



Delegated Action of the Executive Director

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PROJECT

Capitol Gateway Overlay District Review at
Square 700, Lots 43, 866 (SQ700 Trust, LLC)
South Capitol Street and M Street, SE
Washington, DC

NCPC FILE NUMBER

ZC 15-11

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

24 30(06.20)44174

REFERRED BY

Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia

DETERMINATION

Approval of report to the Zoning
Commission of the District of Columbia

REVIEW AUTHORITY

Advisory per 40 U.S.C § 8724(a) and
DC Code § 2-1006(a) and § 11-
3012 1(a)

On July 25, 2015, the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia reviewed plans for a proposed new building to be located at the southeast corner of South Capitol Street and M Street, SE. This review is pursuant to provisions within the Capitol Gateway (CG) Overlay District. The operative provisions include Sections 1604, 1605 and 1610 of the District of Columbia Zoning Regulations (11 DCMR), which apply to new construction on any lot that abuts South Capitol Street or M Street, SE within the CG Overlay District. (The project site is zoned CG/CR and must conform to both CG Overlay District and CR—Commercial-Residential zoning requirements.)

The project site consists of the northern half of combined Lots 43 and 866 in Square 700; it is a corner lot with primary frontage on South Capitol Street to the west and M Street, SE to the north. The site is further bound by Van Street, SE, to the east and the remainder of the undeveloped Lot 866 to the south (slated for future development by the same owner as the project site). The area, the Capitol Riverfront neighborhood, is a rapidly redeveloping part of Washington and currently consists of many vacant lots and new, dense office and residential structures. The Nationals baseball stadium is located one block south of the project site.

The proposed structure is a 128,750 square-foot, 10-story office building with retail space on the ground floor facing both South Capitol Street and M Street, SE. The office lobby will be accessed from M Street, SE; loading and 70 underground parking spaces will be accessed from Van Street, SE. The proposed building height is 130 feet, which is based on the dimension of South Capitol Street and is the maximum height allowed under the Act to Regulate the Height of Buildings in the District of Columbia (Height Act). The proposal also includes an 18-foot, six-inch-high penthouse above the proposed 130-foot structure. The façades of the proposed structure consist of a mixture of precast concrete panels with inserted window walls, glass curtain walls, aluminum glazed storefront windows, and aluminum metal panels. The proposed materials and design are typical of the new development in the Capitol Riverfront neighborhood. Building setbacks at various levels provide terrace space and green roofs; portions of the penthouse roof are also proposed to be green.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 15-11
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
EXHIBIT NO. 24
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The proposed structure meets most of the requirements of the CG Overlay District, including a 15-foot setback from the property line along South Capitol Street, a one-to-one setback above the 110-foot height along South Capitol Street, and a 15-foot setback from the curb along M Street, SE (at levels 1 and 2). The applicant is proposing two areas of relief, as discussed below.

First, the applicant is requesting a variance from the 15-foot M Street, SE setback required within Section 1604.3 of the CG Overlay District for an architectural embellishment consisting of a curved window wall for levels 3 through 10. If this relief is granted a portion of levels 3 through 10 (roughly 25 percent of the length of the M Street, SE, façade) will only be set back 6 feet from the curb along M Street, SE. Based on materials submitted by the applicant, including simulated views of the proposed structure, this architectural embellishment does not appear to negatively impact the street views both east and west down M Street, SE, nor does the reduced setback appear to be inconsistent with the intent and requirements of the CG Overlay District, the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, or any other federal interests.

Second, the applicant has requested relief from the roof structure setback requirements of Section 630.4(b) that require mechanical penthouses on rooftops to be "set back from all exterior walls a distance at least equal to the height above the roof upon which it is located." The proposed 18-foot, six-inch-high penthouse (above the proposed 130-foot structure) meets the required setback along South Capitol Street, M Street, SE, and Van Street, SE. However, due to the nature of a proposed curved façade at levels 9 and 10, the required 18-foot, six-inch penthouse setback is not met (following the curvature of the wall, the 18-foot, six-inch penthouse setback is reduced down to 15 feet, 5 inches at one point). The impact of this decreased setback is visually minimal and does not appear to be inconsistent with the intent and requirements of the CG Overlay District; however, because the proposed penthouse is above the 130-foot height allowed under the Height Act, the penthouse must be set back to meet the one-to-one requirement. As such, the penthouse is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and the requirements of the Height Act. Further, Section 2510.1 of the Zoning Regulations also requires all buildings within the District of Columbia to comply with the Height Act; relief from Section 630.4(b) for a penthouse above the maximum building height allowed under the Height Act would be inconsistent with the requirement of Section 2510.1.

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Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on August 6, 1999 and 40 U.S.C. §8724(a), and DC Code §2-1006(a) and in reference to 11-3012.1(a), I find that the proposed building at Square 700, Lots 43, 866 (SQ700 Trust, LLC) is consistent with the intent and requirements of the Capitol Gateway Overlay District, but is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and other federal interests, due to a minimal violation of the penthouse setback requirements of the Height of Buildings Act.



Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

7/8/15

[Date]