



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: *JL for* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

Historic Preservation and Development Review

DATE: March 2, 2015

SUBJECT: ZC 14-23 – Special Exception Report for the continuation of the Trapeze School, pursuant to the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) Overlay District and Section 3104.1, Special Exceptions

I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends **approval** of Zoning Commission Case Number 14-23, a Special Exception to permit the continuation of the Trapeze School on Parcel O in the Southeast Federal Center Overlay District

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location: Southeast Federal Center, Parcel O; Square 826, Lot 27; Ward 6, ANC 6D

Applicant: Greenstem DeLorme & Luchs, P C on behalf of Forest City SEFC, LLC

Current Zoning: SEFC/CR

Property Size: 60,930 square feet

Proposal: In Zoning Commission Case 09-09, the Commission approved a text amendment to allow the establishment of a temporary Trapeze School and performing arts facility use on Parcel O in the Southeast Federal Center Overlay District, established by Chapter 18 of the Zoning Regulations. The text amendment permitted the location of the Trapeze School on Parcel O with the approval of a special exception from the Commission, and exempted the use from providing parking spaces. The amendment further allows for the continuation of the use after December 31, 2014 with the approval of a special exception by the Zoning Commission. With this application, the applicant requests approval to allow the Trapeze School to remain on Parcel O until December 31, 2015, at which time the School will be relocated to Parcel G, consistent with Commission approval for Z C Case No. 13-16.

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Zoning Commission Case 09-09, the Commission approved a text amendment to allow the establishment of a temporary Trapeze School and performing arts facility use on Parcel O in the Southeast Federal Center Overlay District, established by Chapter 18 of the Zoning



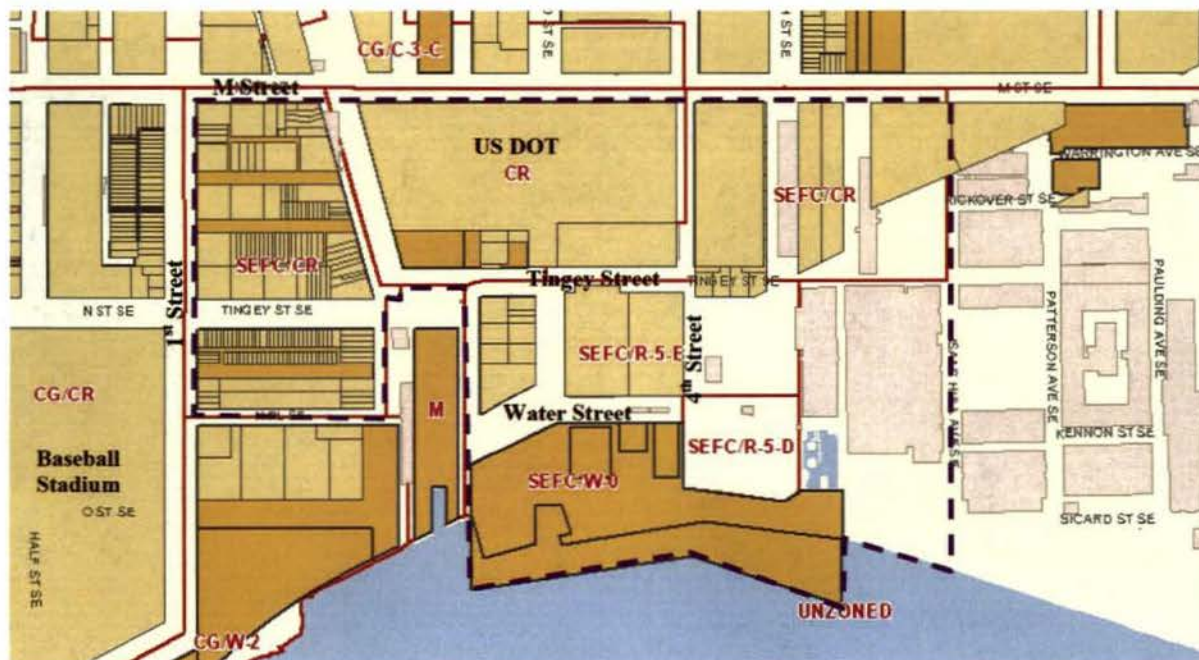
14-23
20

Regulations. The text amendment permitted the location of the Trapeze School on Parcel O with the approval of a special exception from the Commission, and exempted the use from providing parking spaces. The amendment further allows for the continuation of the use after December 31, 2014 with the approval of a special exception by the Zoning Commission. With this application, the applicant requests approval to allow the Trapeze School to remain on Parcel O until December 31, 2015, at which time the School will be relocated to Parcel G, consistent with Commission approval for Z.C. Case No. 13-16.

IV. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

Southeast Federal Center is a 42 acre site located in southeast Washington, D.C., along the Anacostia River. The property was previously known as Reservation 14, and was used as an annex to the Navy Yard. Specifically, the boundaries of the property are M Street S.E. and Tingey Street, S.E. to the north, 1st Street, S.E. to the west, the existing Washington Navy Yard to the east and the Anacostia River to the south (the "Property"). The area includes a District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority Pumping Station facility and the U.S. Department of Transportation Headquarters building.

The SEFC neighborhood planned by the applicant has the potential to provide over 5.5 million square feet of new development including over 2,800 units of residential housing, 1.8 million square feet of office space, and up to 400,000 square feet of retail and cultural amenities, which includes Yards Park, located adjacent to the Anacostia River.

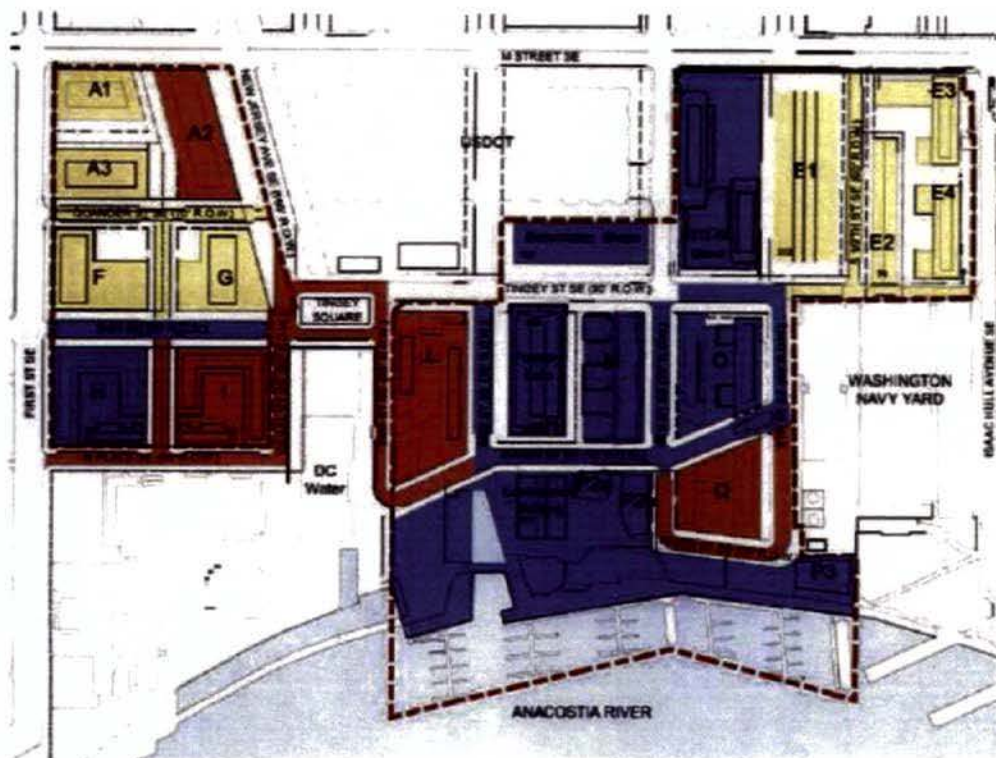


Site Location and Zoning



The parcel in question, Parcel O, is located in the eastern part of the Overlay near the waterfront at the southeast corner of Tingey Street and 4th Street, and has been improved with a tent and outdoor structure that house the School. The site has been landscaped, including a large green space central to the parcel, and perimeter landscaping along the 4th Street frontage that includes tree boxes, benches and a bicycle rack. This parcel is currently being designed for future development, which will occur in 2016, after the Trapeze School has been relocated.

The applicant has provided the following information to demonstrate the status of development in SEFC:



Name/Type of Project	Location	Status
"Parcel A" – Temporary Open Space	Parcel A	Beginning Construction
"Twelve 12" – Residential/Retail	Parcel D	Completed; Occupied
"Parcel F" – Temporary Surface Parking Lot	Parcel F	Beginning Construction
"Parcel G" – Trapeze School relocation	Parcel G	Beginning Construction
	Parcel H	Architect Selected
	Parcel I	
"The Boilermaker Shops" – Retail	Parcel K	Completed; Occupied
"Foundry Lofts" – Residential	Parcel M	Completed; Occupied
"Parcel N" – Residential/Retail	Parcel N	Opens Late 2015
"Parcel O" – Condo/Rental/Retail	Parcel O	In Design Phase
"Lumber Shed" – Retail/Office	Parcel P	Completed; Occupied

V. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to continue the use of the Trapeze School on Parcel O until December 31, 2015, at which time it will be relocated to Parcel G, located in Yards West, consistent with the Commission's approval of Z.C. Case No. 13-16. This case, approved February 3, 2014, approved the temporary use of Parcel G as a Trapeze School for a period of five years, as well as the use of Parcel F as a temporary parking lot for a period of five years.

Parcel O is a 60,930 square foot property located at the southeast corner of Tingey Street and 4th Street. The property is developed with an indoor and outdoor flying trapeze rig; the outdoor rig is enclosed by a temporary fence. The tent has a footprint of approximately fifty by eighty feet, and is accessed by walkways that have been provided outside the tent. The entrance to the Trapeze School is on 4th Street. The lot is largely planted with grass, and landscape has been provided along 4th Street, consistent with adjacent streetscape. Parking has not been provided on Parcel O.

The applicant has received approval from the Zoning Commission to relocate the Trapeze School from Parcel O to Parcel G, but is unable to do so until site preparation, including grading and the extension of utilities, has been completed. Section 1804.8 of the Zoning Regulations specifies that the Trapeze School use may continue beyond the date of December 31, 2014 with the approval of a special exception by the Zoning Commission. This provision indicates that an analysis "shall include a determination as to whether and what amount of parking should be required."

VI. PARKING

The Zoning Commission did not specifically require on-site parking to be provided for the Trapeze School. Rather, the Zoning Regulations specify that this should be evaluated upon the request to extend the use beyond December 31, 2014.

The applicant has indicated that the Trapeze School employs 54 people, with an average of six to ten members of staff present for classes. In addition, each class has ten or fewer students. It is estimated that 50-60% of the school's instructors and students use public transportation or bike to the location. The property is located three blocks from the Navy Yard Metro Station, and there are three Capital Bikeshare docking stations within three blocks of the property. Finally, the Trapeze School possesses nine parking passes to an adjacent monthly parking lot that are available to instructors that choose to drive.

There are several temporary parking lots located in SEFC that provide ample parking for the area. The applicant has identified the following quantity of spaces available in the approved temporary parking lots, which is consistent with the Zoning Commission's approval of Case 13-03, which requested additional temporary parking lots.

Temporary Parking Lots and Number of Spaces	
Parcel H/I	394 Spaces
Parcel L	196 Spaces
Parcel Q	199 Spaces
Parcel F	Approximately 200 Spaces
Total	989 Spaces

The information provided by the applicant demonstrates that the area is well-served by public transportation, and that sufficient parking exists to serve the use.

VII. CRITERIA OF THE SOUTHEAST FEDERAL CENTER OVERLAY

The applicant has requested Zoning Commission review pursuant to the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) Overlay District Section 1800. The following is an analysis of relevant sections of Section 1808 of the SEFC Overlay District.

Section 1808: In addition to proving that the proposed uses, buildings, or structures meet the standards set forth in § 3104.1, the applicant for Zoning Commission approval of a use or structure within the SEFC Overlay District shall further demonstrate conformance to the following standards:

- (a) The use, building, or structure will help achieve the objectives of the SEFC Overlay District as set forth in § 1802;***

Section 1802.4 of the Zoning Regulations indicates that the SEFC Overlay should "Encourage a variety of support and visitor-related uses, such as retail, service, entertainment, cultural and hotel or inn uses." The Trapeze School diversifies the mix of uses in the SEFC Overlay, offering a unique experience to visitors in the area, which achieves this objective.

- (b) The proposed building or structure shall be designed with a height, bulk, and siting that provide for openness of view and vistas to and from the waterfront and, where feasible, shall maintain views of federal monumental buildings, particularly along the New Jersey Avenue, S.E. corridor;***

The temporary tent structure and outdoor rig stand at a maximum height of 48 feet. The structures are set back approximately eleven feet from the edge of the sidewalk, and are largely obscured from view by the recently completed Twelve 12 mixed-use development located north of the site. The structures do not obstruct views of federal monumental buildings, and provide for openness of view and vistas to and from the waterfront.

- (c) On or above-grade parking adjacent to, or visible from, the street shall be limited. Where parking cannot be placed underground, other uses such as retail or residential shall separate parking areas from the street, or where this is not possible, green landscaping or architectural treatment of facades shall adequately screen parking from the street and adjacent development.***

The Trapeze School is a temporary use on the property, and on-site parking has not been provided. Permanent construction of the lot will entail retail, residential and hospitality uses, and will include below grade parking to serve the development

Section 1808.2: In evaluating the application, the Commission also may consider:

- (a) Compatibility with buildings in the surrounding area through overall massing, siting, details, and landscaping;***

Landscaping has been provided along 4th Street that is consistent with adjacent streetscape, which includes tree boxes. The trapeze rigs on the site are not permanent structures, however, the smaller stature of the structures is compatible with surrounding development

- (b) Use of high standards of environmental design that promote the achievement of sustainable development goals;***

The plant materials that have been used on the site are largely native to the region and should provide a relatively low-maintenance landscape. Additional high quality environmental design standards will be incorporated into the permanent development.

- (g) For development within or adjacent to the SEFC/W-0 District, the Commission may consider whether the project is consistent with the following goals:***

- (i) Providing a wide variety of active and passive recreational uses;***
- (ii) Encouraging uses that open to, overlook, and benefit the waterfront park;***
- (iii) Utilizing siting and design of buildings and uses to improve the natural ecology, to illustrate the importance of natural systems, and/or to interpret the historically important maritime context of the site.***

The proposed temporary use increases recreational use along the waterfront. The landscaping provided will continue to enhance the property and assist with stormwater runoff.

Section 3104.1: Special Exceptions

- (a) Will the special exception be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps?***

The Trapeze School has been operating on Parcel O for a period of five years, and has demonstrated that is a compatible use with adjacent developments. The School adds to the recreational opportunities along the Anacostia waterfront, which meets the intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps.

(b) Will the special exception tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Maps?

The special exception should not adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Maps. The property is well-maintained, consisting of landscape and streetscape, which assists with stormwater runoff. The applicant has demonstrated that there is sufficient parking in the SEFC area to accommodate the use without the need for on-site parking to be provided. Finally, the structures are low-profile and do not block monumental views, and are set back similarly to adjacent developments.

VIII. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION (ANC) COMMENTS

ANC 6D reviewed this proposal at its meeting on February 9, 2015 and voted to support the application. A letter from ANC 6D has been submitted to the record for consideration by the Zoning Commission.

IX. DISTRICT AGENCY COMMENTS

As of the date of this report, OP has not received comments from any other District agency or department.

JLS/be