount Vernon District as it relates to our 5th and K project. We offer the following clarifications and / or changes to our original letter as a result of discussions in the aforementioned meeting, as well as in the evolution of the design, as documented in our October 22, 2004 RLARC Submission, we have been able to adjust the design to address some of the issues

In reviewing the draft of the above mentioned document provided us, we offer the following analysis of the proposed Mount Vernon District as it relates to our October 22, 2004 RLARC submission of the 5th and K project. Excerpts from the preliminary report are in italics.

Office of Planning Preliminary Report, updated July 9, 2004:

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Paragraph one. refers to large tract review for Square 515.

The proposed district, other than Square 515, is in the Central Employment Area. As such, Square 515 remains subject to Large Tract Review, if applicable based on the size of the project.

5th & K is located on Square 515, and we do not anticipate going through Large Tract Review, as the land is owned by the city and the plans for the site are reviewed and approved by the RLARC.

Paragraph 3, number 1.

A minimum ground floor height is established that ensures 14-foot high clear space for a depth of at least thirty-six feet back from the building line. .that within the clear space there shall be no elements of building structure other than columns and no components of mechanical electrical or plumbing system

As we have compiled more detailed grading and topographic information and developed the design, it appears that this requirement will only be an issue in retail suites C and D on 5th Street. Grade diminishes along 5th street to the south and also on K street to the east, so as we move south along 5th Street and east on K Street we increase retail space height to exceed the 14 feet requirement. We have already foregone mezzanine / second floor retail space above Retail Suites A and B to achieve increased ceiling height, however if there was

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some flexibility here it would allow us to increase the square footage of and improve the marketability of our mezzanine retail space

Within Retail Suites A and B, if we were to add second floor / mezzanine retail space, we would have exactly 14 feet clear from top of slab to underside of slab at the ground floor retail. This space would have plumbing and mechanical drops from the mezzanine retail space above, as well as drop heads at columns that would encroach in the 14 foot clearance.

Within Retail Suite C we have 14 feet 6 inches and in Retail Suite D we have 14 feet 11 inches clear from top of slab to underside of slab. Again, plumbing and mechanical drops from the mezzanine retail space above, as well as drop heads at columns that would likely encroach in the 14 foot clearance.

Continuing to the south along 5th street and east along K Street, as sidewalk grade falls away, we have the following clear dimensions from top of slab to underside of slab in the ground floor retail:

Retail Suite E 15 feet, 3 inches

Retail Suite F. 16 feet ,2 inches and 17 feet, 8 inches

Retail Suite G/H: 17 feet, 11 inches

Retail Suites I,J&K 18 feet, 5 inches

Retail Suites L,M & N 18 feet, 11 inches

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Paragraph one:

OP contracted for a design and massing study for this, the intersection within the context of the district ..and its recommendations are in the proposed zoning text ..OP expects to provide a summary of the study to the Commission...

We have subsequently refined the design to comply with the suggested orientation of the corner space. Dimensionally, the space would be approximately 60 ft. wide x 28 ft. deep (measured from right of way lines) with some cantilevered overhang at approximately 30 ft. in the air. If measured for face of curbs on 5th Street and K Street, the dimensions of the space would be approximately 76 ft. wide x 76 ft. deep. Please note the dimensions of the space we are proposing are generally consistent with our competition and resubmission designs

Last paragraph:

Require that, for new or substantially rehabilitated buildings in Squares 483, 484 and 515 (this is us) .. there be double-height spaces in the half of the 72 foot by 72 foot zone that is nearest the corner.

At the October 15, 2004 meeting, OP reviewed the proposed double height space at the corner (as shown in our October 22, 2004 RLARC submission) and stated that this complies with the OP study.

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Last paragraph:

Driveways prohibited on: Both sides of K Street between 4th and 7th Streets, NW; other than anew driveway in Square 515 (Wax Museum) aligning with the existing north-south public alley in Square 516.

Our new private alley will not align exactly with the one across the street. Additionally, the Museum Square project also has an existing curb cut on K Street.



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The 4th paragraph:

. The ground floor shall measure at least 14 feet clear to the underside of the next floor's structure for a depth of 18 feet from the building line. Beyond the 18-foot depth, the ground floor shall measure at least 12 feet clear to the underside of the next floor's structure.

This alternate measurement is better, we would need to limit the build out of the mezzanine / second floor retail space above retail suites C and D to keep plumbing and other drops more than 18 feet back from the building line.

Proposed New Section 170x of 11 DCMR, Chapter 17 Downtown Development District, Mount Vernon Triangle District, July 2, 2004

Comments on sections that are duplicative of sections from the preceding Office of Planning Preliminary Report have been left out.

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Number (b) and sub-number (ii):

...At least fifty (50%) of the surface area of the streetwall between twelve feet (12 feet) and fourteen feet (14 feet) above grade shall be clear or clear / low emissivity glass as defined in this section.

We may require grilles and/or louvers in the upper zone of the storefront to accommodate supply air requirements for the retail space

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Number (e) and sub-number (ii):

not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the surface area of the street wall(s) at the ground floor of each building subject to the provisions of 1706..9©, to a height of at least twenty-two feet (22 feet) shall be devoted to display windows and to entrances to commercial uses or to the building provided....(u) At least seventy-five percent(75%) of the surface area ..shall be clear or clear/low-emissivity glass ...

We may require grilles and/or louvers in the upper zone of the storefront to accommodate supply air requirements for the retail space

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Number (iii):

.. it shall align with the north-south public alley in Square 516 existing on the effective date of these regulations;

Again, our proposed new private alley does not align with the existing alley on the south side of K street and there is already a curb cut at the existing Museum Square building.

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Number (a):

. there shall be no more than two driveways per block-face and such driveways shall be separated by no less than sixty (60) feet.

Same problem as above. Also, we do not meet the 60 ft separation, our alley is approximately 20 ft away from the existing Museum Square curb cut. On 9/3/04 we have had a preliminary meeting with Mr. Bah of DCDOT for a preliminary review of our private alleys and curb cuts and he agreed conceptually that they looked acceptable.

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170x.23:



The permitted uses do not mention apartment and condominium lobbies. We also need exit stair discharge, as well as lobbies and secondary entries for below grade parking, mezzanine retail space and a grocery store.

We thank you for meeting with us to discuss these matters. As you are aware, under the Zoning Commission's "setdown" rule, the most restrictive provisions of the proposed overlay and the current zoning apply until revised by the Zoning Commission. We have noted the provisions above which we cannot meet or that need to be modified to result in a "better" project for all. Because of the timing of our project which was well underway before the Overlay was proposed, and our desire to apply for building permits in the very near future, a resolution of these matters is essential. We look forward to reaching a resolution of these issues as soon as possible that both creates a viable and successful mixed use development as well as a first rate public realm and urban design that we all desire.

Sincerely,

Maurice Walters, AIA
Principal
Torti Gallas and Partners

Cc: Steve Cochran/ Office of Planning
Sam Yeung/ RLA
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Gerry Widdicombe/ Mt Vernon Alliance
Marc Dubick/ Duball
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