

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY – 55 H STREET NW
SUPPLEMENTAL STATEMENT IN SUPPORT**

Z.C. CASE NO. 19-20

The following narrative summarizes revisions to the initial design of the Project and provides supplemental information in support of the application. The revised design is shown on the plans attached as Exhibit E (the “**Updated Plans**”).

I. Refinements to Architectural Design

Broadly, the University’s design approach for the Project is to create a building that complements its immediate surroundings yet also readily identifies itself as a unified element of the University’s developing Capitol Campus. The architectural composition addresses these twin goals through a brick base and a neoclassical rhythm that harmonizes with the nearby Government Publishing Office headquarters and other neighboring buildings on H Street, which is overlaid with a terracotta wrap façade that evokes (but does not replicate) the lighter color and materiality of the existing Georgetown Law Center buildings that are the foundation for the University’s Capitol Campus. The blend of terracotta with metal and glass as well as the offset and irregular window patterning on the southern façade also serves as a contemporary expression that gives the mid-block building identity and punctuates the backdrop of its more formal brethren.

The University has refined the physical design of the proposed building in response to feedback from the Office of Planning (“**OP**”). Among other changes, the University has modified the orientation of the ground floor retail entrance to face directly onto H Street, NW, confirmed the intent to maintain transparency from the street into the retail and ground-floor university spaces, incorporated canopies over the primary building entrances, and provided additional information regarding the location and design of proposed signage. Further, the University has also clad the ground floor piers along H Street in brick to strengthen the connection between the Project and the architectural composition of the adjacent buildings and to emphasize the articulation and depth of the ground-level spaces. Finally, the University has selected a brick that is similar in color to the adjacent building at 800 North Capitol Street and takes cues on its rustication from the GPO headquarters across the street.

Based on feedback from Gonzaga College High School, the University has also updated the rear façade of the proposed building, as shown on the Updated Plans. Additional fenestration has been integrated into the two ends of the wings, which further articulates these ends and emphasizes the residential character of the building.

The University has further developed its sustainability strategy for the Project. The University is targeting a minimum of rating of Gold under the LEED v4 New Construction rating system. Additionally, as shown on the Updated Plans, the University is proposing to locate

photovoltaic panels along the top two floors of the building along the H Street building façade as well as on the penthouse roof. The University has adjusted the cornice along these floors in order to optimize the efficiency and function of the panels. Importantly, the sustainable features of the building are also intended to serve as educational features, whether through their physical visibility to student residents or as a part of the ongoing operation of the building. As one example, the building will employ tools linked to the energy and water systems, such as an LCD screen in the lobby to display key metrics and an interactive smartphone app to engage students on a more personal level, that together increase awareness and impact student behavior so that sustainability is emphasized not just as something to think about, but something to practice in everyday life

II. Design Flexibility and Zoning Relief

A. Design Flexibility

As summarized in the initial application, the University is seeking flexibility from the height, rear yard, and side yard requirements of the Zoning Regulations to accommodate the Project. For the reasons set forth in the initial application, the University satisfies the requirements for approving this flexibility as a part of the voluntary design review process.

B. Zoning Relief – Parking

The University is seeking relief from the vehicle parking space requirements. Based on the approximately 158 units at the Project and the 50% reduction in the required number of spaces, due to the Project’s proximity to a Metrorail station, 26 vehicle parking spaces would be required. As shown on the Updated Plans, the Project provides no zoning-compliant parking spaces. (Functionally, the Project includes 3 on-site parking spaces, but these parking spaces are noncompliant from a zoning perspective because they are accessed across and through the loading spaces.)

As discussed in the Initial Statement, the University does not anticipate that the residents of the Project will generate a significant demand for vehicle parking because of available transportation alternatives and because of the context of its student residents. The Project is exceptionally well served by public transportation and other alternatives, including two Metro stations within walking distance, multiple bus lines, many Capital Bikeshare stations and carsharing services, and other transportation modes. The Project’s location between the Mount Vernon, NoMa, and H Street neighborhoods means that shopping, dining, entertainment and convenience options are all nearby. Furthermore, its proximity to the Capitol Campus means that students will be able to walk to their classes and other activities, and the University’s private GUTS system will provide connections to the main campus. Indeed, the University expects that students will choose to live in the Project precisely because it obviates the need to incur the cost of owning and maintaining a motor vehicle.

Accordingly, a reduction in the required number of vehicle parking spaces is appropriate under Subtitle C, Section 703. Section 703.2 identifies a number of potential justifications for a reduction in parking, including when the use is well-served by transit, shared vehicle, or bicycle facilities and when land use characteristics of the neighborhood minimize the need for parking. For the reasons described above, the reduced parking for the Project is justified by the Property's location and the University's proposed use of the building in connection with its nearby campus. In addition to all of the characteristics inherent in the location and use, the University will further support transportation alternatives through the provision of 114 bicycle parking spaces (100 long-term and 14-short-term), 10 on-site collapsible shopping carts for use by students, and ongoing transportation information sharing and promotion, including a transit screen in the building lobby. These elements are all included as a part of the Project's Transportation Demand Management plan, which is required by Section 703.4. Finally, in response to comments from DDOT and ANC 6E, the University has agreed to fund either the expansion of an existing Capital Bikeshare station or construction of a new Capital Bikeshare station within ½ mile of the Project (most likely a new station on the blocks surrounding the Capitol Campus).

Section 703.3 of the Regulations states that the reduction in the number of required spaces is "only for the amount that the applicant is physically unable to provide." Looking at Section 703 as a whole, this prong appears to be only relevant when an applicant claims a reduction due to the "physical constraints of the property" justification under Section 703.2. Otherwise, it would contravene the clear intent of Section 703.2, which only requires an applicant demonstrate one of ten potential reasons for a reduction and does not mandate physical constraints as a requirement for a reduction.

However, assuming for the sake of argument that Section 703.3's "physical constraints" applies in all cases, the University meets this requirement, particularly given that institutional considerations have been repeatedly upheld as justifying a relaxed standard for issuing zoning relief.

- First, the Property is encumbered by two easements that inform the building orientation and massing and reduce its buildable footprint. A 5' wide easement along the east side of the site provides the adjacent office building with adequate separation to maintain its lot-line window openings. A 20' wide easement area along the west side of the site maintains an existing private alley that provides Gonzaga College High School with access to its campus from H Street. These easements preclude the University from siting the building directly abutting the east or the west lot lines, which would theoretically maximize the available contiguous space in the center of the project for a surface parking lot. In addition, the alley easement precludes use of the area along the side of the proposed building for surface parking.

- Second, the Project's extensive landscaped areas, which are required to achieve both programming needs for the building as well as stormwater management requirements preclude locating surface parking in the rear of the proposed building. Furthermore, the proposed ground floor's expansive glass façade was designed in conjunction with the rear yard green space and is intended to create an open view from the street through the ground floor of the proposed building. Locating surface vehicle parking to the rear of the building would undermine the University's attempt to create an attractive sightline from the street and introduce views of green space into an otherwise commercial area.

For these reasons, the University is physically unable to provide surface vehicle parking spaces.

In addition to the physical limitations on providing surface vehicle parking, the University will also have significant difficulty in providing below-grade parking. Excavating the Property and constructing below-grade parking facilities will substantially increase the cost of the Project's development, particularly when the University feels confident that such parking facilities will be unnecessary for this particular student residence use. The additional costs of providing below-grade parking would necessarily increase the costs to the student residents, which defeats the purpose for the Project, which is to provide students with a convenient and competitive housing option to support the emerging Capitol Campus.

While the Project is subject to physical constraints that limit the ability to provide parking, as discussed above, the University believes that even if the Project was not burdened by such physical limitations, the reduction in the required parking would be appropriate in this case. The University does not believe that the Project will generate a demand for vehicle parking. Even if the Project was able to physically accommodate the required number of vehicle parking spaces, the University believes that such spaces would go unfilled and the quality of the Project's design would have to be compromised, at additional expense, simply to provide unnecessary parking facilities.

As set forth in the initial application, the parking relief also meets the general requirements for special exception approval. The Property is immediately across the street from property in the Downtown zone district, where no parking is required, so eliminating parking at this location is not inconsistent with the overall zone plan's approach to properties in the urban core. Furthermore, the lack of parking is not likely to impose adverse impacts on the availability of neighborhood street parking, because the site and its residents are precluded from participating in the Residential Permit Parking program and, in any event, the streets surrounding and near the Property are not designated for RPP anyway. Finally, the University has agreed that, in the limited circumstance that a student resident might require a vehicle, the University will work with that student to identify a parking space for that student within nearby a University-controlled or commercial parking facility.

III. Compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan and Related Planning Documents

As discussed in detail in the initial application, the Project is consistent with and furthers the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies for high-density housing and retail use of the Property as well as specific goals for university development and student housing in locations such as the proposed location. The Property is also consistent with other District planning documents for the reasons discussed below.

A. NOMA Vision Plan

The Project is within the study area of the 2006 NOMA Vision Plan, which was adopted by resolution by the D.C. Council and operates as a Small Area Plan for the NOMA Area. The project furthers multiple goals of the NOMA Vision Plan and it is otherwise not inconsistent with its requirements.

First, the Project meets key goals for the H Street West Character Area. The University is entitling the Project through the Voluntary Design Review process, which provides increased design review that is a stated goal for the H Street West Character Area. Additionally, the Project provides neighbourhood-serving retail along H Street, in direct compliance with the H Street West Character Area guidelines. Finally, the Project is not inconsistent with the Plan's guidance for architectural design, which includes the following elements:

- Emphasizing existing brick architecture with new architecture of the highest quality, inspired by the red-brick Government Printing Office buildings;
- Brick articulation; and
- Large window openings, consistent regulating lines, and architectural continuity.

(NOMA Vision Plan, page 5.15.) As described in detail on page 1 of this statement, the architectural composition of the project uses a brick similar in color to the adjacent 800 North Capitol street building and similar in rustication to the GPO headquarters across the street as the primary material on the west, east, and north facades as well as to articulate the piers at the base of the building along H Street as well as formal rhythm of base/middle/top that is inspired by the GPO headquarters and other adjacent buildings. This brick neoclassical base is balanced by the use of a lighter color terracotta as well as metal and glass elements that give the mid-block building a contemporary expression and tie it thematically with other nearby University buildings.

Second, the Project advances several elements of the desired land use mix of the NOMA Vision Plan, including the introduction of additional residential development west of the train tracks. Furthermore, the graduate and undergraduate student residents will help activate the street beyond the traditional 9 to 5 timelines. Additionally, the Project furthers several Infrastructure and Transportation elements of the NOMA Vision Plan by encouraging walking, use of mass transit, and biking among residents. The Project will contain more than the required bicycle storage

facilities, and as part of its sustainability goals, residents will be encouraged to utilize the nearby public transit, as well as the Georgetown University shuttle.

The thoughtful and high-quality design of the Project will also advance the Identity and Building Design goals of the NOMA Vision Plan. In accordance with the NOMA Vision Plan's goal of ground floor design excellence, the Project will include ground floor retail. Furthermore, the Project's engaging and open ground floor façade will provide pedestrians a clear view to the green landscaped space in the rear of the Project, while maintaining continuity with the overall design of the block through the ground floor brick columns. Finally, the Project will further the Environment and Sustainability goals of the NOMA Vision Plan, specifically the goal of high-performance building design. The Project is being developed with sustainability and green features in mind at nearly all levels, including in physical building design as well as programming and policies for student residents, and the Project will achieve a minimum LEED Gold rating.

The Project is also within the boundaries of the Downtown East Re-Urbanization Strategy area, and is not inconsistent with this strategy. The Project furthers several elements of the strategy, including Enhancing Neighborhood Vitality by introducing a residential use to a primarily commercial area. Furthermore, the Project will integrate students into the fabric of the community and strengthen Georgetown University's presence as an institutional anchor for the area.

IV. Community Outreach and Response to Issues Raised

The University has continued its outreach and communication with ANC 6E, the affected ANC, and other nearby stakeholders. The University's development team made presentations to ANC 6E's Zoning Advisory Committee on October 31, 2019 and to the full ANC 6E on November 5, 2019. ANC 6E voted unanimously in support of the Project at its November 5, 2019 meeting. In response to comments from ANC 6E, the University is working with DDOT to explore the possibility of providing or expanding a Capital Bikeshare station nearby to the Project as well as a pickup / dropoff zone along H Street. The University also agreed to work with the occasional student that might require a car to identify potential offsite parking options. The University is scheduled to present the Project to ANC 6C's Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee on December 4, 2019 and to the full ANC 6C on December 11, 2019. The University has also been in regular contact with Gonzaga College High School, particularly with regards to the design of the north façade of the Project, which faces the Gonzaga College High School football field, and the two parties have reached agreement on the design approach for the north facade.