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Marcel C. Acosta

IN REPLY REFER TO:
NCPC File No. 7003

JUL 12 2011

Mr. Shawn Seaman
PN Hoffman
4725 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Mr. Seaman:

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) staff supporting the Southwest Ecodistrict Initiative wishes to thank the PN Hoffman-Madison Marquette development team for their continued efforts to discuss and address how the Southwest Waterfront development (The Wharf) affects federal interests on adjacent and nearby federal properties. Our discussions have focused primarily on the interface between the federally-owned 10th Street, SW Overlook at Banneker Park and development parcels 1 and 2, located between the Case Bridge and 9th Street, SW. We also appreciate the informational presentations to the Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force and the National Capital Planning Commission to allow for early review and comment on the proposed development plans.

The Wharf is an opportunity to develop an active urban waterfront destination in Washington that will be a catalyst for economic growth. It will help establish a more viable connection along the 10th Street, SW corridor between the National Mall and the waterfront and establish Banneker Park as an attractive nationally significant cultural destination for a future museum or memorial. The Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force, comprised of federal and local government stakeholders, is interested in the revitalization of the nearly federal office precinct and shares the common goal of creating a vibrant mixed use neighborhood and workplace for Southwest Washington.

Currently, the Overlook at Banneker Park is an elevated site with 180 degree views of the Potomac River and is on axis with the Smithsonian Castle. It is within a short walking distance of the National Mall and is one of 20 prime sites in Washington for a nationally significant museum or memorial, as identified in NCPC's 2001 Memorial and Museums Master Plan and the 1997 Legacy Plan.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 11-03
EXHIBIT NO. 58

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As reinforced by NCPC's and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts' 2009 Monumental Core Framework Plan, the Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force directed NCPC staff to work with the PN Hoffman development team to ensure the following primary federal interests were addressed:

- maintain important long views down river from the Overlook;
- ensure reciprocal views between the Overlook, the waterfront, nearby memorials and parks, and travel routes are compatible with and befitting to a capital city;
- strengthen the gateway features of the Overlook; and
- accommodate universal pedestrian and bicycle access between the elevated overlook, Maine Avenue, and the waterfront.

Based on proposed waterfront development plans prepared between 2007 and the Fall of 2010, NCPC staff suggested several modifications:

- the waterfront terminus of 10th Street, SW (L'Enfant Promenade) should be given equal or greater prominence to the open spaces and plazas at 6th, 7th, and 9th Streets, SW; and
- the placement, massing, and form of proposed buildings and ancillary site features such as towers, beacons, and signage should be significantly modified or eliminated to ensure that the federal interests are protected at this important capital city gateway.

We appreciate that the Wharf development proposal has been modified to address many of NCPC's concerns regarding visual access and physical connections. Based on the waterfront development plans dated June 28, 2011, posted online by the DC Office of Zoning, staff notes the following improvements:

- The buildings at the base of the Overlook have been shifted, and their form modified, to accommodate an important view corridor and significant pedestrian access point at the proposed Market Square plaza.

A 100-foot view corridor to the river is established on axis between the Kiley Fountain at Banneker Park and Ohio Drive at East Potomac Park (the potential location for a future canal that will improve watercraft access to the Wharf). We understand that this plaza will be designed primarily for pedestrians; all structures within the viewshed will be narrow and a no more than one-story to

maximize the views to the river; and that it will not become a parking garage access point.

A potential 80-foot view corridor could be achieved along an extended 10th Street axis between the Smithsonian Castle and a future memorial site on East Potomac Park. Although, the Wharf's proposed 4,000 seat theater is higher than the Overlook and blocks its current view, an 80-foot view corridor will be visually accessible if the design of a future museum or memorial mitigates this elevation change.

- The proposed cultural site located within the Washington Channel has been relocated and replaced with a boat marina. This will allow the view corridor to remain unobstructed. Any future development proposal for this area should be designed to retain the unobstructed 100-foot view corridor identified above.
- The overhead wires have been removed from the proposed street car line along the Maine Avenue corridor.

With the exception of the large rooftop sign proposed at the fish market that would negatively impact view corridors to national memorials at the gateway to the capital city, the proposed development balances local and federal objectives. The buildings between 9th Street and I-395 has been designed to respect basic design principles that will allow the Overlook to accommodate a future nationally significant museum or memorial in the form of a building, an object in a landscape, or part of a large cultural-federal development.

This letter acknowledges the improvements to the proposed development plan as it directly relates to the work of the SW Ecodistrict Task Force. It does not represent an endorsement by the Commission of the pending zoning application; however, the Commission looks forward to receiving the full PUD application in the coming months for review and comment prior to the final Zoning Commission action. The Commission staff is available to consult with the development team and other organizations or agencies in preparation for NCPC's public hearing.

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Thank you once again for your continued efforts to balance the private, local, and federal interests at this important location in the capital city and for many of the recent modifications that we think will improve the way in which the Wharf development will interface with the Overlook at Banneker Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcel Acosta', with a stylized, cursive script.

Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

cc: Thomas Luebke
Commission of Fine Art

Harriet Tregoning
D.C. Office of Planning

Doug Jacobs
National Park Service

William Dowd
Physical Planning Division

David Levy
Urban Design and Plan Review