

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-13
EXHIBIT NO. 25

Office of the Director

Memorandum

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM:  Ellen McCarthy, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: October 13, 2006

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

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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 at this prominent location in the central business district. The flexibility requested is for additional density and the development of the site as a PUD ensures a contribution to the construction of new affordable housing off-site.

OP is concerned that there are a number of deficiencies in the proposal, particularly in the design of the building and the proposed amenity package. OP does not believe that the design of the building is of a "superior" quality that this intersection deserves. While the applicant has made statements as to contributions they will make as part of their amenity package, they have not provided any of the signed agreements for OP to review, and overall OP considers the proffer very weak, given the value of the density generated through this PUD. Based on the above factors, OP cannot support the proposal at this time.

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

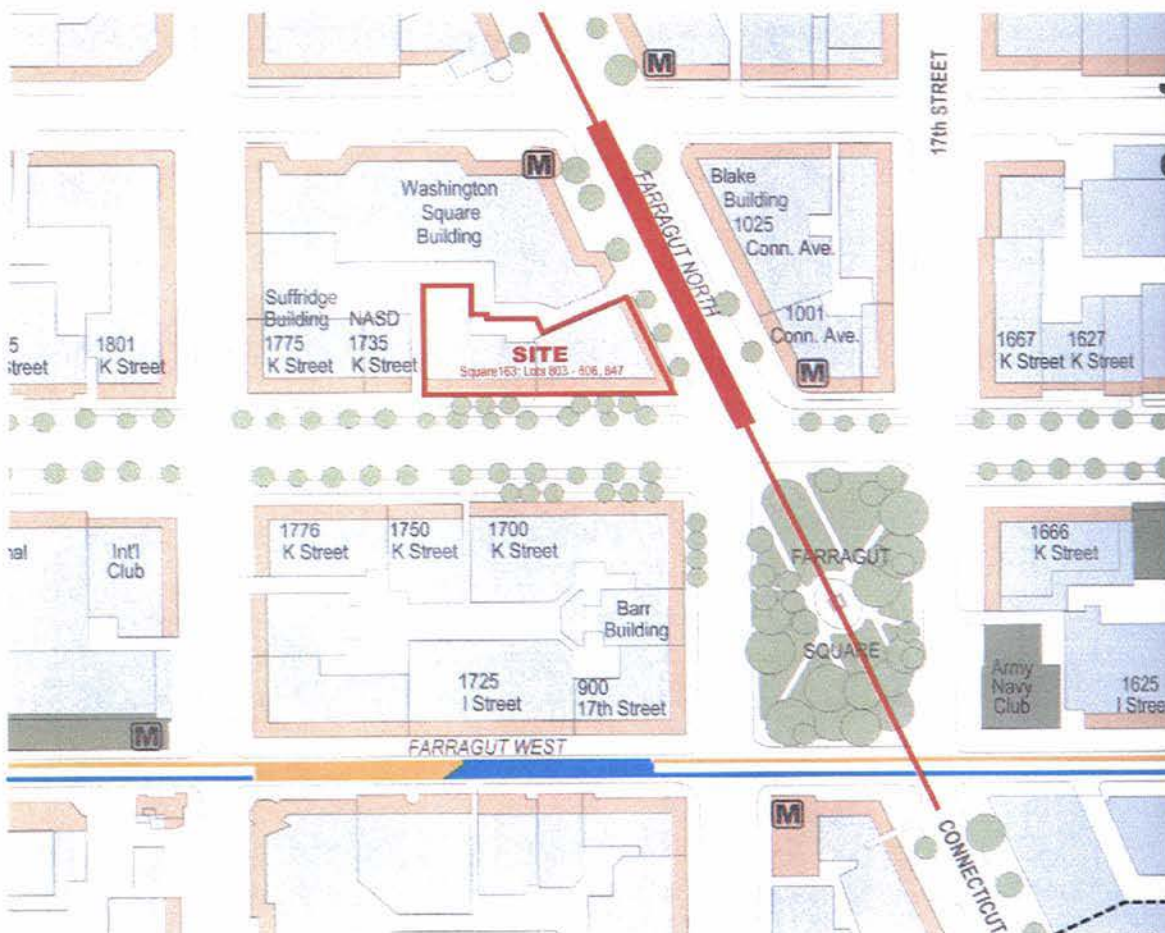
Site Area Map below). The site is approximately 33,231 square feet, of which 243 square feet is from the closed alley, and is within a square that is developed with high rise office buildings.

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.

The architects have developed separate treatments for the K Street, Connecticut Avenue and the corner facades. The K Street façade is divided into three, granite faced pavilions with an entrance lobby defined by the center pavilion. The pilasters of the pavilions extend above the roof line and form a cornice above the roofline to shade the roof terrace and provide security barrier to allow users to view the park from the roof level.

The Connecticut Avenue façade has a single pavilion with faceted glass and stainless steel panel cladding. The wall is of near-symmetrical return facades folded perpendicular to the Avenue.

The corner portion of the building is more horizontally oriented glass and is a transition between the two sides of the building.

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.	32,782 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	236 spaces/8 bicycle spaces
Loading	3 loading berth @ 30 ft. deep 3 loading platform @ 100 sq. ft 1 service/delivery space @ 20 ft.	3 loading berth @ 30 ft. deep 3 loading platform @ 100 sq. ft 1 service/delivery space @ 20 ft.	3 loading berth @ 30 ft. deep 3 loading platform @ 100 sq. ft 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 has recently agreed to contribute an additional \$200,000 to MHCDO (for a total of \$841,700) which will increase the amount of housing to over 13,000 square feet.

To date, OP has not received the signed agreement with MHCDO for review.

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 and the closing had been reviewed and supported by the Department of Transportation, the Fire Department, and the Metropolitan Police Department.

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.

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 architect has stated that 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.

Landscaping

Currently, the sidewalks are brick and pored concrete and the applicant proposes to significantly improve the street frontages the walkways will be improved through the use of granite pavers along the borders and brick pavers along the main walkways. The pavers will be continued down the alley off Connecticut Avenue for approximately 40 feet to enhance the visual appearance on that side of the building.

The applicant has incorporated an additional four trees along K Street and three along Connecticut Avenue. In addition, sidewalk benches will be installed along the K Street frontage. The same cannot be accommodated along Connecticut Avenue because of underground transformer vaults.

OP believes that if the granite pavers are acceptable to DDOT then this item could be considered as an amenity.

The main entrance to the retail area will be at the corner which the applicant is not able to identify. The applicant has stated that the entrance as seen on the plans is a place holder because the user of that space will require that they design their own entrance feature. The applicant therefore anticipates coming back before the Commission with any modification.

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 to create a forecourt for the retail entrance, and to manage flow of pedestrian activity at this intersection. The streetscape will be enhanced by contrasting brick pavers and stone, benches, and street trees.

The entrance to the garage is located at the western end of the K Street frontage and the interior entrance ramp will be specially treated to reflect the quality of the building. The wall of the ramp will be clad with masonry similar to that used on the alley side of the building. The ceiling will be an open structure screened by suspended 24 inch, aluminum panels at intervals of approximately 5 feet descending with the slope of the ramp. Above the suspended panels will be indirect florescent lighting fixtures. The driveway surface that crosses the sidewalk will be of pavers that match those of the sidewalk. The

garage enclosure will be aluminum finished coiling grill. The attendant booth will be at the bottom of the ramp so the stacking of cars will occur on the ramp so as not the cause stacking on K Street or on the sidewalk which could impede pedestrian movements.

OP Analysis

OP finds that there is little articulation between the retail façade at street level and the rest of the vertical wall. The two parts of the building are essentially flush with each other. From the point where the retail glass touches the ground, to the point where the vertical façade ends, it is essentially a straight line making for an undifferentiated flush surface. The result is a rather cold and monolithic architecture, where the storefront resembles an office wall, and the building does little to acknowledge and relate to the scale of the pedestrian.

The corner of the building facing Farragut Square is a quintessential urban cornerstone for the area, and presents an opportunity to be used as a parting point, or at least a focal point, in the building's design. However, the current architecture addresses the corner in such a way that it seems like a remnant rather than a focal point. The corner seems compressed by two uniform facades that effectively act as "bookends," and the corner is swallowed by the building. Further, the entrance to the building at this point seems unresolved and tertiary (as well as at the mercy of the retail tenant's design parameters), rather than celebratory.

There is an insistence by the applicant on "capping" the vertical "bays" of the façade to bolster their height and differentiate them from the rest of the bulk of the building. OP believes that the same effect could be accomplished through the modest use of setbacks, which would help the building achieve the same proportional goals. This alternative approach would also have the added benefit of relating to the setbacks of the adjacent neighbor on K Street, thus helping to lock the new construction to its immediate urban context.

Overall, the building seems generic, rather than a building made to relate to the specific conditions Washington's urban context. While this building would have rich use of materials its design is essentially generic and acontextual and could not be considered superlative for its prominent location.

Streetscape

This building proposes a new curb-cut into K Street to access the parking garage when the current desire is to minimize the number of disruptions to the street. DDOT has recommended that the building utilize the existing alley along K Street or Connecticut Avenue for garage-entry rather than adding another cut to the sidewalk. The applicant has stated that the alley access is not possible because a number of factors such as: alley congestion which could spill out over onto sidewalk and onto Connecticut Avenue; the increased volume of traffic which would result in the alley; insufficient alley width too support the increased volume of trucks and other vehicles; garage security as patrons to the retail use would have to exit through the alley to have access to the retail uses; and garage security when users have to enter and exit the garage at night.

Provided the proposed improvements are acceptable to DDOT, the granite pavers, new trees, etc. could be considered an amenity.

Signage

The signage for the retail uses on the first floor will be contained within an illuminated sign box. The style of the sign is still unknown, and OP considers an adequate or certain resolution this issue to be critical to the street level character of the building.

Parking

The applicant is providing extra parking that at this location greater than that required by zoning which is directly across from a Metro station. The District's public policy approach to parking in the central employment area is complex. On the one hand, it seeks to promote additional parking in areas with a high concentration of retail. On the other hand it discourages additional parking in areas adequately served by Metro due to problems of congestion and air quality non-attainment. The vicinity around the subject site has a significant concentration of retail space, but it is not within the designated downtown retail core. The Red Line Metro Station is directly across from the site and Blue/Orange line Metro station is within one block so would serve the building. While the provision of 46 additional parking spaces would clearly benefit the building's operators and tenants, OP is not able to consider it a public amenity in evaluating the proposed PUD.

Special Value to the Neighborhood

The applicant has indicated that they have set aside \$120,000 to be divided between the Dupont Circle Citizens Association (DCCA) and the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District to bring value to the neighborhood. The Dupont Circle Citizens Association (DCCA) will receive \$69,854.40 towards improvements to the National Park Service (NPS) park at 20th and Q Streets, N.W. The applicant has left the negotiations with the NPS to the Citizens Association. However, to date, NPS has given no indication that they will accept this contribution. The applicant has not submitted a signed agreement between the applicant, DCCA and NPS and therefore there is no proposed amenity to evaluate.

The applicant has indicated that they will contribute \$50,379.75 to the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District to assist with community programs. Again, the applicant has not provided any information on the programs or written agreements to substantiate the statement.

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 stated that they will not be seeking LEED Certification but will incorporate other LEED elements into the building. OP has requested a detailed inventory of such elements but to date none has been forthcoming from the applicant. As such, at this point, only the green roof could be considered a project amenity.

Local Business Opportunities and First Source Agreements

The applicant has stated that they will be entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the District of Columbia Local Business Opportunity Commission, and include small, local and disadvantaged businesses in the contracted development costs in connection with the design development, construction, maintenance and security of the project.

The applicant has also stated that they will work with and use the Department of Employment Services (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.

Although the applicant has stated that they will participate in both of the above mentioned programs, to date OP has not seen or received any signed agreements.

Increased Tax Revenues

To the extent that upgraded commercial space replaces existing space, this can be a benefit, but this has not yet been documented by the applicant.

Amenities in Relation to the Degree of Flexibility Requested

The applicant has offered that they have commissioned an exceptional architect design firm of James Ingo Freed and the firm of Pie Cobb Freed & Partners, to design the new building with a cost of approximately 15-20 percent more than what is typically expended on a downtown building. In OP's opinion, the proposed building is generally in character with the area and may be well detailed but is essentially generic in design. The applicant has satisfactorily documented that the materials and the details are excellent, and that the façade cost is significantly more than average. However, the design does not seem to be significantly superior to what a developer would provide for a matter-of-right development at this prime location and OP does not believe that the applicant has presented a building of superior architectural merit at this significant intersection.

Other clearly demonstrable and quantifiable public benefits and amenities offered include:

- Green roof
- Landscaping and streetscape improvements
- Contribution to affordable housing over that which is required
- Donation for NPS park improvement
- Donation to Golden Triangle Business Improvement District
- First Source Agreement with DOES and Memorandum of Understanding with the District of Columbia Local Business Opportunity Commission

It should be noted that OP is unable to evaluate most of these stated amenities because the applicant has not provided the necessary details or signed agreements.

The proposed project does not exceed the permitted height but the density is greater than what would be permitted on the site as a matter-of-right. The applicant is also requesting additional density over matter-of-right; and avail itself of the Commission's option to grant up to 5% additional square footage than would normally be permitted a PUD in a C-4 zone. As matter-of-right, the applicant would be entitled to up to 333,310 square feet of space but the applicant is requesting 369,295 square feet of space through the PUD, or an additional 36,985 square feet of space.

Tax revenues will probably increase from the replacement of Class B+ office buildings with a Class A or A+ building. The provided parking will exceed what is required; whether this is a benefit at a location one block from two metro stations serving three lines is debatable. While not considered an

amenity, the project will effectuate the provision of over 13,000 square feet of affordable housing as required by Section 2404.6 of the zoning regulations.

The applicant has slightly increased their amenity package over time but OP is still uncertain about the validity of some items because the details and agreements have not been finalized, and feels that the overall package is very weak, given the value of density granted. OP has discussed these concerns with the applicant, particularly recommending a significantly improved amenity package and design modifications.

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 the following Comprehensive Plan 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 for 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 . . .*” (Section 404.1). The applicant proposes a green roof and has 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” (Section 702.1(b)) and to “encourage new development within areas of strong architectural character to contribute to the physical identity and character of the area” (Section 710.2 (d)). The new building will replace two outdated buildings. This location is a prominent corner of the commercial corridor and OP believes that while the proposed building has some significant urban design features it is not a superior urban structure that this location deserves.

Ward 2 Plan

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

AGENCY COMMENTS

DDOT, in conversation with OP, has stated that their main concern is the location of the parking garage entrance along K Street. DDOT review of the proposal will be submitted under separate cover. Both

the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS) and Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) have indicated that the new building will not generate any additional services over that which is currently provided.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

On August 9, 2006 ANC-2B voted to support the application. The Dupont Circle Citizens Association also supports the application and would administer the upgrading of the park at 20th and Q Streets.

RECOMMENDATION

OP is concerned that final design of the main retail entrance is not available, and that the design of the building is not of a superior quality befitting this location. If the application is approved, OP recommends that the applicant file a modification to the plans when a user is assigned for the space.

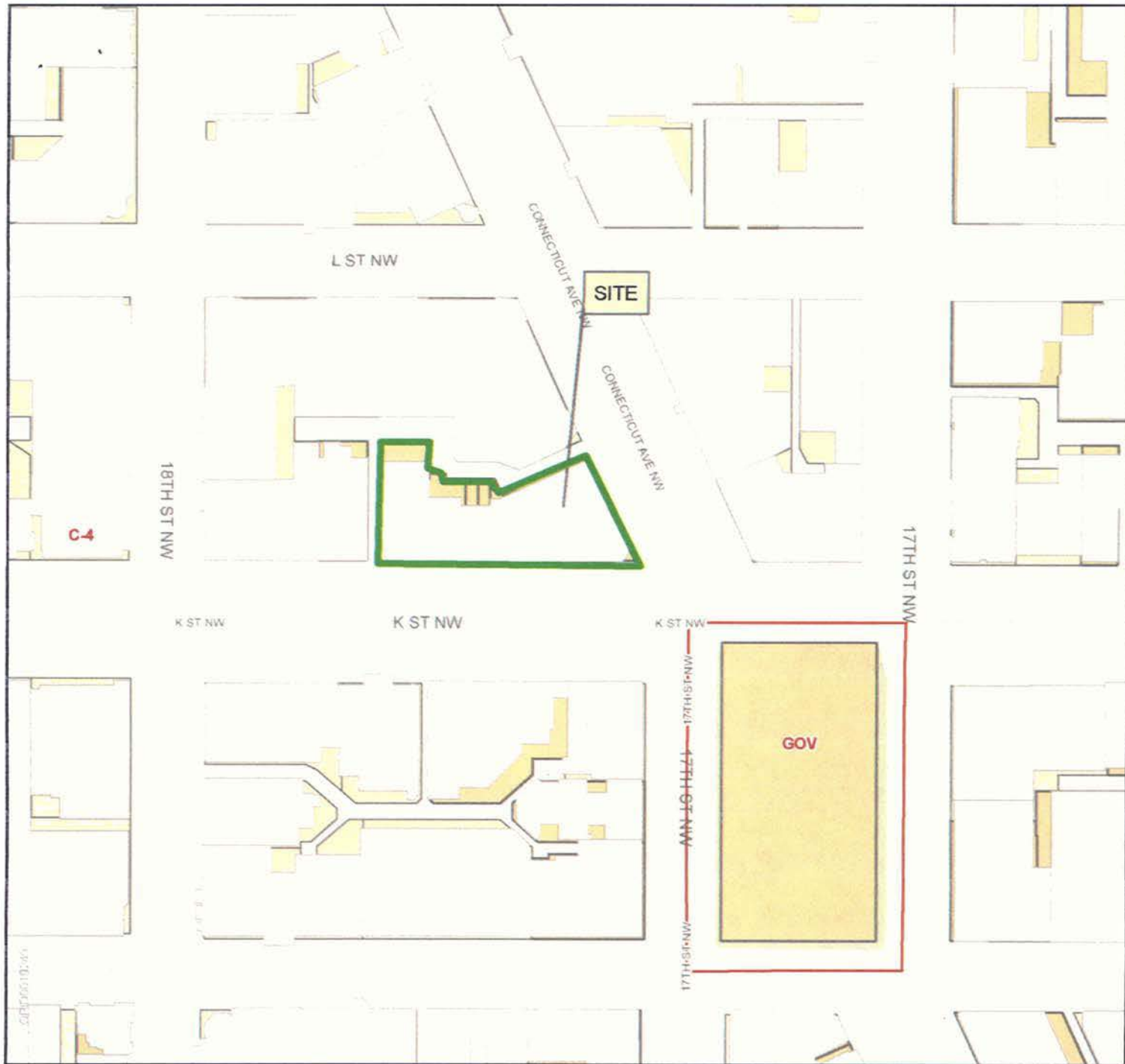
OP is also concerned that there are still a number of deficiencies in the proposed amenity package:

1. OP does not believe that the design of the building is of a "superior" quality that this intersection deserves.
2. The applicant has not provided any of the signed agreements for OP to review.
3. Overall, OP considered the amenity package to be weak and not commensurate with the value of the density through the PUD.

Bases on the above factors, OP cannot fully support the proposal at this time.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Land Use

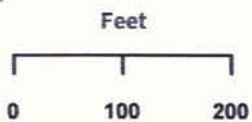


**1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Square 163, Lot 803-806, 847
Zoning Commission Case # 06-13**

★ ★ ★ Government of the
District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

Office of Planning ~ August 13, 2006

This map was created for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.



	Zoning Districts
	Street Centerlines
	Major Roads
	Major Roads
	Buildings
	Buildings