

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



Office of the Director

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Harriet Tregoning, Director

DATE: February 7, 2007

SUBJECT: Post-Hearing Report for ZC 06-46
Monument Realty Half Street Project Phase I
Zoning Commission Design Review Under the Capitol Gateway Overlay

The Zoning Commission held a public hearing on this application on January 11, 2007. The applicant, Monument Realty, is seeking design review approval pursuant to 11 DCMR Chapter 16, the Capitol Gateway Overlay District (CG Overlay), in order to construct two mixed use buildings near the new baseball stadium in Southeast. The subject site is the entire east side of Half Street, S.E., between M and N Streets, S.E. In conjunction with the design review, the applicant is seeking relief from a number of other zoning requirements for building form, setbacks and arrangement of uses.

Design Modifications

Subsequent to the public hearing, the applicant submitted revised plans and updated information about the proposal. The Office of Planning feels that the changes since the hearing have improved the project. The penthouse on the lower hotel wing adjacent to Cushing Place has been substantially reduced in size. The retail elevator has been moved from Half Street to Monument Place, providing additional retail frontage along Half Street. OP also appreciates the commitment on the part of the applicant to a minimum of 30% green roof for the project and the additional detail on the Metro screen wall. Other changes are discussed in more detail below.

Streetscape

The design of the streetscape now includes bollards on Monument Place to demarcate pedestrian and automobile zones. This improvement will increase pedestrian safety. The row of bollards, however, appears to extend across the Half Street sidewalk and into the parking lane. Please refer to Sheet L8 of the January 25 plan set. Also, the streetscape design continues to use benches as dividers between the parking lane and the main sidewalk. OP is concerned about the proximity of people sitting on the benches and vehicles trying to parallel park. Some other means should be used to separate seating areas from parking areas.

There have been productive meetings involving the applicant, DDOT and OP regarding the streetscape. But it is OP's understanding that DDOT has not yet accepted a design for the Half Street right-of-way, so the final design may differ from that shown in the latest submission from the applicant. As such, it is OP's position that if future changes to this important element are necessary, then further Zoning Commission review and approval would be required.

Hotel Lobby

The hotel lobby is now confirmed to be on the second floor, along with the hotel lounge. In order to accommodate the needs of the hotel, the second floor is 14 feet tall, which results in a first floor height of 11'6". While this is less than the required height of the CG Overlay, it will ensure two active uses at the corner of Half Street and Monument Place. OP does not object to the lower ceiling height in this particular location.

Recommendation

The new information submitted at and since the public hearing has addressed Office of Planning's concerns other than those noted in this report. OP recommends approval of the application, subject to the applicant addressing the issues mentioned above.