

Overview

Outline

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 - ▶ Historic Preservation
 - ▶ Affordable Housing
 - ▶ Transit Options
 - ▶ Traffic
 - ▶ Parking
 - ▶ Ground Water
 - ▶ Possibility of Toxic Chemicals Onsite

Overview

Narrative

ANC 3E believes this project should be approved and has submitted a resolution, approved 4-0, in support of it. We have invested a significant amount of time and energy reviewing the project, analyzing its benefits, impacts and conformance with the zoning code, adherence to the Comprehensive Plan and its relationship to neighborhood institutions. We have also met extensively with community members, both in opposition and in support, and examined in detail the concerns they have raised, the most prevalent issues being the ones discussed in the Issues Examined section.

While doing so, we kept in mind our obligation to look at the project not only in the context of the nearby neighbors, but the community and the city as a whole, an obligation that is part of our oath of office as Commissioners. We referred to the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Code to guide us on how we interpreted that obligation and evaluated the Developer's proposal.

This project has taken a number of turns and changes as it has evolved, it has not been a simple and straightforward process. We do believe that, while not an ideal scenario, that process has ultimately improved the project and incorporated the vast majority of the concerns and desires of the community into the proposal currently presented. This does not make it a perfect project, few if any are, but it is a project the ANC believes will be a benefit to the community and whose impacts are sufficiently mitigated.

The presentation will touch on several broad themes: The project's Progression, its Benefits and Impacts and the MOU that addresses them, Community Outreach, and the Issues Examined in the course of evaluating the proposal. Our contextual framework used the following criteria when viewing the project: the benefit for the community as a whole, the impacts from that benefit, whether those impacts can be sufficiently mitigated, and if the balance between those benefits and mitigations warrants support of the project. To reiterate, we believe the project does warrant our support based on that analysis which is detailed in the pages following.

We recognize the project's progression from the original proposal, one that was a fairly large, imposing development that relied heavily on a PUD, and possibly a map amendment, with a FAR that was probably close to 4 or higher, to one that, eventually, was a modest neighborhood compatible building with a FAR of 2.68 and a design that integrated with its surroundings rather than imposed on and conflicted with them. This was a direct result of the extensive community engagement that the Developer, the ANC, the opponents and the supporters, partook in as well as the Developer's openness to changing the proposal in response to those interactions. We also believe the current proposal is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and applicable zoning.

In terms of what the project proposes in the context of a PUD, the project proposes a FAR that, as a whole, is .32 less than what would be allowed under a MU-4 MOR with IZ proposal, it does not ask for a map amendment, it asks for minor relief for a rear yard setback and a penthouse, and it offers several significant community benefits as defined in the zoning code and recognized by ANC 3E and 3D as such. There are sufficient mitigations of its impacts proposed, many of which are the result of community input and ANC engagement.

It is also important to touch on one point that is an underlying theme of the city's approach to urban planning but that is often lost in the minutia of zoning and development discussions and that is: creating affordable, equitable, and inclusive neighborhoods throughout the city, including those that are stable and low scale, as the neighborhood this project is located in. Those words do not connote stasis or little to no change in neighborhoods, they simply provide context on how that change occurs. There is a clear state of affairs in this part of the city that it has not met the ideals the Comprehensive Plan enunciates in this regard. This state is documented in the Historical Preservation section and the Affordable Housing section.

The ANC believes though that this project would substantially further progress in achieving the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and particularly in this area of the city. We regard that as a significant benefit to the community.

Overall ANC 3E, after extensive research, analysis and engagement, supports the project and asks that the Zoning Commission approve it and incorporate the signed Memorandum of Understanding into the zoning order.

Project Progression

Comparison – Window view

Final Proposal



Original Proposal



Project Progression

Comparison – Yuma/48th view

Final Proposal



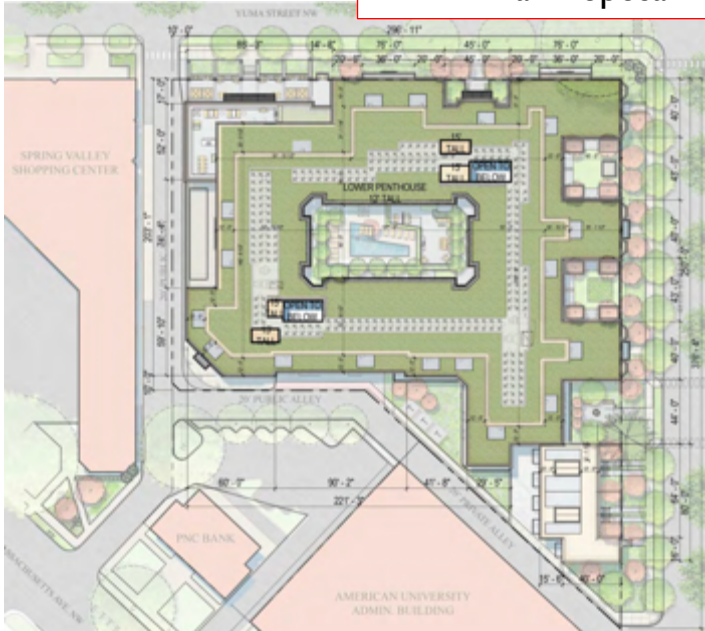
Original Proposal



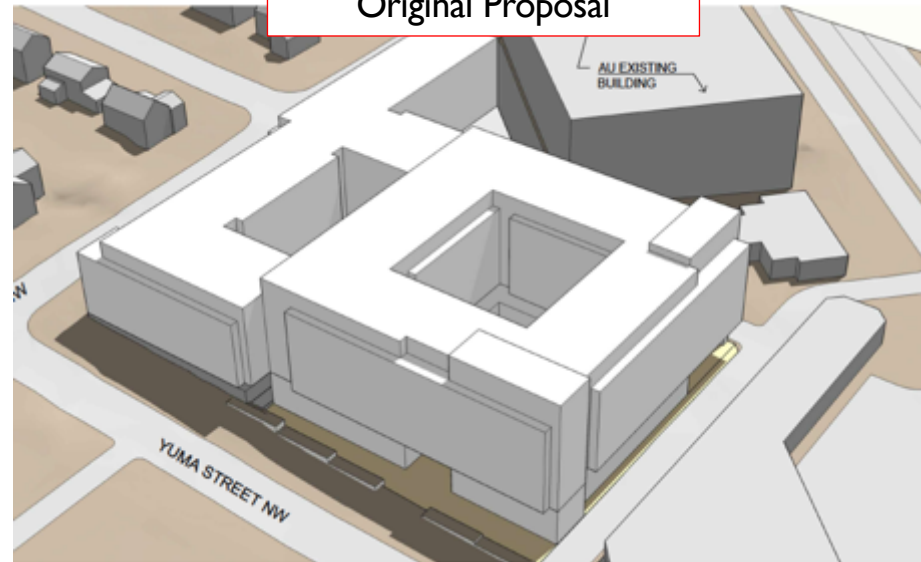
Project Progression

Lot Coverage and Massing

Final Proposal

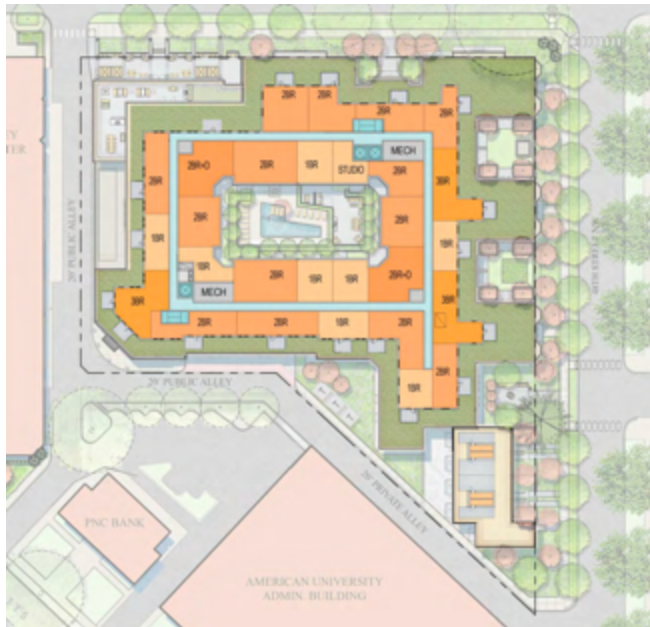


Original Proposal



Project Progression Comparison – Floor Plans

Final Proposal

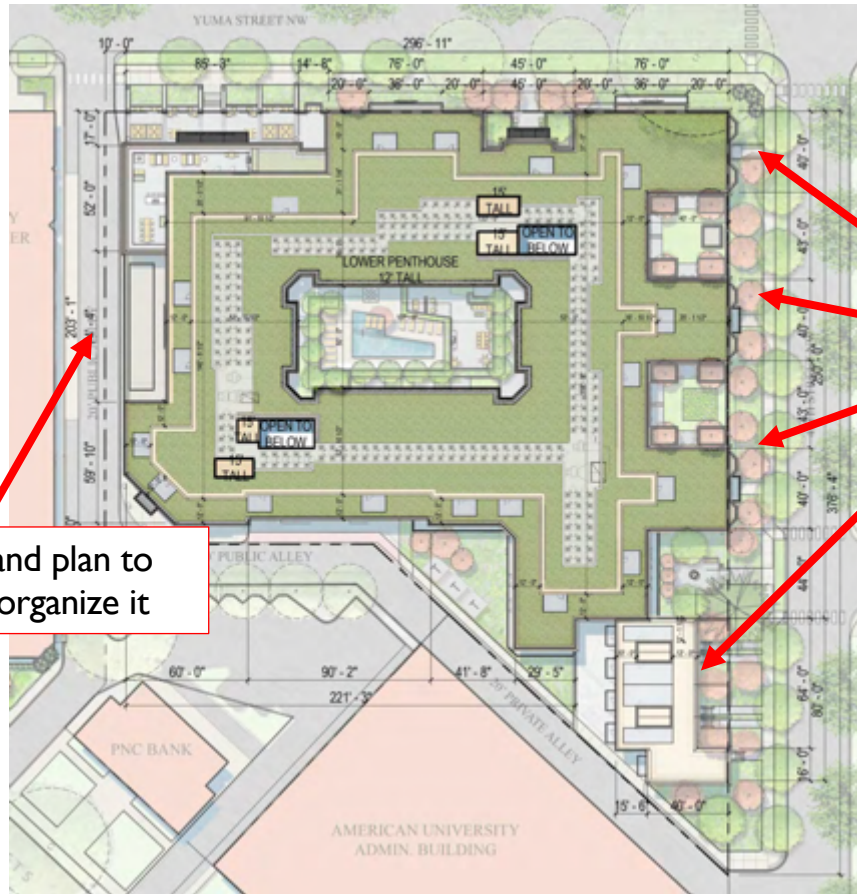


Original Proposal



Project Progression

Final design - Floor plan



Wider alley and plan to cleanup and organize it

Façade is broken up to reduce apparent massing

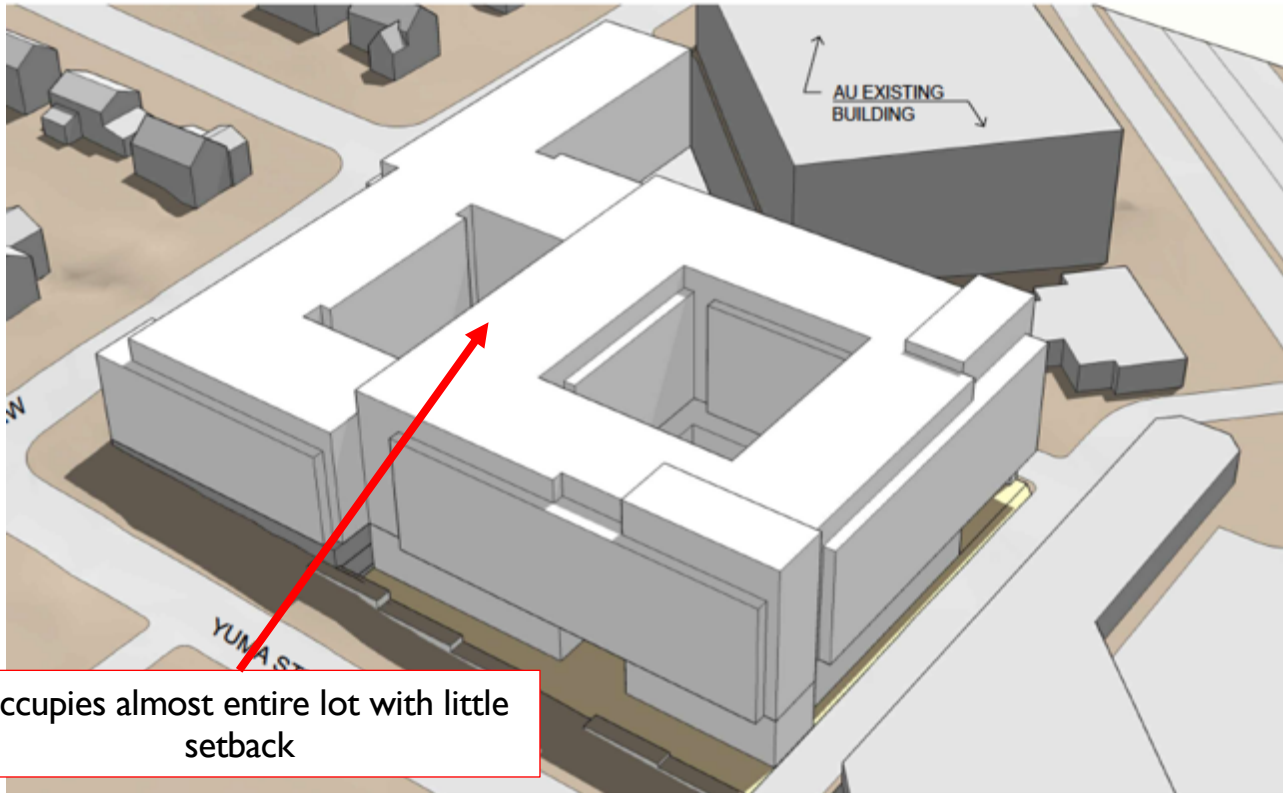
Project Progression

Calculations – Summary

	Final	Original	Difference
Zoning	MU-4	C-2-A	ZR16 vs ZR58
Total GFA	236,945 sf	421,210 sf	-184,265 sf
Residential GFA	216,759 sf	361,210 sf	-144,451 sf
Non-residential GFA	20,535 sf	60,000 sf	-39,465 sf
Non-residential - Grocery	16,584 sf	55,000 sf	-38,416 sf
Non-residential - Retail	1,614 sf	5,000 sf	- 3,386 sf
Parking - Total	370	460	-90 spaces
Parking – Grocery/Retail	86	147	- 61
Parking – Residential	228	77	+151
Parking – AU/Shared	56	236	-180
Units - Total	219 @ 1,241 sf	278 @ 1,300 sf	-59 units
Units – Proposed IZ	11%	10%	Added 1%

Project Progression

Original PUD Design - Massing



Occupies almost entire lot with little setback

Project Progression

Original PUD Design – Floor Plan

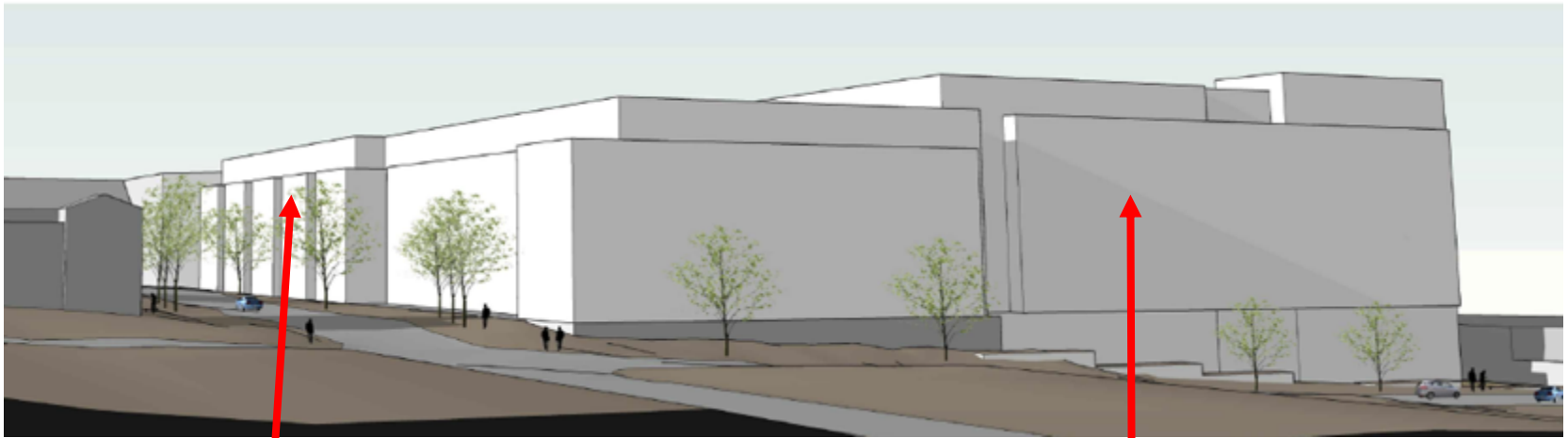


Narrow alley that doesn't solve existing issues with it

Structure closed to surrounding neighborhood, consumes most of site

Project Progression

Original PUD Design – Massing - Elevation



Continuous façade all down 48th Street

Continuous façade all down Yuma Street

Project Progression

Original PUD Design – Articulated Elevation – 48th/Yuma



Materials may have hints of adjacent structures but architecture conflicts with neighborhood styles – we're not rectilinear

Project Progression

Original PUD Design – Articulated Elevation - Yuma



Project Progression

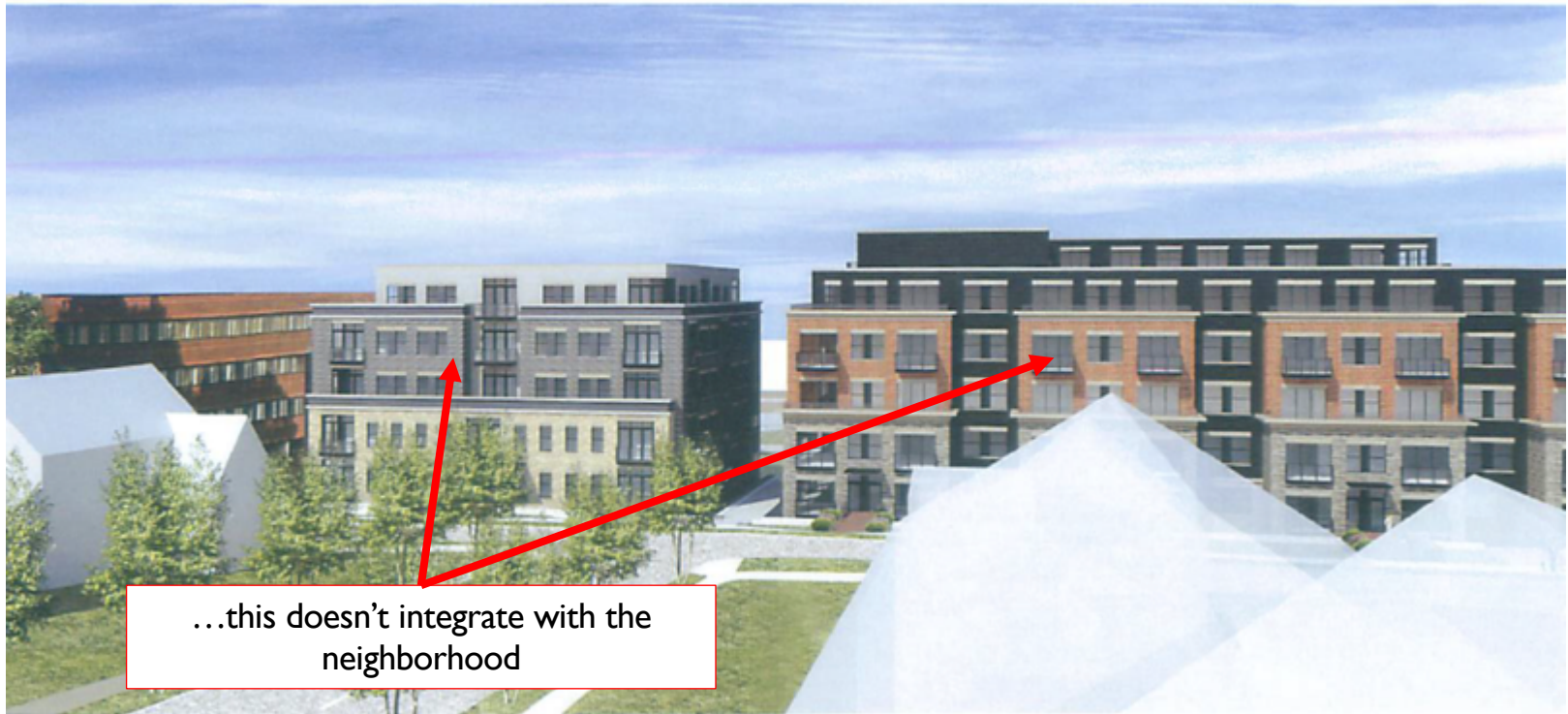
Original PUD Design – Articulated Elevation – Mass Ave



This does not fit in with either the neighborhood architecture nor does it complement the historic Massachusetts Avenue Park and Shop style

Project Progression

Original PUD Design – Articulated Elevation - Windom



Project Progression

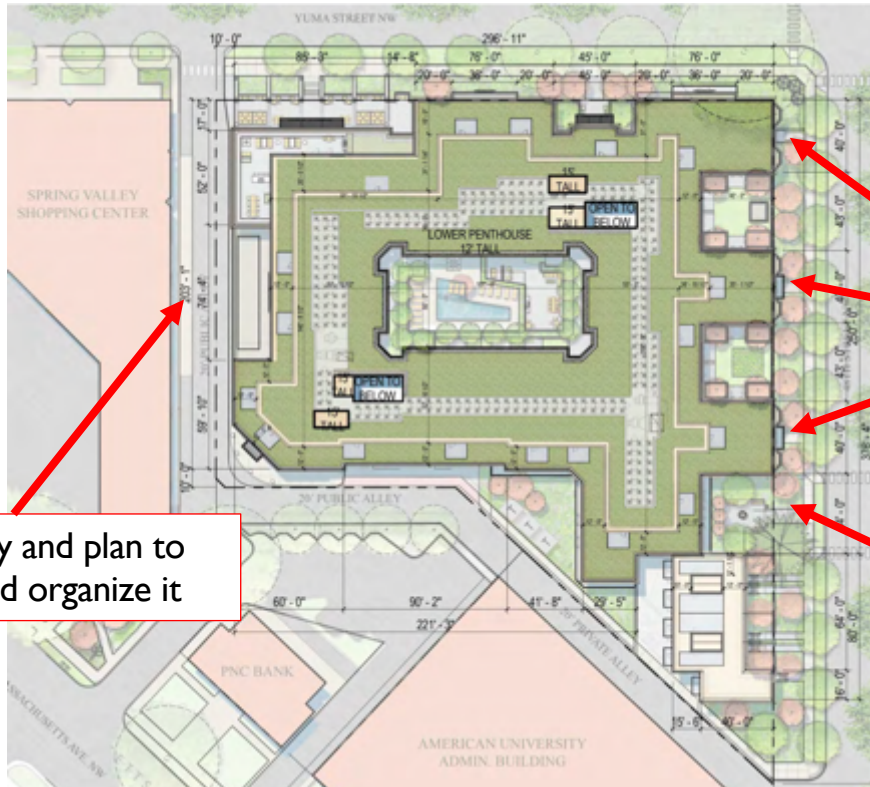
Final Design – Articulated Elevation - Windom



Different architecture but still a classical versus a modernist style as well as design decisions that break up mass and reduce perceived heights

Project Progression

Final design - Floor plan



Wider alley and plan to cleanup and organize it

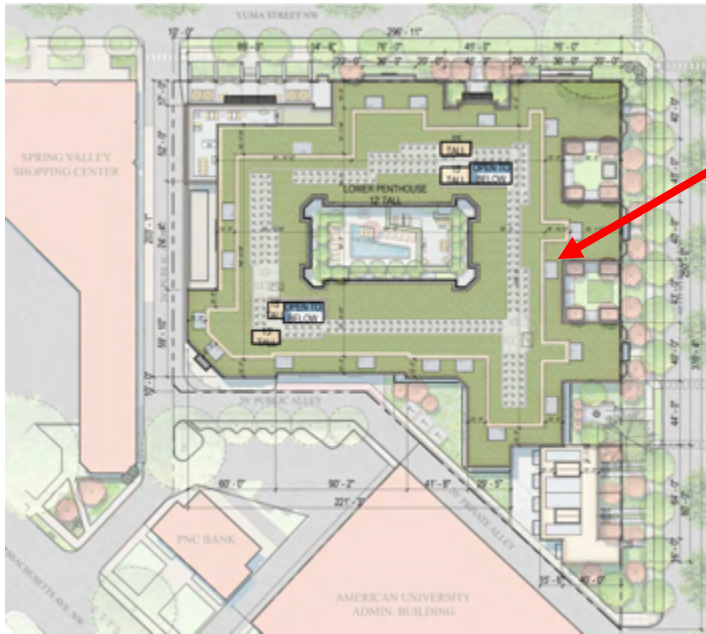
Façade is broken up to reduce apparent massing

Passageway is gone but building is stepped back to breakup façade

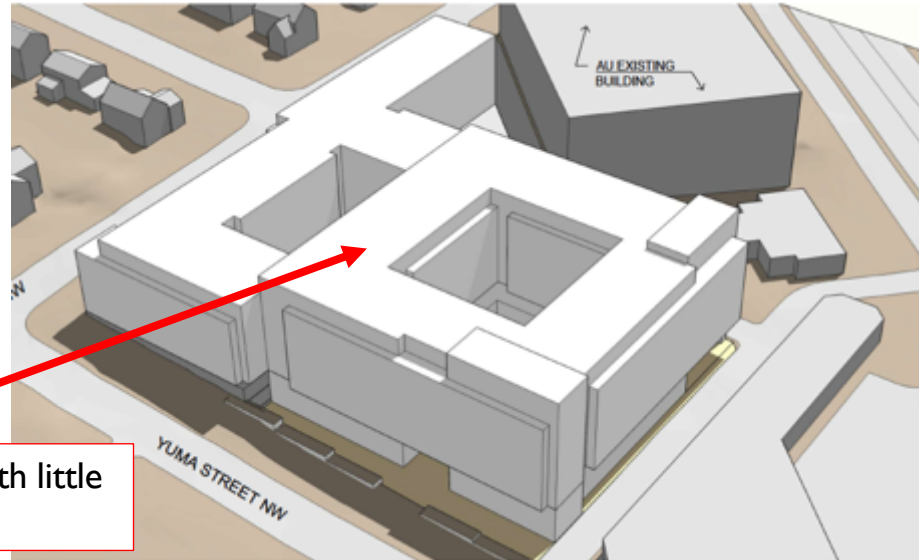


Project Progression

Comparison – Lot Coverage and Massing



Employs many setbacks to mitigate massing and reduces lot coverage

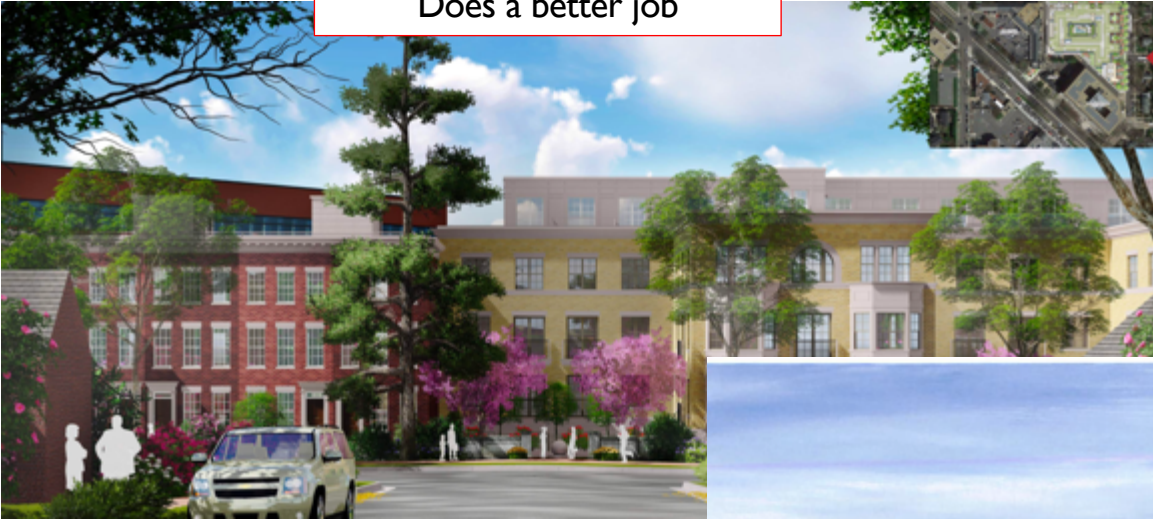


Occupies almost entire lot with little setback

Project Progression

Comparison – Window view

Does a better job



This doesn't integrate well with the neighborhood



Project Progression

Comparison – Yuma view

Does a much better job



This doesn't integrate well with the neighborhood

Project Progression

Comparison – Mass Ave view

Does a much better job



This doesn't integrate well with the neighborhood



Project Benefits

Summary

- ▶ Addition of 219 units of Multi-family housing to diversify housing stock
- ▶ Significant Amount of Affordable Housing, including multi-bedroom units
- ▶ Full-service Grocery Store
- ▶ Activation of a site that has been moribund for more than 5 years
- ▶ Numerous improvements to the surrounding pedestrian infrastructure including a HAWK light in Massachusetts Avenue
- ▶ Numerous improvements to the surrounding transportation infrastructure
- ▶ A LEED Gold building
- ▶ Neighborhood compatible and exemplary building design
- ▶ Public space improvements in and around project site

Project Impacts

Summary

- ▶ Traffic
- ▶ Loading and Unloading Activities
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Construction Activity

Memorandum of Understanding

Summary of ANC3E Resolution and MOU

- ▶ ANC3E supported the proposed development via a resolution and has negotiated an MOU with Valor to be incorporated into the Zoning Order if the proposal is approved
- ▶ The MOU contains the following:
 - ▶ Benefits
 - ▶ A guarantee to reserve at least 13,000 sf of retail space within the project solely for use by a full-service Grocer
 - ▶ Agree to set aside no less than 11% of the residential GFA for IZ (previously 10%)
 - ▶ Commit to LEED Gold certification
 - ▶ Agree to fund the study and installation of a HAWK light across Massachusetts Avenue to provide safe pedestrian passage between the two shopping centers
 - ▶ Agree to provide \$100,000 for connecting to Metro, currently envisioned as a geo-fenced ride hailing service.
 - ▶ Agree to reorganize, clean and expand existing public alley
 - ▶ Agree to fund a transportation study, using data collected from the CTR, of Massachusetts Avenue from 49th St to 48th/Fordham Road to examine more efficient turning movements and safer pedestrian movements. The maximum cost of the study would be \$15,000.
 - ▶ Agree to spend \$15,000 on public space improvements on and around the site.
 - ▶ Mitigations
 - ▶ Agreements for mitigating building uses such as
 - Waste Management
 - Restaurant Venting
 - Rooftop Terrace impacts
 - Alternate lease uses
 - ▶ Agreements to mitigate transportation and parking impacts such as pedestrian infrastructure, loading, and parking
 - Agree to implement Pedestrian Infrastructure and Traffic Calming surrounding the site
 - Agree to implement a Parking plan that restricts building residents from participating in the RPP Program
 - Agree to a parking plan that guarantees 370 parking spaces will be available to the plan
 - ▶ Agreements to mitigate construction activity

Community Engagement

Summary of Meetings

- ▶ The Applicant has met extensively with various parties
 - ▶ ANC 3E Meetings 13 times
 - ▶ ANC 3E Commissioners 14 times
 - ▶ ANC 3D Meetings 4 times
 - ▶ General Community Meetings 5 times
 - ▶ Meetings with Opponents 8 times
 - ▶ Meetings with Supporters 5 times
- ▶ The ANC has met extensively with the Developer, opponents, and supporters. These meetings have encompassed descriptions of the project details, discussions of concerns about the project, suggestions about it, and discussions of benefits and mitigations regarding the MOU.

Issues Examined

Summary

- ▶ The ANC researched a number of issues raised by itself and the community in the past several years and the numerous hearings, meetings, and email communications. These were the main topics we looked at.
 - ▶ PUD versus VDR
 - ▶ Compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan
 - ▶ Historic Preservation
 - ▶ Affordable Housing
 - ▶ Transit Options
 - ▶ Traffic
 - ▶ Parking
 - ▶ Alleyway Operations
 - ▶ Ground Water/Stormwater
 - ▶ Possibility of Toxic Chemicals Onsite

PUD versus VDR

Summary

▶ Issues

- ▶ The ANC, along with ZC, was uncomfortable with the use of a Voluntary Design Review versus a Planned Unit Development method for submitting the proposal.
- ▶ The means of evaluating the project using a VDR are more challenging and lacking in precedential basis than the tried and true PUD structure.

▶ Responses

- ▶ The ANC asked the Developer to withdraw the VDR application in favor of the PUD application after the ZC expressed its concerns about pursuing both paths. The Developer agreed to do so.
- ▶ The ANC believes a PUD is the appropriate method for best evaluating the merits and impacts of the proposed development and how it fits into the existing site uses.

Compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan Summary

▶ Issues

- ▶ Opponents have argued the project is not compatible with the City's Comprehensive Plan and accompanying Future Land Use Map

▶ Responses

- ▶ While it is beyond the scope of the ANC to determine the legal merits of this issue, we can assess the view of community on whether the project comports with the site and the existing developments in the context of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ▶ Comprehensive Plan: From the Rock Creek West Area Element (Table 2)
 - RCW-1.1.3: Conserving Neighborhood Commercial Centers:
 - RCW-1.1.4: Infill Development
 - RCW-1.1.11: Managing Transportation Demand
 - RCW-1.1.13: Parking
 - RCW-1.1.14: Bicycle Facilities
 - RCW-1.1.15: Metro Access
- ▶ Existing development and site conditions
 - ▶ Designation on Future Land Use Map
 - MAPS is extremely low density and Historically Designated thus restricting development.
 - The AU Spring Valley Building is much higher density on a site that is approximately half the size of the Ladybird site and about the same size as the MAPS site.
 - The Spring Valley Shopping Center across Massachusetts Avenue is low density as well and Historically Designated thus restricting development.

Compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan

Summary (Continued)

▶ Response (Continued)

▶ Conclusions

- ▶ In reviewing the proposal through the lens of a PUD that encompasses the whole site, the ANC views the project as appropriately balancing the very low density development of the MAPS lots (.43 FAR), with the higher density development of the AU Spring Valley Building (4.3 FAR), and the modest density development proposed for the Ladybird project (2.68 FAR). Coupling that with the low density commercial development across Massachusetts Avenue and Spring Valley Shopping Center, a site that will probably never have any mixed-use development and hence no opportunity for more diverse neighborhood housing choices, the ANC looks at the Ladybird project as satisfying, in its community informed view, the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map's intended purposes as a whole.
- ▶ While the FLUM suggests the low-density commercial designation, it's clear that the zoning envisioned the possibility of mixed-use development of the site, development that hasn't occurred anywhere else on the multiple lots in this area designated in the FLUM and by the MU-4 zoning. This ANC values mixed-use development, especially in areas that are specifically designated for it and sees this project as one of the few opportunities to create that type of development.
- ▶ The zoning of the site, MU-4, clearly allows for a development of this size and density. The fact that the PUD's resulting FAR of 2.68, just .18 FAR above a Matter of Right ratio and well below either the IZ FAR of 3.0 or the PUD FAR of 3.6, confirms the ANC's view that the project is an appropriate scale and density for the site.
- ▶ The fact that the proffered amenity, the full-service grocery store that the community requested to replace the one that existed before, is the main reason the why the PUD is necessary, also confirms the ANC's view that the project is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and the FLUM in terms of offering neighborhood amenities that are part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ▶ The developer has also changed the original proposal drastically to be more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and to reduce the neighborhood impact it will have, as illustrated in the table on page 8.
- ▶ Lastly, many of the policies enumerated in the Rock Creek West Area Element of the Comprehensive Plan are addressed by the project including the Conservation of Neighborhood Commercial Centers (which the PUD site is designated) through compatible uses such as multi-family housing and the accompanying affordable housing, using infill development or mixed use development to address community needs (the Grocery Store), and the provision of multiple transit modes to facilitate travel (Car sharing, Metro connectivity, alternate transit mode accommodations). The fact that the site is a block away from a major artery, Massachusetts Avenue, further suggests the appropriateness of developing at this site.

Historic Preservation

Summary

▶ Viewstand

- ▶ The current viewstand has several jarring elements to it including:
 - ▶ A gas station pricing sign displayed prominently from the Massachusetts Avenue viewstand
 - ▶ An outdated gas station canopy also in the Massachusetts Avenue viewstand
 - ▶ The current backdrop viewstand consists of a concrete block façade that is the backside of the long vacant Superfresh building with jail-like window features and exposed chilling units on the roof
- ▶ The original proposal from the Applicant also had problems in its compatibility with the MAPS viewstand. The massing was much more imposing and the design aesthetic had more in common with the institutional building next to it than the MAPS buildings or the neighborhood homes behind it. The Developer received quite a bit of criticism on the design as a result.
- ▶ In contrast, the current design takes visual cues from both the shopping center and the surrounding homes and uses similar materials, such as red brick, to relate to those buildings. Its mass steps back in order to not impose on those surrounding buildings and uses similar massing geometries to complement those buildings. The result is a far more harmonious effect that complements both the MAPS buildings and the neighborhood homes.

▶ Urban Design

- ▶ The MAPS property is a prime example of urban sprawl planning: neighborhoods designed around the idea of entirely car-centric transit movements with other transit modes such as walking and biking discouraged and ignored. The design ethos is something the vast majority of urban planners have rejected in favor of multi-use, denser and far more flexible buildings and planning strategies. The city has also embraced that urban design philosophy which is expressed in the Comprehensive Plan and the ZR-16 zoning.
- ▶ Evidence of this anti-pedestrian design can be seen in the graphic on page 12. A pedestrian attempting to access the MAPS center coming from the north must pass through an active gas station garage and pump stand that lacks a sidewalk and crosses in front of car repair bays, risks walking through the middle of a busy parking lot, or must go to the southern end of the center near the Wells Fargo bank. This area at the south end is also near a desire path crossing Massachusetts Avenue to connect with the shopping center on the west side and is where the proposed HAWK light would be installed in order to ensure safe pedestrian passage.
- ▶ The Historic Preservation designation of a bland, faux colonial strip mall has deprived the city of developable GFA on this lot of which 39,516 square feet is occupied by only 16,933 square feet of commercial development for a resulting FAR of .43. The Matter of Right development maximum potential of 98,790 GFA or the MOR with IZ potential of 118,548 GFA will never be utilized because of this designation. The Future Land Use Map's (FLUM) intended purposes for the site are permanently undermined, to the community's detriment, in exchange for preserving a strip mall with a large surface parking lot and dubious historicity.