



2014 NOV 26 AM 11:58

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
JLS
FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director for Development Review & Historic Preservation
DATE: November 26, 2014
SUBJECT: ZC 10-06A – Modification and Design Review under § 2523
Saint Elizabeths East Campus Water Tower
DC Water and Sewer Authority

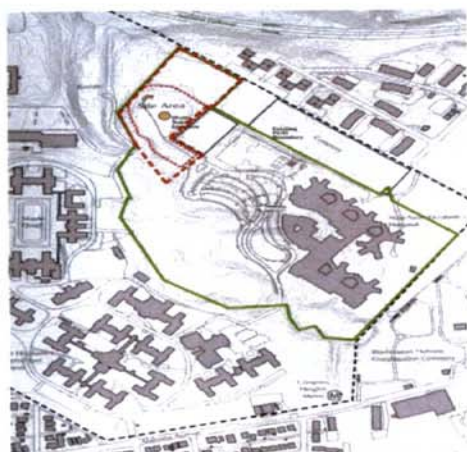
I. RECOMMENDATION

DC Water and Sewer Authority (WASA or DC Water) requests modification to the plans approved in ZC Order 10-06 to remove the architectural screening around the 175-foot water tower. The proposal would continue to meet the Special Exception requirements of § 2523. The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the minor modification to the approved plans and to ZC Order 10-06, Condition 1. The modified condition would read as follows: (old text is marked with ~~strikethrough~~ and new text is shown in **bold and underline**:

1. The water tower shall be consistent with the **basic water tower design** ~~for either Option A or Option B~~ as included in the Applicant's Exhibit 3 ~~initial~~ filing; provided, that the Applicant shall have the flexibility to **paint the water tower with a light color** and modify the design to provide any illumination ~~or~~ **lighting, or markings** required by the ~~Federal Aviation Administration~~ or for other **mitigation**, safety or security purposes.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed water tower is to be located on the Saint Elizabeths East Campus. The property is a 3-acre area adjacent to the northwestern portion of the new Saint Elizabeths Hospital and consists of mostly hilly terrain with a fairly flat area at the top of the knoll. The flat area is cleared of vegetation while the rest of the property is fairly treed.



SITE LOCATION

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 10-06A

EXHIBIT NO. 7



III. PROPOSAL

DC Water proposes to modify the approved plans for the water tower by removing the architectural screening. The water tower would be constructed without any of two options were approved by ZC Order 10-06. The Site and Landscape Plans (Attachments 1 and 2) show the area surrounding the water tower to be enhanced with a walking path, landscaping, storm water management, a scenic overlook and additional site amenities.

IV. ZONING

The property is Unzoned. Section 106.7 allows the construction of the water tower on unzoned property (ZC Order 09-10) if the requirements of Section 2523 are met.

V. BACKGROUND

In 2010, the Zoning Commission reviewed and approved two options for architectural screening around the water tower and landscaping at the base of the tower. The screening was intended to mitigate the height and visibility of the tower and its impact on the historic Saint Elizabeths East Campus. Subsequent to the Zoning Commission's approval, the plans were further reviewed in 2014 by the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and all recommended deletion of the architectural screening. The proposal was also reviewed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

On February 20, 2014, CFA reviewed the proposal and approved the final design of the water tower only. They expressed concerns about the screening and noted that "many of the precedents presented relied primarily on either color or simple form-rather than screening-to create meaningful icons of civic infrastructure." In addition, they urged DC Water to "consider the design of the site surrounding the water tower as a demonstration of the principles and techniques of green infrastructure promoted elsewhere in the city, consistent with DC Water's new approach toward sustainability and the legibility of water infrastructure."¹

At its June 26, 2014 Meeting, HPRB approved the concept without the architectural screening and recommended clearance of a permit for its construction, with further review delegated to staff. The Board also requested that "there be some agreement, at least on the process for resolving the issue of mitigation, within six months. As for the character of the mitigation, the Board emphasized preservation work on the campus, but is also open to other design work on the tower itself or its environs that would ameliorate its impacts, or to other amenities. Regarding landscape around the tower, the Board recommended that it be designed so that it is not distinct and isolated, but knits together with the adjacent portions of the campus. The Board also expressed an interest in finishes on the tower that are low-maintenance and have low reflectivity."²

On October 31, 2014 NCPC approved the final site and building plans for the water tower and recommended that the tower "be painted light in color, have no lettering and no antennas that project above the water tower or face Suitland Parkway."³

¹ US Commission of Fine Arts, February 27, 2014

² Historic Preservation Review Board, HPRB Actions, June 26 and July 2014

³ National Capital Planning Commission, Delegated Action of the Executive Director, October 31, 2014

On November 15, 2009 the FAA in reviewing the proposed water tower made a determination of “No Hazard to Air Navigation” with the condition that the structure be marked and/or lighted⁴. This determination has to be reviewed yearly until the water tower is built. The latest extension was granted in July 1, 2014 and expires January 1, 2016⁵.

DC Water has committed to implementing mitigation measures due to the fact that the water tower looms over the historic Saint Elizabeths East Campus. DC Water continues to work with the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), community representative and other stakeholders to finalize an agreement.

VI. WATER TOWER DESIGN REVIEW

On April 12, 2010, the Zoning Commission adopted the proposed rulemaking regarding the location of a water tower at the Saint Elizabeth East Campus under Section 106.7. The Order requires that any water tower that exceeds 90 feet on the Saint Elizabeths East Campus is subject to design review under Section 2523.

2523 WATER TOWER ON THE EAST CAMPUS OF SAINT ELIZABETHS

2523.1 Notwithstanding any other provision of this Title, a water tower or elevated water tank (“Water Tower”) owned and operated by the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority may be established on unzoned property owned by the District of Columbia and located on the East Campus of Saint Elizabeths Hospital.

The proposed water tower is to be located on the Saint Elizabeths Hospital East Campus on a 3 acre, unzoned property. The water tower would be owned and operated by the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority.

2523.2 No building permit to construct a Water Tower in excess of ninety (90) feet in height may be issued unless the Zoning Commission finds that said tower, as designed, meets the standards of § 3104 and is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, small area plan(s), and other adopted planning studies that pertain to the site.

Section 3104 requires that the proposal “*will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map*.” The proposed location for the water tower was chosen after an extensive evaluation of four potential sites. The evaluation criteria assessed the service area needs as well as the direct and indirect effects of each location on its:

- area of potential effect (East Campus, neighborhood and distant),
- adjacency to historic and archeological resources;
- effect on cultural, landscape and natural resources;
- compatibility with Saint Elizabeths East Redevelopment Framework Plan;
- visual impact within and outside of the Saint Elizabeths Campus; and

⁴ Federal Aviation Administration, Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation, November 25, 2009

⁵ Federal Aviation Administration, Extension, July 1, 2014

- engineering and cost implications.

Following the evaluation, the proposed site was found to be appropriate following which the design of the tower was evaluated. The site is not directly adjacent to any existing or proposed residences. An impact of the proposed tower is its visibility from various locations. However, its visibility would not adversely impact the surrounding neighborhood

The proposed water tower and its surrounding improvements would not adversely affect the use of neighboring properties and would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan or the Saint Elizabeths East Redevelopment Framework Plan as further demonstrated below.

Comprehensive Plan

With the proposed modification, the water tower would continue to be not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and would further policy statements in the Infrastructure Element by facilitating the modernization and rehabilitation of water infrastructure and ensuring that improvements are coordinated with development and redevelopment plans. The existing water tower replacement would also support a relevant policy of the Far Southeast/Southwest Area Element by providing the infrastructure necessary to allow for the redevelopment of Saint Elizabeths East Campus

IN-1.2 Modernizing Water Infrastructure

“In conjunction with WASA, the District must consider the impacts of new development and ensure that water infrastructure will be able to meet future demand. Planned improvements to the water system involve normal maintenance to replace aging water distribution mains and small diameter pipes, and upgrades to keep pace with population growth and new development. This may also include the addition of new water storage facilities, increasing the capacity of certain water mains, and upgrading pump stations.”

“WASA’s Capital Improvement Program has identified the need for several new storage facilities to support growth projections. These facilities will provide additional water pressure to certain areas of the District as well as emergency backup service. Two million gallons of elevated storage is needed in the southern half of the Anacostia First High service area. WASA has worked with the District and reached an agreement to site this water storage tank on the East Campus of St. Elizabeths Hospital. Currently, necessary approvals and permits are being pursued, including historic preservation approvals that will ensure no historic structures on the campus are negatively impacted.”

As recommended in the Comprehensive Plan, the water tower would be located on the Saint Elizabeths East Campus. The proposed water tower would be an improvement in infrastructure as well as service by way of increased capacity and water pressure to serve both the current needs and accommodate future demands. To date, DC Water has consulted with federal and District agencies and has been given approval to construct the water tower without the architectural screening. DC Water continues to work with the agencies and others to finalize the color of the tower, the design and landscaping at the base and mitigation measures.

Policy IN-1.2.1: Modernizing and Rehabilitating Water Infrastructure

“Work proactively with WASA to repair and replace aging infrastructure, and to upgrade the water distribution system to meet current and future demand. . ANC’s and community

organizations should be consulted in the siting of any new facilities to ensure that the potential for adverse impacts are appropriately addressed ”

The proposed water tower would replace the existing water tower which was put into service in 1936 and does not meet the current or future water distribution and water pressure demands DC Water has had numerous meetings with the community in conjunction with various public reviews at which their desire for improved service has been strongly emphasized. The community and ANC-8A are supportive of the modification and are included in the mitigation discussions

Policy IN-1.2.2: Ensuring Adequate Water Pressure

“Work proactively with DC WATER to provide land for new storage tanks and other necessary operations so that adequate water supply and pressure can be provided to all areas of the District The siting and design of water storage tanks and similar facilities should be consistent with the policies of the Urban Design and Environmental Protection Elements, and should minimize visual impacts and “skylining” effects on ridges or hills ”

The proposed water tower would lead to adequate water supply and water pressure in the future to serve the Anacostia First High service area In evaluating the various locations and designs for the water tower, the assessment concluded that the proposed location and design would have the least amount of visual impact on view ranges from the surrounding area and other prominent features. The proposal therefore meets the policies of Urban Design and Environmental Protection Elements.

Far Southeast & South West Area Element

The proposal meets the following policy of the Far Southeast & South West Area Element:

Policy FSS-2.2.1: St. Elizabeths East Campus

Redevelop the East Campus of St Elizabeths Hospital as a new community containing a mix of uses, including mixed density housing, retail shops, offices, a comprehensive mental health care facility, and parks and open space Other uses such as satellite college campuses, civic uses, and local public facilities should be incorporated 1812 4

The design and location of the proposed water tower included consideration of the future development of Saint Elizabeths East Campus as envisioned in the Saint Elizabeths East Redevelopment Framework Plan and the Saint Elizabeths East master plan and Design Guidelines and is located away from the development areas

Saint Elizabeths East Redevelopment Framework Plan

“The Saint Elizabeths East Redevelopment Framework Plan, anticipates the construction of a new water tower on site, which is needed to support the future development envisioned in the plan as well as the current needs of existing residents Although the exact location for the new tower has not been determined, the plan anticipated that it would be located in the vicinity of the existing water tower site This is based on the desired site characteristics for the new tower, which include greater distances from residential areas and a high ground elevation ”

The proposed water tower continues to be on the East Campus but following extensive studies it was determined that the proposed location is superior to the current water tower location The proposed water tower would meet current and future demands, would be located away from existing

and proposed residential areas and would be on a high elevation in order to achieve the needed water pressure. The requested water tower is therefore not inconsistent with this Plan.

2523.3 An application pursuant to Section 2523.2 shall include such plans and illustrations necessary to adequately represent the proposed appearance of the tower, including its materials, elevation, and location on the East Campus. The application shall also identify how the proposed design meet the standard for approval set forth in § 2523.2.

The applicant provided plans and illustrations that represent the proposed water tower (Applicant's Exhibits 1 and 3, ZC Exhibit 2A). As demonstrated above, the proposed design meets the requirements of § 2523.2.

2523.4 An application shall be included as a "Final Action" item for a Zoning Commission meeting scheduled after the completion of the thirty (30) day review period allowed the affected ANC(s). The notice to the affected ANC (s) shall include the date of ZC final action and a tentative public hearing date.

The ANC 8C was notified and has submitted a letter of support for the proposed minor modification (ZC Exhibit 2G).

2523.5 The only motion that can be made at that time is for approval of the application in accordance with Section 3028 and without the need for a public hearing.

The Zoning Commission will make the determination.

2523.6 If no motion is made, or if the motion fails, the matter shall be moved to the "Hearing Actions" portion of the agenda, at which point the Commission may take any of the actions authorized by §§ 3011.3 through 3011.6.

The Zoning Commission will make the determination.

2513.7 A request to modify an approved design shall be subject to the same review criteria and approval process as set forth in this section for the original application.

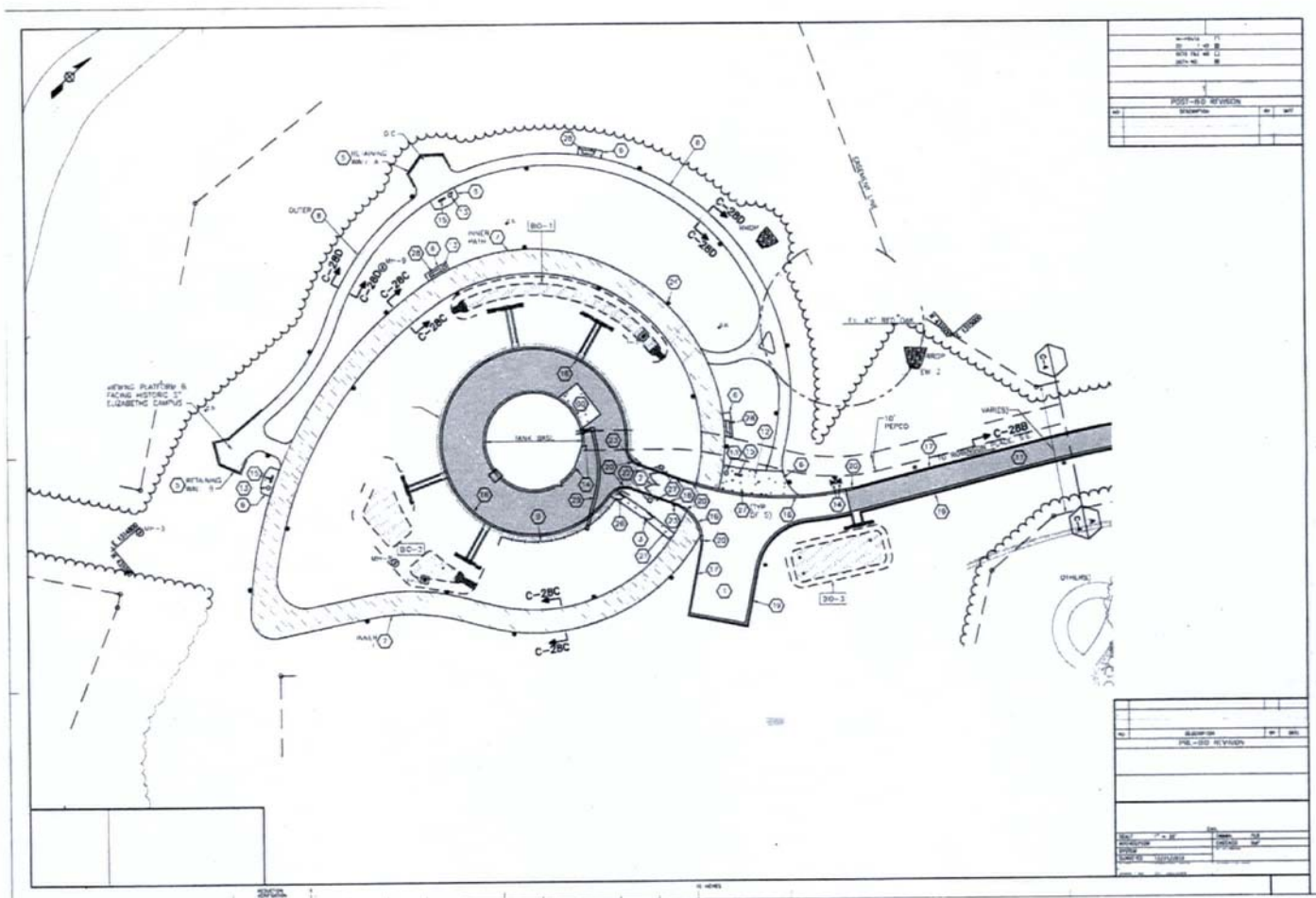
The requested minor modification has been reviewed subject to the requirements of §§ 2513 1-2513 6.

VII. CONCLUSION

As demonstrated above, the modified water tower at its proposed 175 feet will address the demand for water and water pressure in this area of the District. The proposal will also allow DC Water to provide for development demands that is envisioned for Ward 8. The proposal is also compatible with the historic Saint Elizabeths campus as well as other prominent views both near and far. The proposal is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and meets the other requirements of the special exception and therefore the Office of Planning recommends **approval of the minor modification and Condition 1 as follow:** (old text is marked with ~~strike through~~ and new text is shown in **bold and underline**:

- 1 The water tower shall be consistent with the basic water tower design for either ~~Option A or Option B~~ as included in the Applicant's Exhibit 3 ~~initial~~ filing, provided, that the Applicant shall have the flexibility to paint the water tower with a light color and modify the design to provide any illumination, lighting, or markings required by the Federal Aviation Administration or for ~~other~~ mitigation, safety or security purposes

Attachment 1- SITE PLAN



Attachment 2 – LANDSCAPE PLAN

