



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
FROM: JL for Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director Development Review & Historic Preservation
DATE: March 24, 2015
SUBJECT: ZC 14-09: Supplemental Report - Consolidated Planned Unit Development (PUD) with PUD-related Map Amendments at Square 369 (Columbia Place).

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BACKGROUND

At its public meeting of February 23, 2015, the Zoning Commission took proposed action to approve case 14-09, Columbia Place (the “Project”), a new mixed use development at the corner of L and 9th Streets NW. The Commission discussed the proposed Project’s roof structures, and requested that the Office of Planning (OP) work with the Zoning Administrator (ZA) to clarify whether the proposed roof structures were fully consistent with the Zoning Regulations and the Height of Buildings Act of 1910. As noted below, the applicant has also amended the rooftop design in response to Commission comments and concerns.

ISSUES

1. Rooftop Pool

The Commission noted that the height of the pool deck as originally proposed, which included a height of just under four feet for the mechanical plinth and an additional four feet for the pool, appeared to exceed the permitted height of the building by eight feet, and would therefore be inconsistent with both the zoning regulations and the Height Act (refer to Sheet A-215, View 3, of the Applicant’s post-hearing submission dated February 12, 2015, Exhibit 63A1).

Subsequently, the ZA agreed that the height of the pool deck would violate the Height Act.

However, in response to Commission comments during the proposed action meeting, the Applicant has modified the design of the pool deck so that the deck would be flush with the height of the plinth, or just under four feet in height (refer to Sheet A-216, View 3, of the Applicant’s submission dated March 2, 2015, Exhibit 66B).

2. Mechanical Plinth Space

The Commission noted that the Project’s mechanical plinth space, the first three feet 11 inches of additional height above the roof, was not set back a distance equal to its height (refer to Sheets A-215 and A-216, View 6, of the Applicant’s post-hearing submission dated February 12, 2015, Exhibit 63A1) and questioned whether this was in conformance with the Height Act and zoning regulations.

The Applicant has since reaffirmed to the Zoning Administrator that the plinth space would be used entirely for mechanical equipment, including mechanical ductwork, the hydronic system, the fire protection system, domestic water distribution, and the power system, and would be less than four feet in height, so not subject to the requirements for a roof structure, pursuant to §411.17. However, the Applicant has modified the design so that the plinth would provide a 11' setback (refer to Sheet A-216, View 3, of the Applicants revised submission dated March 2, 2015, Exhibit 66B).

The Applicant continues to request relief from the setback requirements of 770.6 to allow the mechanical penthouse to not provide the required set back along the east wall of the courtyard (i.e., the west wall of the hotel penthouse -- as shown on View 9 of Sheet A-215 of the Applicant's revised submission dated March 2, 2015, Exhibit 66B). The Applicant has also requested flexibility to not set back the plinth and railing a distance equal to their combined height along the west elevation of the building, which abuts a court and alley (see Views 3 and 4 on Sheet A-216 of the Applicants revised submission dated March 2, 2015, Exhibit 66B).

3. Handrail

The Commission noted that the proposed 42 inch handrail appeared to exceed the building's permitted height, was not setback 11', and was a structure on top of the mechanical penthouse.

The ZA stated that because the handrail is required by the building code and would be predominantly transparent, it is permitted to exceed the structure's permitted height and would not require a 1.1 setback.

In response to Commission comments during proposed action, the Applicant modified the railings such that they would generally be set back from the exterior walls a distance equal to their height, with the exception of the guard rail along the west elevation along a courtyard with private easement access (refer to Sheet A-216, Views 3 and 4, of the Applicant's submission dated March 2, 2015, Exhibit 66B).