

October 6, 2020

BY IZIS

Mr. Anthony Hood, Chairperson
D.C. Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200-S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Z.C. Case No. 20-18: Application of 1319 South Capitol Owner, L.L.C. (“Applicant”) for Review of a Building on Lots 14, 15, 53, 54, 60-64, 68, 70, 810, 811, and 831 in Square 653 (the “Property”) – Pre-Hearing Submission

Dear Chairperson Hood and Members of the Commission:

On July 24, 2020, the Applicant submitted the above-referenced application for Design Review of a building located along South Capitol Street in the CG-2 Zone District. The Applicant is proposing to develop the Property with an eleven (11) story residential building containing approximately 310 residential units (the “**Project**”). The Applicant hereby supplements the record with additional information to detail Project design updates largely in response to comments from the community and government agencies regarding the Project.

I. Plan Updates

Attached as Exhibit A are the updated plans for the Project (the “**Plans**”). Overall, the Plans are similar to the initial plan set filed on July 24, 2020 but have incorporated modifications as the result of community and agency comments, as follows:

- South Capitol canopies – At the suggestion of the Office of Planning (“**OP**”), the Applicant has introduced small individual canopies over the entrances to the three (3) South Capitol townhouse that are designed as potential live/work units, as shown on Sheets 27 and 28 of the Plans. These canopies will encroach three (3) feet in to the South Capitol Street 15-foot setback similar to the balconies above, but given their limited size and enhanced articulation, they improve the design of the Project without taking away from the setback’s visual integrity along South Capitol Street.

- Pet area – After further conversations with Advisory Neighborhood Commission (“ANC”) 6D and the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (“SWNA”), the Applicant has added a dog run area to the roof, as shown on Sheet 11 of the Plans. This will exist in combination with the pet area that was introduced to the ground level landscaped area at the community’s request to ensure sufficient recreational resources for pet owners.
- Building entrance/lobby design – The initial plans also had two Lobby Base options. The Applicant has chosen to proceed with Option 1, as shown on Sheet 34 of the Plans.
- Rear façade details – The updated Plans demonstrate the additional design details that were integrated into the rear façade of the Project as the result of community requests. Specifically, brick detailing such as soldier and belt coursing and cornices were added along the rear façade. These building elements are drawn specifically from the nearby historic Syphax School building, allowing residents standing in the open space between the Project and the Syphax historic building to immediately see the reference between the buildings and understand a purposeful connection. More generally, the rear façade of the Project is the subject of a high degree of articulation. Said another way, the rear façade is not designed as a rear at all but rather it is crafted to have a richness typically reserved for street-facing facades. As a result, the Project does not “turn its back” on the neighborhood, but rather embraces it and uses materiality and building form to break down the building. Along these lines, the Project employs glass rather than masonry along the top floor at the rear to further reduce the appearance of the building along this façade. The Applicant also notes that it selected the coloration of the building and the rear façade to incorporate the many related colors in the neighborhood – from the Syphax historic building itself (shown on Sheet 26 of the Plans), to the brick coloration of the adjacent rowhouses, to the more orange hues found in the James Creek community (shown on Sheet 26.A of the Plans). The resulting coloration is highly complementary of these surrounding elements and allows for the building to tie them all together while establishing its own rich, additive identity.
- Historical and community fabric elements – The Applicant enhanced the commemorative component of the Project to include additional signage, murals, and other components that will reference and further incorporate the history of the neighborhood. Specifically, while a commemorative element had been noted along the western façade on Sheet 17, additional components have been added within the landscaped courtyard along South Capitol Street, as shown on Sheet 9 of the Plans. In their totality, these components will complement the existing rowhouses that will be retained and integrated into the Project to convey a greater sense of the significance of the site and an understanding of the people who lived in the homes and around the neighborhood.
- Details of N Street rowhouses¹ – As shown on Sheets 20 and 20A-C of the Plans, the Applicant proposes two alternatives to the units constructed within the four existing rowhouses and the adjacent portion of the Project. In both cases, four units would be constructed. In the first alternative – the “vertical rowhouse” style – the four rowhouses would be retained in their original vertical configuration, with the rears removed and additions constructed and integrated into the Project to allow for larger units. In the

¹ The Applicant appreciates the great deal of time that SWNA has spent on this issue in particular and looks forward to continuing its partnership.

second alternative – the “flats” style – the four rowhouses would be slightly modified to allow for the construction of two “flats” on each floor, again with the rears of the homes removed to allow for an addition and integration into the Project. In both cases, the fundamental design input is the retention and preservation of the original N Street rowhouse fabric. The exteriors will appear the same in both alternatives with the N Street rowhouses restored to have their original form from sidewalk level. The Applicant notes that it also included additional detail depicting how the N Street rowhouses will appear by the inclusion of the elevations and rendering on Sheets 15 and 16 of the Plans.

- Solar panels – The Applicant has introduced an area of solar panels into the Project. As shown on Page 11 of the Plans, approximately 600 square feet of solar panels have been designed onto the roof structure to enhance the building’s sustainability approach.

No other changes have been made to the Project since the initial filing.

In addition to the changes made to the Project described above, the Applicant added several sheets to the Plans at the request of OP and the community and in order to assist in the Commission’s review of the Project, as follows:

- South Capitol viewshed analysis – Included in the Plans as Sheets 30 and 31, the Plans show a viewshed analysis incorporating the Project north and south along South Capitol Street to the Capitol building and the Anacostia River, respectively. As shown in these images, the Project enhances this monumental South Capitol Street viewshed and does not detract from the view corridor. In fact, the Project contributes to the framing of this perspective. Further, the requested flexibility components – the balconies, canopies and brick patios that project into the required 15-foot setback along South Capitol – do not detract from the viewshed along South Capitol. Rather, these components allow the Project to have a varied articulation and massing envisioned by the Capital Gateway subchapter itself. The Project is ideal for its environment.
- Rear alley/rear rendering – Per OP’s request, the Plans show additional views south down the rear alley separating the Project from Syphax Village on Sheets 15 and 16. These images depict the significant separation between the Project and the adjacent homes and historic Syphax School building, along with the ample open space that will exist within this area. This open area is also shown by Sheet 8 of the Plans.
- Materials pages – Per SWNA’s request, the Plans include additional details regarding the glass material planned for the Project on Sheet 33 of the Plans. This page demonstrates that the glass will be selected as the result of its advanced features and reduction of reflectiveness. Therefore, the glass components of the Project will not create adverse reflection conditions in the surrounding neighborhood.

II. Sustainability

The Project includes a commitment to sustainability consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the goals for the Capital Gateway zones. First, the Project is removing a large surface parking lot and includes the rehabilitation of some legacy buildings, providing immediate sustainable benefits to the Property and surrounding area. Additionally, the Project exceeds the minimum Green Area Ratio (“**GAR**”) of 0.3 for the Project as shown on Sheet 46 of the Plans.

Notably, the Applicant has included approximately 600 square feet of solar panels. Based on all of these sustainability measures, the Project will achieve, at a minimum, a LEED v.4 Silver rating for New Construction, as shown on Page 44 of the Plans. Some of the Project's key sustainable features include indoor and outdoor water use reduction strategies, energy performance optimization, low emitting materials, and construction and demolition waste management, among other elements including indoor air quality considerations both during construction and before occupancy, quality views analysis, occupant controllability of lighting and thermal control systems, functional testing of MEP equipment via the commissioning process, and ventilation strategy compliance.

III. Signage

ANC 6D, at its meeting on October 5, 2020, requested that the Applicant confirm that no digital or neon signage will be introduced on the Project. The Applicant confirms that no digital or neon signage will be introduced on the Project and commits to such restriction.

IV. South Capitol Setback Flexibility – Canopies

The Applicant wishes to update the record to add the three canopies introduced onto the three South Capitol Street “townhouse” live-work units to the areas of flexibility requested from the 15-foot setback required along the Property's South Capitol Street frontage pursuant to Subtitle K, Section 510.1(b)(1). The Project retains its request to include the balconies and walk-out patios and related stairs that project into such 15-foot setback space as well.

The proposed canopies were included at the request of OP in order to further articulate the façade along the South Capitol Street streetscape. Such flexibility component is narrowly drawn and only requested for the three (3) foot projection of such canopies into the required setback area. These canopies will add visual interest while not having an adverse impact on the viewsheds along South Capitol Street. In fact, as with the balconies and patios along this façade, the canopies are intended to be additive to the aesthetics along this façade.

The Applicant retains its request for court and rear yard flexibility as stated in its original application materials.

V. Community Outreach

As noted in the initial filing, prior to submitting the application, the Applicant engaged in significant community outreach, particularly with SWNA, Syphax Village, ANC 6D, and its immediate neighbors. The Applicant also expresses its gratitude to the community individuals who have spent such a significant amount of time working with the development team on these important issues and looks forward to continuing these relationships.

The Applicant and its team has had a great number of meetings with SWNA and Syphax to discuss the Project over the past several years. This dialogue led to significant progress on the Project proposal regarding the design, use mix, and Project construction compatibility within the neighborhood. As a result of these discussions, the Project was designed with the concept of preservation and compatibility in mind. For example, these meetings resulted in a Project that incorporates a significant historical component from the neighborhood, including the four

rowhouses along N Street, SW, and two rowhouses along South Capitol Street. Not only does the Project integrate into and with these six rowhouses, but it complements the other surrounding rowhouses that are not part of the Property, while weaving in characteristics of the wider surrounding neighborhood context. Further, the Applicant coordinated with SWNA and the ANC regarding the potential commercial uses along South Capitol, both in the two standalone rowhomes and the three live-work units. As the result of the significant dialogue with SWNA over the past several years, the Applicant and SWNA executed and recorded a robust development agreement setting forth principles of preservation and related concepts that have been a primary driver in the Project's design. Along the same lines, the Applicant is currently working with Syphax Village to finalize a "Good Neighbor Agreement" to address construction management concepts and further memorialize the considerations of sensitively integrating the Project into an existing neighborhood, while also filling a gap along the South Capitol Street corridor.

In addition, the Applicant has maintained a long running dialogue and cooperation with the owners of other properties adjacent to the Project along South Capitol Street, culminating in an easement agreement and "Good Neighbor Agreement" with these neighbors as well.

The Applicant presented at the ANC 6D July meetings and the October 5, 2020 Administrative meeting, and will present to the full ANC again on October 13th. The Project incorporates a number of updates that resulted from the ANC's comments.

The Applicant is committed to continuing to work with Syphax Village, SWNA, the ANC, and its neighbors throughout the design and development process and as neighbors.

VI. Agency Coordination

In addition to community outreach, the Applicant has engaged in extensive agency coordination regarding the Project. The Applicant has coordinated with OP to address comments and provide updated materials. The Applicant also met with the Historic Preservation Office ("HPO") regarding the design of the Project, particularly the preservation and integration of the South Capitol and N Street rowhomes. The Applicant has also coordinated with DDOT regarding the Project, including with the filing of the Comprehensive Transportation Report ("CTR") in the record at Exhibit 11A. In related coordination, the Applicant has been in communication with the Urban Forestry Division ("UFD") regarding the trees located on the Property. The Applicant has also coordinated with the Department of Energy and Environment ("DOEE") regarding both the Voluntary Clean-up Program and the Environmental Impact Screening for the Project. Finally, the Applicant has been in communication with the Department of Housing and Community Development ("DHCD") regarding the Project and the affordable units that will be created through its construction. The Applicant will continue to engage with these agencies throughout the Design Review and permitting process and appreciates their time and input regarding the Project.

VII. Consistency with the Southwest Neighborhood Small Area Plan

In the initial filing, the Applicant detailed the Project's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan of the District of Columbia (the "**Comprehensive Plan**"). In addition, the Comprehensive Plan explains that "the zoning of any given area should be guided by the Future Land Use Map, interpreted in conjunction with the text of the Comprehensive Plan, including the

citywide elements and the area elements, as well as approved Small Area Plans.” (§§1907.2; 1908.2) The Property is located within the boundaries of the Southwest Neighborhood Small Area Plan (the “SAP”). The SAP was approved by the Council in 2015 by DC Council Resolution R21-0128. The Property is located in the secondary area of the SAP, where neighborhood conservation, connectivity, and sustainability are the principal focus. The Project is consistent with those goals by preserving existing rowhouses, adding additional street-level and street-oriented residential and potential commercial uses, constructing a building compatible with its surroundings, and filling in the existing gap along the South Capitol Street SW streetscape.

The Project also promotes the Guiding Principles of the SAP, specifically Neighborhood Character, Pedestrian Safety, Housing, Transportation, Historic Preservation, New Development, and Sustainability. (SAP at 67-68.) The Project preserves the neighborhood’s varied scale by retaining numerous existing rowhouses and setting the taller portion of the Project back from the rowhouses along N Street and sculpting the building away from the rowhouses along South Capitol Street. The Project also includes an articulated massing and carefully selected materials and coloration, appropriate for new development that complements the character of the existing neighborhood. Additionally, the Project will greatly enhance the public space around the Property while allowing for unique areas of urban landscaping and greenery, improving pedestrian and neighborhood conditions. The Project significantly serves the housing goals for the SAP by providing approximately 310 new residential units. The Project also furthers transportation goals by removing a surface parking lot and creating a transit-oriented development. Finally, as detailed in Section II of this Statement, the Project includes significant sustainability measures.

In addition to furthering the Guiding Principles of the SAP, the Project furthers several specific policies of the SAP. Specifically, the Project furthers the following Modernist Gem Design Guidelines listed in the SAP (pg. 81-83):

Principle 1: Encourage a mix of building heights. *Provide a massing and mix of defined building heights which complement and uphold the current mixture of high-rise and low-rise buildings. Particularly on large sites, this mix should include the provision of rowhouses and high-rise buildings, and avoidance of mid-rise building forms.*

Principle 2: Achieve design excellence for high quality and timeless development. *Achieve high quality development and the creation of attractive buildings and landscapes through design excellence by using distinguished architecture, durable high quality materials and detailing, and advanced sustainable design.*

Principle 3: Promote variation in building frontages along streets with continuous massing. *Promote cohesive building forms and design, while incorporating articulation in the building and landscape design. This will ensure a pedestrian-scale of development and lessen the perceived length of high-rise buildings or rowhouse groupings. Blank, unarticulated walls should be avoided, particularly along streets and pedestrian ways.*

Principle 4: Enhance green space through landscaped perimeters and internal green or amenity spaces. *Support Southwest’s vibrant green character through the provision of publicly visible landscaped perimeters; internal green or amenity spaces; and landscaped setbacks appropriate to the streetscape, particularly for high-rise structures.*

Principle 5: Incorporate sustainable building and site design. *Employ a range of innovative sustainable design strategies and building standards to promote a high performing environment that encourages healthy living, energy efficiency, and stormwater management.*

Principle 6: Ensure parking is not a detractor. *Locate vehicle parking underground, or in above-grade structures that are visually buffered from the street and adjacent properties. Services such as parking and loading access should avoid the interruption of street-facing building fronts or communal open space.*

The Project provides a varied height and massing along South Capitol Street with the 110 foot tall building height and sculpted massing of the building immediately adjacent to the similarly-sized Camden building to the south, while varying the façade with the townhouse-style units and the preserved townhouses. As stated above, this building form incorporates significant building setbacks from the existing rowhouses along N Street and South Capitol Street. The Project removes a surface parking lot and replaces the parking below grade, while allowing for usage of only the existing alley system. No curb cuts are proposed by the Project. The Project also includes green improvements on the roof and elevated courtyard as well as along the Property’s perimeter landscaping, all consistent with the Design Guidelines of the SAP.

The Project also furthers the Vibrant Connections of the SAP, specifically VC.11, which states:

Goal: *Support the transformation of South Capitol Street into a high density, urban boulevard that establishes a robust pedestrian realm. Coordinate with the South Capitol Street Corridor Project to promote a high performance “green” streetscape, improve connections across South Capitol Street at ‘I’, M and P Streets, and reduce/limit commuter traffic through the Southwest neighborhood.*

The Project provides high-density development along the urban boulevard of South Capitol Street while still preserving and incorporating existing rowhouses on the Property and designing a the façade to fit within the neighborhood context. The Project also proposes improvements to the surrounding public space, as detailed in the Plans and in Comprehensive Transportation Report filed at Exhibit 11 in the case record.

Therefore, the Project is consistent with the Guiding Principles, Design Guidelines, and policies of the SAP.

VIII. Flexibility Requested

As noted in the initial filing, the Applicant is requesting flexibility pursuant to 11-X DCMR § 603.1 for the rear yard, court, and South Capitol Street setback requirements of the Zoning

regulations. In addition to those specific areas of flexibility, the Applicant requests the following flexibility with the approval of the Project:

- a. To vary the location and design of all interior components, including but not limited to partitions, structural slabs, doors, hallways, columns, signage, stairways, mechanical rooms, elevators, and toilet rooms, including the ability to construct the first and second level units fronting on N Street as flats or vertical rowhouses, provided that the variations do not change the exterior configuration or appearance of the building;
- b. To vary the final selection of the exterior materials within the color ranges of the material types as proposed, based on availability at the time of construction without reducing the quality of the materials;
- c. To make minor refinements to exterior details, locations, and dimensions, including: window mullions and spandrels, window frames, doorways, glass types, belt courses, sills, bases, cornices, railings, balconies, canopies and trim, such that the refinements do not substantially change the external configuration or appearance of the building;
- d. To vary the number of residential units and the residential unit types by plus or minus 10%;
- e. To eliminate up to one level of the parking garage;
- f. To increase the number of parking spaces by 10% provided that no relief is required;
- g. To reconfigure the garage layout provided that no relief is required;
- h. To vary the roof plan as it relates to the green roof areas, solar panels, planters, terraces, pool, equipment, and outdoor amenity areas, provided that total GAR is not reduced below that shown on the GAR scorecard and the minimum solar panel square footage is provided;
- i. To vary the signage of the building pursuant to market or tenant demands, subject to D.C. signage regulations; and
- j. To modify the streetscape design and areas in public space in response to DDOT and the public space permitting process.

IX. Resumes and Outlines of Testimony

Five witnesses will testify on behalf of the Applicant at the hearing: Greg Van Wie and/or George Chopivsky on behalf of the ownership team; Hany Hassan and/or Caroline Warlick Levins, the Project architect; Paul Toler and/or Loren Helgason, the Project landscape architect; Mike Babcock, the Project sustainability consultant; and Erwin Andres, the transportation engineer.

Each of these witnesses except the Applicant's representative is being offered as an expert in their respective fields, and their resumes are attached as Exhibit B for reference (Erwin Andres' resume was already submitted into the record at Exhibit 11B). Outlines of the testimony for each witness are also attached as Exhibit C. The Applicant anticipates needing 45-60 minutes for its presentation.

X. Conclusion

The Applicant believes that the Project presents a complete and attractive design in accordance with the Design Review standards of the Capitol Gateway that will contribute to the South Capitol Street corridor while being highly complementary to the surrounding community and celebratory of the prior residents of the Property itself. The Applicant looks forward to continuing its dialogue with the many stakeholders, including the community and government agencies.

Please feel free to contact Jeff at (202) 721-1132 or Meghan at (202) 721-1138 if you have any questions regarding the enclosed. We look forward to presenting the project to the Zoning Commission at the October 26, 2020 public hearing.

Sincerely,

_____/s/____

Jeff C. Utz
Meghan Hottel-Cox

Certificate of Service

The undersigned hereby certifies that copies of the foregoing document will be delivered by electronic mail to the following addresses on October 6, 2020.

Jennifer Steingasser
Joel Lawson
Matthew Jesick
Office of Planning
1100 4th Street, SW, Suite 650E
Washington, DC 20024
jennifer.steingasser@dc.gov
joel.lawson@dc.gov
matthew.jesick@dc.gov

Anna Chamberlin
Aaron Zimmerman
District Department of Transportation
55 M Street, SE, Fourth Floor
Washington, DC 20003
anna.chamberlin@dc.gov
aaron.zimmerman@dc.gov

ANC 6D
1101 4th Street SW, Suite W130
Washington, DC 20024
6d@anc.dc.gov

Rhonda Hamilton – ANC 6D 06
1301 Delaware Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20024
6D06@anc.dc.gov

_____/s/
Meghan Hottel-Cox