

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



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Memorandum

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

FROM:  Ellen McCarthy, Director
Office of Planning

CASE NO. 06-13

EXHIBIT NO. 14

DATE: June 2, 2006

SUBJECT: Setdown Report - ZC #06-13 (1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.)
Consolidated Planned Unit Development

APPLICATION

The applicants, 1000 Connecticut Avenue Associates and PNC Bank, Trustees propose to demolish two existing office buildings at the northwest corner of Connecticut Avenue, N.W. and K Street, N.W. and replace them with a larger, more efficient, new office building, with first floor retail. The applicant has requested that the proposal be reviewed as a consolidated Planned Unit Development (PUD). The property is within the C-4 district.

OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The proposed redevelopment of the site will replace two antiquated buildings with a more contemporary building befitting its prominent location in the central business district. The flexibility requested is relatively small and the development of the site as a PUD ensures a contribution to the construction of new affordable housing off-site. Setting this application down for a public hearing will also stimulate further discussion of the design and amenities appropriate to this primary commercial site. The Office of Planning (OP) recommends the Zoning Commission setdown this application for a public hearing with the understanding that, before the public hearing, the applicant addresses the issues of concern to the Office of Planning, particularly:

1. As part of the design presentation, the applicant should show in greater detail, the garage entrance, both open and closed, and any inside back wall for the garage that may be visible from the street.
2. The applicant should provide a detailed roof structure plan showing all dimensions.
3. The applicant should provide more documentation about the off-site housing proposed to be funded as part of the PUD. The correspondence in Tab B of the submission is a letter from the applicant.
4. The applicant should consult with the appropriate ANC and community groups.

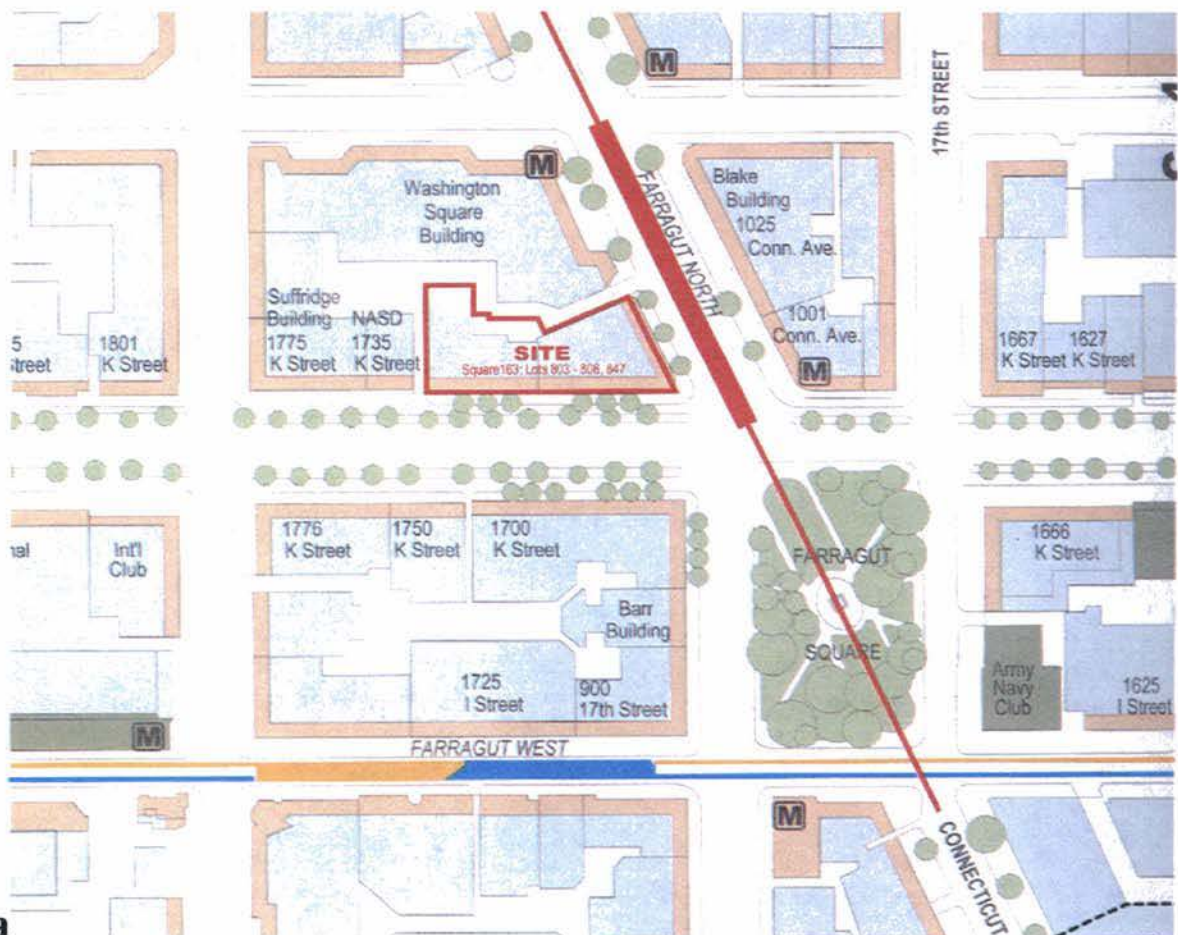
SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The subject property is developed with two office buildings designated as 1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. and 1725 K Street, N.W. (Square 163, Lots 803-806, 847 and a portion of an adjacent alley) (See Site Area Map below). The site is approximately 33,231 square feet, of which 224 square feet is from the closed alley, and is within a square that is developed with high rise office buildings.

The junction of Connecticut Avenue and K Street marks the intersection of two highly visible thoroughfares and this area is considered the epicenter of the central business district and of the private professional sector in the City. The area is developed with large scale contemporary commercial structures generally containing retail uses on the first floor and offices above. Although some of the older buildings rise to only 110 feet, the majority of buildings are 130 feet high.

Farragut Square, a park under National Park Service jurisdiction is diagonally across from the site. The Metro Farragut North, Red Line station is north of the site and exits are at the adjacent Washington Square building and directly across Connecticut Avenue. The Blue/Orange Line, Farragut West station is one block south, at 17th and I Streets.

The zoning for the site and for all nearby squares is C-4 (Attachment 1) as befits this section of the central business district.



Site Area

PROPOSAL

The applicant wishes to demolish the two office buildings on the site which were built in the 1950's and 1960's at an overall FAR of 10.70. The proposed development will be 369,393 gross square feet and will extend 143 feet along Connecticut Avenue and 325 feet along K Street. The project will include approximately 15,737 square feet of retail space on the ground floor along both adjacent streets. A 229 space underground parking garage will be entered from K Street, just to the east of the alley bordering the site on its west.

ZONING

The site is currently zoned C-4, Central Business District, which is “. . . designed for the downtown core that comprises the retail and office centers for both the District of Columbia and the metropolitan area.” The following table is a comparison of the C-4 standards, the C-4/PUD standards and the proposed development:

Table 1

	C-4 Standards	C-4/PUD Standards	Proposal
Area	N/A	15,000 sq. ft.	33,231 sq. ft.
Height	130 ft.*	130 ft.	130 ft.
FAR	10.0	11.0	11.11**
Lot Occupancy	100%	100%	100%
Rear Yard	12 ft. minimum or 2.5 ins./ft. of height or 17 ft.	12 ft. minimum or 2.5 ins./ft. of height or 17 ft.	Court in lieu of a rear yard
Parking	147 spaces/8 bicycle spaces	147 spaces/8 bicycle spaces	229 spaces/8 bicycle spaces
Loading	Office: 3 loading berth @ 30 ft. deep 3 loading platform @ 100 sq. ft 1 service/delivery space @ 20 ft. Retail: 1 loading berth @ 30 ft. deep 1 loading platform @ 100 sq. ft 1 service/delivery space @ 20 ft.	Office: 3 loading berth @ 30 ft. deep 3 loading platform @ 100 sq. ft 1 service/delivery space @ 20 ft. Retail: 1 loading berth @ 30 ft. deep 1 loading platform @ 100 sq. ft 1 service/delivery space @ 20 ft.	For Office and Retail Uses: 3 loading berth @ 30 ft. deep 1 service/delivery space @ 20 ft.

*The C-4 District permits a maximum height of 130 feet the property abuts a street which is at least 110 feet wide.

**Section 2405.2 and 2405.3 authorizes the Commission to allow an increase of not more than 5% on the maximum height and FAR.

FLEXIBILITY

FAR

According to Section 2405.2, the maximum floor area ratio for the total of the project may not exceed 11.0. Section 2405.3 gives the Commission the discretion to increase the height or FAR by 5% (maximum of 11.55 FAR) if such an increase “is essential to the successful functioning of the project” and is consistent with other PUD purposes and standards. The applicant proposes a FAR of 11.11. The applicant's statement did not present any discussion or details as to what are the circumstances that makes the additional 0.11 FAR “essential.”

Housing Linkage

Section 2404 links the Commission's discretionary awarding of additional commercial square footage through a PUD or an alley closing action to the applicant's effecting the provision of additional housing. The application is requesting additional square footage through both the PUD and the alley closing.

Section 2404.3 allows the applicant to provide the required housing by:

- a. Actual construction, as specified in Section 2404.6 or by;
- b. A financial contribution to a housing trust fund, as provided in Section 2404.7.

Section 2404.6 (b) allows the applicant to construct the housing, or "secure the housing production by other business arrangement . . ." The applicant has chosen to participate in the construction of affordable housing and has entered into a Contract Construction Agreement with the Marshall Heights Community Development Organization (MHCDO) (See Tab B of the applicants February 21, 2006 submission) to provide \$641,700 to assist in writing down the cost of construction for a minimum of 12,834 square feet of affordable housing to the residential housing market in southeast Washington. MHCDO is a well-established and successful housing provider of affordable housing. Under the agreement the affordable dwellings will be constructed on vacant land at 4th Street S.E. and Mississippi Avenue, S.E. and will be a part of the Wheeler Hills Estate housing development. The area is shown on the District of Columbia Generalized Land Use Policies Map as the Wheeler Hill Estates Housing Opportunity Area (#25).

The square footage of new or rehabilitated housing is calculated according to Section 2404.6 (a) (2) "not less than one-third of the gross square feet of increased office space". The PUD will result in 37,961 additional square footage of space. Based on the formula, 12,653 square feet of housing is required. The applicant proposes 12,834 gross square footage of proposed housing construction.

Closing of a portion of the Alley

The applicant proposes to close a portion of the alley abutting the property in the rear. The applicant states this is a small triangular portion of an irregularly shaped east-west alley that is unnecessary for alley purposes. This portion of the alley will allow for a more rational layout of the proposed building and will allow for the "squaring off" of this portion of the building.

The configuration of the proposed area to be closed does not appear to interfere with the ability of traffic, deliveries or emergency vehicles to safely negotiate the alley. OP has no objection to the proposed closing of this public space at this time, subject to additional review by the Department of Transportation, the Fire Department, the Metropolitan Police Department, and other appropriate agencies.

The closing of the alley will result in a total of 2,916 additional gross square footage of space or an FAR of 0.005. This housing required for the additional FAR gained by the closing of the alley is accounted for in the housing linkage calculations in the Housing Linkage section of this report.

Loading

The zoning requirement that three loading platforms be provided is not indicated on the zoning tabulation or on the plans (See Applicant's Submission, Page A-6, Level 1 Plan). OP has requested that the applicant supply a justification for not meeting this requirement but to-date none has been forthcoming.

PUD EVALUATION STANDARDS

The purpose and standards for Planned Unit Developments are outlined in 11 DCMR, Chapter 24. Section 2400.1 states that a PUD is "designed to encourage high quality developments that provide public benefits." In order to maximize the use of the site consistent with the zoning regulations and to utilize opportunities for additional FAR the applicant is requesting that the proposal be reviewed as a consolidated PUD. This will allow the utilization of the flexibility stated in Section 2400.2.

The overall goal is to permit flexibility of development ands other incentives, such as increased building height and density; provided, that the project offers a commendable number of quality public benefits and that it protects and advances the public health, safety, welfare, and convenience."

Section 2403 further outlines the standards under which the application is evaluated.

2403.3 The impact of the project on the surrounding area and the operation of city services and facilities shall not be found to be unacceptable, but shall instead be found to be either favorable, capable of being mitigated, or acceptable given the quality of public benefits in the project.

PUBLIC BENEFITS AND AMENITIES

The objectives of a PUD are:

- to permit flexibility of development in return for
- the provision of superior public benefits,
 - provided the PUD process is not used to circumvent the intent and purposes of the Zoning Regulations,
 - or results in an action inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Public amenities are defined in Section 2407.3 as including "one type of public benefit, specifically a functional or aesthetic feature of the proposed development that adds to the attractiveness, convenience or comfort of the project for occupants and immediate neighbors".

The applicant states that they consider the following items as amenities:

Superior Urban Design, Architecture and Site Planning

The building will be located at a prominent corner that is focused towards Farragut Square. The proposed development is designed by the same architect that designed the office building opposite the

subject property, on the south side of K Street and in their statement has stated their intent is to balance the buildings and be sensitive to their context. The design demonstrates superiority by responding to the context of both K Street and Connecticut Avenue with different façade treatments to distinguish the new building in a way that would reinforce the block while reshaping the façade. The K Street façade is more formal and is composed of mostly granite and glass. The street wall is divided into three pavilions with recessed bays of oversized windows to create separate masses. Modulating elements help to scale back the building to that of neighboring buildings. The Connecticut Avenue façade, also predominantly glass, has a zigzag motif that creates a visual staccato along this street.

The retail area on the ground floor will be trimmed in stainless steel with different types of finishes and illuminated signage. An important feature of the development is the recessing of building at the corner that creates a forecourt to the retail entrance and also manages flow of pedestrian activity at this intersection. The streetscape will be enhanced by contrasting brick pavers and stone, benches, and street trees.

Special Value to the Neighborhood

The applicant has proposed to install twenty signs within the Dupont Circle Historic District located three blocks to the north of the site. The signs are to identify the historic district will serve to notify residents of their obligations under the District Preservation Laws to protect the historic resources in their neighborhood. Secondly, the signs are intended to foster goodwill in the historic neighborhood. OP has informed the applicant that the cost for the installation of the signs has been funded and they will not be able to utilize the installation of the signs as an amenity. OP has suggested to the applicant that they may want to work with the Dupont Circle Conservancy to find an appropriate amenity for the Dupont Circle Historic District and neighborhood.

Environmental Protection

The applicant states that fifty-three (53) percent of the rooftop will be a green roof consisting of low growing, succulent, plants of various species. The green roof will help to minimize stormwater runoff and reduce rooftop temperature of the building. Additionally, the applicant proposes to construct the building utilizing the criterion of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) to provide a high performance sustainable building. The applicant has outlined that they will incorporate LEED elements but has not specified if they will aim for LEED certification.

Local Business Opportunities and First Source Agreements

By entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the District of Columbia Local Business Opportunity Commission, the applicant agrees to include participation by small, local and disadvantaged businesses in the contracted development costs in connection with the design development, construction, maintenance and security of the project.

By working with the Department of Employment Services, the applicant will agree to use DOES as its first source for recruitment, referral and placement of new hires for employees whose jobs are created by the PUD and will hire fifty-one (51) percent of District's residents for all new jobs in connection with the project construction.

Increased Tax Revenues

To the extent that upgraded commercial space replaces existing space, this can be a benefit. The applicant has not actually demonstrated that the lesser amount of upgraded space would generate more tax revenue than the slightly greater amount of less attractive space currently on the site. Such a situation seems possible to OP, given the inefficient configuration of the existing buildings, but it has not yet been documented.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND PUBLIC POLICIES

The Generalized Land Use Map describes the area as “the business and retail heart of the District of Columbia and the metropolitan area includes a mixture of employment, retail, office, cultural, and entertainment centers”. The proposed development is not inconsistent with this recommendation. Further, the PUD is consistent with Comprehensive Plan including the following elements:

Housing

The housing element of the Comprehensive Plan encourages the private sector to provide new housing to meet the needs of present and future residents. Further, Section 300.8 recommends that “*Additional commercial office space at appropriate locations, derived from discretionary zoning density increases or street or alley closings, shall be used to leverage the production of affordable housing throughout the District of Columbia.*” The applicant will receive additional density from both the PUD and the alley closing and will contribute to the construction of affordable housing by working with MHCDO.

Environmental Protection

A goal of environmental protection on the District is to “*protect the environment, to resist threats to its overall quality, to act, to maintain and enhance its positive features in the interest of residents, workers, and visitors . . .*” The applicant proposes a green roof and indicated that they will include elements into the building that will promote energy conservation, improve air quality and help to protect the natural environment.

Urban Design

A goal of the District is to “preserve and enhance the outstanding physical qualities of the District neighborhoods” and to “encourage new development within areas of strong architectural character to contribute to the physical identity and character of the area” The new building will replace two outdated buildings and will highlight this prominent corner of the commercial corridor.

Ward 2 Plan

Ward 2 Plan encourages the office employment growth in the Downtown and the central employment area. The proposed development is consistent with this goal.

AGENCY REFERRALS AND COMMENTS

If this application is set down for a public hearing, it will be referred to the following District government agencies for review and comment:

- District Department of Transportation (DDOT);
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS);
- Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

OP is aware of no discussion with the community to date.

RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends the Commission setdown the application for a public hearing with the understanding that the applicant will address several issues before submitting its pre-hearing statement. These include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. As part of the design presentation, the applicant should show in greater detail, the garage entrance, both open and closed, and any inside back wall for the garage that may be visible from the street.
2. Detailed Roof Structure Plan
3. The applicant should provide more documentation about the off-site housing proposed to be funded as part of the PUD. The correspondence in Tab B of the submission is a letter from the applicant.
4. The applicant should consult with the appropriate ANC and community groups.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Land Use Map

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