

Z.C. CASE NO. 13-14
McMillan Sand Filtration Site – 2501 First Street, N.W.
APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO
ZONING COMMISSION COMMENTS AT SET-DOWN MEETING

ZC COMMENT/ISSUE	APPLICANT'S RESPONSE
<p><i>Housing:</i> Family v. senior housing (Commissioner Cohen)</p>	<p>Over the past several years, the Applicant has worked closely with the community to provide the right mix of uses at the site. Throughout the process, the community has expressed its strong and consistent preference for senior housing to enable family members and elders to age in close proximity to their current residences. The Applicant believes that there is sufficient demand in this segment of the city to support the provision of senior housing at the site as alternative measure. Based on a market study commissioned by the Applicant in 2012 from Real Property Research Group, there is a net demand for senior rental housing. Taking into account household trends and necessary unit replacement, it is projected that there will be excess demand for 279 senior rental units in the McMillan market area as of January 2015. The results of this derivation of senior rental demand indicate that the market has adequate depth of senior need to absorb the three senior pipeline rental properties and still maintain considerable excess demand for senior rental units. The Applicant is contemplating 84 units of affordable senior housing as a component of the project. Nevertheless, affordable housing opportunities are provided for families throughout the PUD. The townhouses offer inclusionary zoning ("IZ") units at a rate of 10 percent of the total gross floor area, or 18 units, which equates to 12 percent of the total number of rowhouses. This exceeds the eight percent of gross floor area requirement of IZ. The future multi-family building to be located on Parcel 2 will also provide IZ units for families, setting aside at least ten percent of the total gross floor area.</p>
<p><i>Housing:</i> Amount of low-income housing for District project (Commissioner Miller)</p>	<p>The Commission requested additional information on the level of affordability typically required for District projects. District projects have typically required affordability rates at 80% of AMI for market-rate housing and at 30-60% of AMI for senior housing. See, for example, Z.C. 07-13, Z.C. 07-26 and Z.C. 11-24. This PUD is consistent with those standards and the requirements of the Applicant's Exclusive Rights Agreement with the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. As noted above, the Applicant will exceed the IZ requirements by providing approximately 10 percent of the residential gross floor area of the rowhouses (12% of the units) and at least 20 percent of the total multi-family building program (both Parcel and Parcel 4) gross floor area for affordable units.</p>
<p><i>Architecture:</i> blank wall on Evarts St. (Commissioner Cohen)</p>	<p>The Applicant understands this comment to apply to the multi-family /retail building facing south on Evarts Street. Because the loading docks are located in this façade, it is less articulated than the other elevations. Nevertheless, this façade has been designed</p>

	so as not to appear as a blank wall. The updated architectural drawings include a rendering showing a more detailed view of this elevation.
<i>Architecture:</i> location of healing gardens along high-traffic Michigan Ave. (Commissioner Cohen)	The health care facility at the north portion of the site requires a vehicular drop off area to accommodate passenger cars, vans, medical transports, taxis and shuttle buses. This vehicular access to the medical office fronts on Michigan Avenue to protect the historic North Service Court, which cannot accommodate the anticipated volume of passenger loading and unloading. The healing gardens serve as a landscape buffer for the Michigan Avenue transportation hub, while enhancing the historic Olmsted Walk lining the perimeter of the site. Unlike the straight pathways on the other three external street frontages, the Michigan Avenue segment of the Olmsted Walk is curvilinear. Additionally, the "plinth" of the McMillan Sand Filtration site is below the grade of Michigan Avenue. The gardens are intended to create a soft transition from the hard edge of Michigan Avenue to the scenic elements of the Olmsted Walk and provide visitors a contemplative area featuring plants known for their healing qualities.
<i>Architecture:</i> articulation of townhouse end units (Commissioner May)	The rowhouses were the subject of significant discussion before the Historic Preservation Review Board ("HPRB"). HPRB concluded that the rowhouse designs as they were ultimately approved (and as submitted in this PUD application) well complimented the historic resources and captured the modern design intent envisioned by HPRB and the Applicant. The end units have been fully designed to take advantage of their additional exterior wall. The Master Plan allows the row home buildings to be built along Evarts Street in a rhythm and pattern respectful to the rhythm and pattern found with silos in the South service corridor. Each building is separated by either a street or alley in alternating sequence along the length of Evarts Street. The side facades of these buildings have been uniformly designed to reinforce this repetition and rhythm, and activate Evarts Street by being symmetrically balanced with windows flanking a centrally featured cantilevered bay window.
<i>Architecture:</i> need more renderings of interior of project (Commissioner May)	The additional renderings requested by the Commission are included in the updated drawings dated April 11, 2014.
<i>Architecture:</i> need to address scale, brutalist appearance of other buildings (Commissioner Turnbull)	The design intent in the approved guidelines is to reflect the industrial nature of the existing resources on the site by expressing "a sense of both the raw quality found in the sand bins and filtration beds with the refined qualities found in the regulator houses." McMillan Master Plan Design Guidelines, at 9. Buildings along the North Service Court are to "have a podium expressed similarly to the other buildings that will employ a concrete color that recalls the historic North Service Court wall." The multi-family/retail building employs a white skin that is "gridded and banded to visually reference the geometries and material use in

	<p>the other buildings while symbolically referring to the site's historic water filtration function." The healthcare facility similarly incorporates the materials and vocabulary of the regulator houses and the sand storage bins into a contemporary architectural language. The Applicant worked with HPRB and HPO staff to achieve building designs that evoke the unique qualities of the site. HPRB found the concept designs to "represent an architecturally coordinated and cohesive approach that specifically relates to the character of the McMillan site." See HPRB Actions, October 31, 2013. The Applicant looks forward to describing the design approach in greater detail at the hearing.</p>
<p><i>Architecture:</i> design should reflect and blend in with the surrounding neighborhood (Commissioner Turnbull)</p>	<p>Two design approaches for this unique historic site were specifically explored during the Historic Preservation Review Board ("HPRB") process: (i) whether to devise a contextual neighborhood design, or (ii) reflect the industrial character of the landmark that set it apart from the surrounding area. Initial designs presented to HPRB in 2012 integrated the site more with the surrounding community. HPRB commented, however, that the "plan was trying to relate too closely to the many disparate conditions around it, rather than reinforcing and recreating a unique place that is specific to the character of McMillan and distinct from what is surrounding it." In response, the Applicant developed Design Guidelines, which were adopted by HPRB, that emphasize a cohesive approach to landscape and architecture that act as additions to the historic landmark. Overall building forms and geometries should be very simple to reflect the simplicity of both the site's organization and its historic structures. The Applicant will present this design approach in greater detail at the hearing.</p>
<p><i>Historic Elements:</i> re-use of vaults, historic elements (Commissioner Cohen)</p>	<p>The majority of the underground sand filtration "cells" are structurally unstable and cannot be re-purposed as they exist now. However, Cell 14 at the northeast corner of the site has been retrofitted by D.C. Water for stormwater management until 2022. Thereafter, the Applicant will adapt this cell for active uses dependent on its condition. Cell 28 will be partially preserved and incorporated into the architecture of the Community Center. Cell 29 at the southeast corner of the site will be exposed and its structural elements will frame a landscaped water feature. All above-grade historic structures in the north and south service courts will be preserved, as described on pages 26-29 of the Stage 1 (Master Plan) drawings dated April 11, 2014.</p>
<p><i>Historic Elements:</i> re-use of historic fountain in possession of NPS (Commissioner May)</p>	<p>The Applicant enthusiastically endorses the idea of re-using the historic fountain on the site and would look forward to working with the Office of Planning to obtain permission and receive the missing pieces from the federal government to implement this proposal.</p>
<p><i>Lighting Plan:</i> none provided (Commissioner Cohen)</p>	<p>The lighting plan is included with the Stage 1 PUD drawings dated April 11, 2014, beginning on page 84.</p>

<p><i>Parking:</i> explanation of parking spaces at community center; number of spaces seems too low (Commissioner Miller); number of spaces seem too high (Commissioner Cohen); need to hear from DDOT</p>	<p>A typographical error on the zoning tabulations for the community center incorrectly listed the parking requirement as 95 spaces when the actual requirement is 9 spaces. The Applicant exceeds this requirement by providing 21 spaces in the South Service Court. Ample additional parking is located throughout the site within close walking distance to the community center. The Applicant is presently reviewing with the DDOT its transportation impact study.</p>
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