

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Jonathan Kirschenbaum, Case Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: October 25, 2019

SUBJECT: BZA Case 13540A (1600 M Street, NW) to request a modification of consequence to construct a front entry pavilion at the National Geographic Society headquarters.

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the modification of consequence to construct a front entry pavilion at an existing building approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment (Board) under Order No. 13540, pursuant to Subtitle Y § 703.

The proposed addition would not change the material facts upon which the Board based its original approval of the project, and the applicant affirms that the proposed addition would fully comply with the 2016 Zoning Regulations.

II. BACKGROUND

The subject site contains three buildings for the headquarters of the National Geographic Society, including the 16th Street Building, the 17th Street Building, and the M Street Building. The Board approved the M Street Building on November 26, 1981 under Order No. 13450. The approval granted the applicant the ability to extend office use into the SP-2 zone (now D-2) as a special exception, extend the permitted uses of the C-4 zone (now D-6) into the SP-2 as a special exception, and to vary the open court requirements.

III. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1600 M Street, NW
Legal Description	Square 183, Lots 883 and 884
Zoning	D-2, D-6
Ward and ANC	2/2B
Historic District	The 16 th Street and M Street Buildings are located in the Sixteenth Street Historic District.
Lot Characteristics	Corner lot bounded by 16 th Street, NW to the east, M Street, NW to the north, 17 th Street, NW to the west and a public alley to the south.

Adjacent Properties and Neighborhood Character	Office buildings, non-profit institutions, and hotels.
Existing Development	<p>The lot contains the headquarters for the National Geographic Society spread across three buildings, including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16th Street Building – 2 – 4 stories;• 17th Street Building – 10 stories; and• M Street Building – 7 stories. <p>There is a large plaza to the north of the M Street Building with below-grade parking beneath. All three buildings are connected either below or above grade.</p>

IV. DESCRIPTION OF MODIFICATION

The applicant proposes to construct an entry pavilion in front of the M Street Building and between the 16th Street and 17th Street Buildings. Most of the existing plaza would be retained, and the proposed pavilion would create a seamless above grade connection between the three existing buildings. The pavilion and plaza would serve as the main entryway into the headquarters, to replace the existing main entrance located at the 17th Street Building. The pavilion would be 41 feet in height and would be two stories, though most of the building area would be one story with high ceilings. The total gross floor area of the pavilion would be 23,550. The proposed pavilion would make the three existing buildings one building for zoning purposes.

V. ANALYSIS

Subtitle Y § 703.3 defines “Minor Modifications” as “modifications that do not change the material facts upon which the Board based its original approval...”.

The applicant affirms that the proposed addition would meet the development standard requirements of the D-6 zone, and OP finds that the proposal would not change the material facts upon which the Board based its original approval.

VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The design proposal was granted concept approval by the Historic Preservation Review Board on August 1, 2019.

VII. AGENCY COMMENTS

No agency comments were received from other District agencies as of the date of the filing of this report.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS TO DATE

No community comments had been filed to the record as of the date of the filing of this report.

IX. ATTACHMENT

