

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Matt Jesick, Project Manager
JL for Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

DATE: October 16, 2020

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Report for Case #20-18, 1319 South Capitol Street
Design Review in the CG-2 Zone

I. RECOMMENDATION

This application filed by 1319 South Capitol Owner, LLC is for a new residential building in a zone which establishes a mandatory review by the Zoning Commission. Evaluation of the subject application is against the criteria contained in Subtitles K Chapter 5 and Subtitle X Chapter 6. OP is supportive of development of this site, and has met with the applicant a number of times, raising concerns and issues for additional clarification from the applicant. The applicant has responded to many of these issues, which OP appreciates.

OP recommends **approval** of the proposal, subject to the following conditions, which would help ensure that the project meets the established design review criteria:

1. Development of the project, including maintaining rowhouses on South Capitol Street, incorporating existing rowhouses on N Street, and creating three new rowhouse style entrances on South Capitol Street, shall be generally as shown in the plans at Exhibit 12A.
2. Details of the façade at the first two stories of the new building along South Capitol Street shall be generally as shown on pages 27 and 28 of Exhibit 12A, including canopies, lighting, brick friezes, brick detailing around the windows, and the brick cornice above the second floor.
3. Balcony railings shall use glass as the primary material, as shown in the renderings on page 32 of Exhibit 12A.

OP has also strongly encouraged the applicant to achieve LEED Gold, and to incorporate a larger solar array to generate a larger percentage of the building's energy use on-site. This would help to address the design review criterion K § 512.3(f), which seeks to minimize impacts to the environment. Prior to the hearing, the applicant should quantify the energy generation of the solar array and compare it to the energy usage of the building, to help staff and the Commission evaluate the project.

II. SITE AND CONTEXT

Address	1319 South Capitol Street
Legal Description	Square 653, Lots 14, 15, 53, 54, 60-64, 68, 70, 810, 811, and 831
Ward / ANC	6D
Zone	CG-2 (Capitol Gateway Medium Density Mixed Use)
Property Size	37,453 sf
Historic District or Resource	None
Existing Development	Rowhouses fronting on South Capitol and N Streets; Surface parking lot
Adjacent Properties and Neighborhood Character	<p>East – Ballpark, high rise mixed use development</p> <p>North – Rowhouses along South Cap., interspersed with the subject site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One story commercial use at corner of South Cap. and N. - Rowhouses on south side of N - Rowhouses and one story commercial north of N <p>West – rowhouses, parking, green space, Syphax School</p> <p>South – 110’ tall apartment building</p>

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes an all residential building of approximately 300 units, with a height of 110’ and an FAR of 7.2. The project would include two stand-alone rowhouses on South Capitol Street, and would incorporate four existing rowhouses into the mass of the building on N Street. New rowhouse style units facing South Capitol Street could be strictly residential or could be used as live-work units. The project, however, would contain no dedicated retail space. All vehicular access would be from two public alleys which would connect to each other at the first floor of the building, where the former public alley has already been closed. The main entrance to the building would face the alley extending from South Capitol Street. The design proposes a plaza in that area, which would incorporate the alley. Alternative paving schemes in the alley right of way would require the approval of DDOT. The main materials are brick and glass, with design cues in the brick drawn from nearby buildings.

IV. ZONING SUMMARY

The subject site is zoned Capitol Gateway-2, (CG-2), which “is intended to permit medium-density mixed-use development with a focus on residential use and provide for the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard” (K § 502.1). Pursuant to Subtitle K § 512, this zone includes a mandatory Zoning Commission review against specific criteria found in Subtitles K and X. The following tables compares the proposal to the zoning, including the areas of requested flexibility, pursuant to X § 603:

CG-2	Requirement	Proposal	Relief
Lot Area	n/a	37,453 sf	Conforming
Height K § 502.4	110' max.	110'	Conforming
Residential Units	n/a	Approx. 302	Conforming
FAR K § 502.3	7.2 max	7.2 (269,661 sf)	Conforming
Lot Occupancy K § 502.6	90% max.	70%	Conforming
Rear Yard K § 502.7	15' min.	Varies between 15' and 3'	Flexibility Requested
Side Yard K § 502.8	None required	None	Conforming
Court K § 502.9	4" / ft. of height 4" * 110' = 36'8"	28'8"	Flexibility Requested
GAR K § 502.11	0.3	0.3	Conforming
Vehicular Parking K § 513.2(a)	No minimum	180 spaces	Conforming
Bicycle Parking C § 802	Long term – 1 per 3 units Short term – 1 per 20 units	At least 100 long term At least 15 short term	Conforming
Loading C § 901	1 30' berth 1 20' space 1 100 sf platform	1 30' berth 1 20' space 1 100 sf platform	Conforming
South Cap. Setback K § 510.1(b)(1)	15' min.	13' at balconies	Flexibility Requested
South Cap. Street Wall K § 510.1(b)(1)	Min. of 60% of building face must be at the setback line	Complies	Conforming
South Cap. Step Back K § 510.1(b)(3)	1-to-1 step back above 110'	n/a (Max. building height is 110')	Conforming
South Cap. Vehicular Entrances K § 510.1(b)(4)	No new parking or loading entrances	Complies	Conforming

V. REVIEW CRITERIA

The zoning for this site, in Subtitle K § 512, provides specific criteria for the Zoning Commission review of proposed developments. The following is OP's analysis of the standards applicable to this application.

Subtitle K Design Review Criteria

512 ZONING COMMISSION REVIEW OF BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND USES (CG)

512.1 The provisions of this section apply to properties:

[...]

- (d) Abutting South Capitol Street, other than renovation or replacement of an existing row dwelling within Squares 653 or 655; or for a minor addition not exceeding fifty percent (50%) of the gross floor area of the original row dwelling structure;*

The site fronts on South Capitol Street, so the project is subject to design review.

512.2 With respect to those properties described in Subtitle K § 512.1, all proposed uses, buildings, and structures, or any proposed exterior renovation to any existing buildings or structures that would result in an alteration of the exterior design, shall be subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission in accordance with the following provisions.

512.3 In addition to proving that the proposed use, building, or structure meets the standards set forth in Subtitle X and the relevant provisions of this chapter, an applicant requesting approval under this section shall prove that the proposed building or structure, including the siting, architectural design, site plan, landscaping, sidewalk treatment, and operation, will:

- (a) Help achieve the objectives of the Capitol Gateway defined in Subtitle K § 500.1;*

The proposal would help achieve relevant objectives of K § 500.1, such as developing the neighborhood with residential uses and contributing to the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard.

- (b) Help achieve the desired use mix, with the identified preferred uses specifically being residential, hotel or inn, cultural, entertainment, retail, or service uses;*

The applicant proposes a residential building with approximately 300 units.

- (c) Be in context with the surrounding neighborhood and street patterns;*

The overall mass of the building would be in keeping with the monumental scale of South Capitol Street and similar in size to other recent construction near the ballpark. The height and FAR are appropriate to the location in a dense, transit accessible neighborhood. At the ground level, the design would preserve rowhouses on South Capitol, incorporate into the building existing rowhouse façades on N Street, and create new rowhouse-style entrances to units in the new

building on South Capitol. All of these gestures would tie the project into the surrounding street patterns.

(d) Minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians;

The proposed design should minimize conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. Vehicular access to the drop off area for the building, the parking garage and the loading dock would be from public alleys. No new curb cuts are proposed, and one existing curb cut to a commercial parking lot would be closed. The design would maintain the appearance and use of rowhouse structures on both South Capitol and N Streets, and create new rowhouse-type entrances on South Capitol, reinforcing the pedestrian-friendly streetscape. At the main building entrance, the applicant proposes distinctive paving in front of the door as well as in the public alley. While the public space design would need further approval from DDOT, the intent is to demonstrate to drivers that this is a place for slow travel and that pedestrians would also be using the space. Bollards would separate the alley from the pedestrian-only area immediately in front of the entrance.

(e) Minimize unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces through facade articulation; and

The proposed design would minimize unarticulated blank walls. At the ground level, the design would preserve rowhouses on South Capitol, incorporate into the building existing rowhouse façades on N Street, and create new rowhouse-style entrances to units in the new building on South Capitol. In addition, the design proposes brick detailing such as articulated friezes above the first floor, window sills and “frames” at the second floor, and a projecting cornice above the second floor. See the renderings at pages 27 and 28 of Exhibit 12A. On higher levels, the balconies, the stepped massing of the building facing the court, the mix of glass and brick, and variations within the brick “frame” all lend visual interest to the building. Many of these characteristics were also carried around to the rear of the building, providing an interesting façade to neighboring uses.

(f) Minimize impact on the environment, as demonstrated through the provision of an evaluation of the proposal against LEED certification standards.

The application indicates that the project would achieve a LEED Silver rating. OP has strongly advised the applicant that they should commit to achieving LEED Gold as well as actual certification, to ensure that this criteria is adequately met.

The applicant has agreed to add a small area of solar panels on the roof of the building. However, it is unclear how the size of the solar array, 600 square feet, was arrived at and why a larger array cannot be provided. As such, OP has also advised the applicant to re-examine the solar panel and maximize its area, again to better address this criteria. The applicant should also provide an estimate of what percentage of the building’s energy use will be produced by the solar panels. DOEE, in their comments to OP, has also suggested that the applicant provide a greater commitment to renewable energy. See Section VI below, as well as Attachment 1, for DOEE’s comments.

512.6 *With respect to a building or structure that has frontage on South Capitol Street, S.E.:*

- (a) *The building or structure shall incorporate massing, materials, and buildings and streetscape landscaping to further the design and development of properties in a manner that is sensitive to the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard;*

The building's massing and streetscape landscaping would be conducive to the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard. As seen in the rendering on page 30 of Exhibit 12A, the building would help to frame the view toward the Capitol, in a portion of the street that, on the west side of the street, currently lacks a strong street wall. The landscaping would comply with DDOT requirements and complement existing street trees to the south of this site.

- (b) *The building or structure shall incorporate massing, location of access to parking and loading, and location of service areas to recognize the proximate residential neighborhood use and context, as applicable; and*

The building would use existing public alleys to access the parking and loading areas, and the visual impacts of those vehicular movements should not result in undue impacts on adjacent neighborhood uses. The location of the loading and parking entrances, at the rear of the building, is the most appropriate location, rather than a location visible from an adjacent public street, which would have negative impacts on those streetscapes.

- (c) *The application shall include a view analysis that assesses openness of views and vistas around, including views toward the Capitol Dome, other federal monumental buildings, the Ballpark, and the waterfront.*

Renderings toward the Capitol Dome and toward the Anacostia River are included in Exhibit 12A at pages 30 and 31. The building's massing and streetscape landscaping would be conducive to the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard. It would help to frame the view toward the Capitol, in a portion of the street that, on the west side of the street, currently lacks a strong street wall. Balconies, which are proposed to project slightly into the South Capitol Street view shed, would be relatively small and primarily glass, so should not interfere with the overall views toward the Capitol or toward the water, to help ensure that the design addresses this criteria.

Subtitle X Design Review Criteria

603 DESIGN REVIEW FLEXIBILITY

603.1 As part of the design review process, the Zoning Commission may grant relief from the development standards for height, setbacks, lot occupancy, courts, and building transitions; as well as any specific design standards of a specific zone. The design review process shall not be used to vary other building development standards including FAR, Inclusionary Zoning, or green area ratio.

Pursuant to this section, the applicant requests flexibility from rear yard, court and South Capitol Street setback requirements.

	Requirement	Proposed (see p. 12 of Exhibit 12A)
Rear Yard	15' min.	Varies (15' to 3')
Court	36'8" min.	28'8"
South Capitol Street Setback	15' min.	15' at main façade, 13' at balconies

603.2 Except for height, the amount of relief is at the discretion of the Zoning Commission, but provided that the relief is required to enable the applicant to meet all of the standards of Subtitle X § 604. The Zoning Commission may grant no greater height than that permitted if the application were for a PUD.

The requested flexibility would help to achieve the design review standards of Section 604. The projecting balconies, an important part of the overall composition of the façade, would help to enliven the street face of the building, as called for by the review criteria. The balconies would be relatively small and composed primarily of glass, so should not interfere with the overall views toward the Capitol or toward the water.

The flexibility requested for rear yard, while bringing the building closer to the alley separating the site from its neighbors to the west, also serves the purpose of breaking down the mass of the long western façade, helping it to be more sympathetic to the smaller-scaled developments on that side of the building.

The court flexibility is necessary given the unusual shape of the site. The reduced dimension is not a result of building walls being too close together, but rather the result of rowhouse properties creating interlocking “fingers”. The combined open space would still provide light and air to the central courtyard.

604 DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

604.1 The Zoning Commission will evaluate and approve or disapprove a design review application subject to this chapter according to the standards of this section and for Non-

Voluntary Design Reviews subject to this chapter according to the standards stated in the provisions that require Zoning Commission review.

604.2 *For Non-Voluntary Design Review, the application must also meet the requirements of the provisions that mandated Zoning Commission approval.*

The requirements of Subtitle K are reviewed above.

604.3 *The applicant shall have the burden of proof to justify the granting of the application according to these standards.*

604.4 *The applicant shall not be relieved of the responsibility of proving the case by a preponderance of the evidence, even if no evidence or arguments are presented in opposition to the case.*

604.5 *The Zoning Commission shall find that the proposed design review development is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and with other adopted public policies and active programs related to the subject site.*

The project would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The plan specifically calls out South Capitol Street as a location for new development, including high density residential (LU-1.1.5). That same policy goes on to encourage pedestrian friendly designs and high quality architecture. The Land Use Element also generally encourages infill development near metro stations, especially stations located near underutilized land (LU-1.3.2 and LU-1.4.1). Similarly, the Transportation Element calls for transit oriented development and supporting pedestrian improvements near metro stations (T-1.1.4). The Urban Design Element includes a number of policies which seek to protect and enhance important views like the view toward the Capitol (UD-1.2.4, 1.4.1, and 1.4.3). South Capitol Street is specifically called out as an important symbolic street which would benefit from design improvements (UD-1.4.5).

The project would also further the policies of the Lower Anacostia Waterfront and Near Southwest Element. Those policies seek to “transform South Capitol Street into a great urban boulevard and “walking” street, befitting its role as a gateway to the U.S. Capitol...” (AW-2.2.1).

The Generalized Policy Map shows the subject site as part of a Land Use Change Area, and the Future Land Use Map designates the site as appropriate for Medium Density Residential and Moderate Density Commercial mixed use. The project would not be inconsistent with those designations.

604.6 *The Zoning Commission shall find that the proposed design review development will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property and meets the general special exception criteria of Subtitle X, Chapter 9.*

The proposed development should not affect neighboring properties adversely. A building of this scale will generate new shadow, but the impacts would be limited to early in the day, and would not be out of character for areas with high density buildings. The scale of the building is also consistent with the intent of the Regulations, which permit the proposed height and FAR. The building has been designed to have detailed architecture on all sides, so would not present a blank face to any nearby properties.

604.7 The Zoning Commission shall review the urban design of the site and the building for the following criteria:

- (a) Street frontages are designed to be safe, comfortable, and encourage pedestrian activity, including:*
 - (1) Multiple pedestrian entrances for large developments;*
 - (2) Direct driveway or garage access to the street is discouraged;*
 - (3) Commercial ground floors contain active uses with clear, inviting windows;*
 - (4) Blank facades are prevented or minimized; and*
 - (5) Wide sidewalks are provided;*

The design of the project would encourage pedestrian activity. Construction would close one existing curb cut on South Capitol Street which provides access to the present surface parking lot, and all vehicular access to the new building would be from the existing public alleys adjacent to the site. The preservation of existing rowhouses, and the new rowhouse-style entrances to units fronting South Capitol Street will also help to maintain a comfortable pedestrian environment. The use of balconies and façade detailing also adds articulation to the design, and help to activate the streetscape.

- (b) Public gathering spaces and open spaces are encouraged, especially in the following situations:*
 - (1) Where neighborhood open space is lacking;*
 - (2) Near transit stations or hubs; and*
 - (3) When they can enhance existing parks and the waterfront;*

The proposed development would include an open plaza near the main entrance and on the interior of the site which, according to page 15 of Exhibit 3, will be open to the public and their pets.

- (c) New development respects the historic character of Washington's neighborhoods, including:*
 - (1) Developments near the District's major boulevards and public spaces should reinforce the existing urban form;*
 - (2) Infill development should respect, though need not imitate, the continuity of neighborhood architectural character; and*

- (3) *Development should respect and protect key landscape vistas and axial views of landmarks and important places;*

Renderings toward the Capitol Dome and toward the Anacostia River are included in Exhibit 12A at pages 30 and 31. The building's massing and streetscape landscaping would be conducive to the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard. It would help to frame the view toward the Capitol, in a portion of the street that, on the west side of the street, currently lacks a strong street wall. Although the rowhouses on the subject site are not part of an historic district, they are old and their preservation and integration into the new building would provide a link to the existing neighborhood and add additional visual granularity to the streetscape.

- (d) *Buildings strive for attractive and inspired façade design, including:*
 - (1) *Reinforce the pedestrian realm with elevated detailing and design of first (1st) and second (2nd) stories; and*
 - (2) *Incorporate contextual and quality building materials and fenestration;*

The design proposes an attractive façade and quality materials and detailing. At the ground level, the design would preserve rowhouses on South Capitol, incorporate into the building existing rowhouse façades on N Street, and create new rowhouse-style entrances to units in the new building on South Capitol. In addition, the design proposes brick detailing such as articulated friezes above the first floor, window sills and "frames" at the second floor, and a projecting cornice above the second floor. See the renderings at pages 27 and 28 of Exhibit 12A. Some of the details are drawn from adjacent rowhouses. On higher levels, the balconies, the stepped massing of the building facing the court, the mix of glass and brick, and variations within the brick "frame" all lend visual interest to the building. Many of these characteristics were also carried around to the rear of the building, providing an interesting façade to neighboring uses.

- (e) *Sites are designed with sustainable landscaping; and*

In addition to the green roof, the applicant proposes to plant new street trees as well as a number of trees in the internal courtyard. Exhibit 3 states that the landscaping at the street will comply with DDOT requirements and that no landscaping on the site would include invasive species (pp. 16-17).

- (f) *Sites are developed to promote connectivity both internally and with surrounding neighborhoods, including:*
 - (1) *Pedestrian pathways through developments increase mobility and link neighborhoods to transit;*
 - (2) *The development incorporates transit and bicycle facilities and amenities;*
 - (3) *Streets, easements, and open spaces are designed to be safe and pedestrian friendly;*
 - (4) *Large sites are integrated into the surrounding community through street and pedestrian connections; and*

- (5) *Waterfront development contains high quality trail and shoreline design as well as ensuring access and view corridors to the waterfront.*

The development will present a sympathetic edge to the adjacent streets through the preservation of existing rowhouses and the incorporation of new rowhouse-style entrances into the building. The streetscape will comply with DDOT standards and should be pedestrian friendly. While intended primarily for vehicles, the pass-through under the building could be used by pedestrians as an additional connection through the site. The building would provide over 100 long term bicycle spaces in a dedicated room on the P1 level, as well as approximately 15 short term spaces. The plans should identify where the short term spaces would be located.

604.8 *The Zoning Commission shall find that the criteria of Subtitle X § 604.7 are met in a way that is superior to any matter-of-right development possible on the site.*

The proposed building and site design meet the criteria in a way that would be superior to a building not subject to design review.

VI. AGENCY COMMENTS

As of this writing the record contains no comments from District agencies. OP understands that DDOT has been reviewing the application and will provide comments. OP asked DOEE to review the proposed solar array on the building, and their comments, which encourage the applicant to provide a larger array and produce more of the building's energy through solar, are provided in Attachment 1.

VII. ANC COMMENTS

As of this writing the record contains no comments from the ANC.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

As of this writing the record contains emails and a shadow study from the community at Exhibits 13, 14 and 15.

IX. ATTACHMENTS

1. DOEE Comments on Solar Array

JLS/mrj

Attachment 1

DOEE Comments on Solar Array

DOEE Comments for Applicant Regarding Solar:

- The applicant has indicated that a 600 square foot space on the roof will be dedicated to solar panels. The maximum number of panels that could fit in a 600 square foot space is 34, assuming that there is no loss of panels for row spacing requirements. Assuming that the panels are 320 watt, conservative in today's industry, the system would be approximately 10.88 kilowatts. A 10.88 KW array is more consistent with a single-family home than a large 300 unit multifamily building. Using a typical DC solar panel production coefficient (1200 kWh per KW), the annual production would be around 13,056 per year. This production will offset a very small portion of the building's annual electricity consumption.

DOEE encourages the applicant to enlarge the size of the solar array. Even if the tenant's systems are fully unitized, the solar array can be used to offset the owner paid utility load. Virtual net metering is also permitted in DC, which would allow the project team to build a community renewable energy facility (CREF) and offer the tenants community solar subscriptions. For more information on virtual net metering and community solar please visit:

<https://www.pepco.com/MyAccount/MyService/Pages/DC/CommunityEnergy.aspx>

Maximizing solar energy production will contribute to achieving the District's goal to increase the use of renewable energy to 50% by 2032. As a result of the requirement for 10% of the District's electricity supply to come from locally generated solar by 2040, there are many financial incentives to install solar.

- If unable to install solar at the time of construction, DOEE encourages the project to plan for solar-ready roofs. By minimizing penetrations and mechanical equipment footprints in prime locations, providing additional conduit where appropriate and including space in the electrical panel, future solar systems can be installed much more cost effectively and with less disruption.
- DOEE also encourages the project to consider providing electric vehicle chargers, or installing make-ready infrastructure so that charge points can be added at a later date for significantly lower cost and disruption. The 2017 DC Green Construction Code provides some suggested thresholds for the provision of supply equipment and make-ready infrastructure.

Code Language: Energy Conservation Code – Commercial provisions

Chapter 5, Section 5.4.4

- Solar ready language states “no less than 25% of the horizontal projection of the gross roof area” be available for on-site renewable energy systems.

Chapter 13

- Renewable energy generation requirement provides two different thresholds depending on the efficiency of some of the equipment installed in the building.
- 13.1.1.1 Standard Renewables Approach – Solar systems shall be installed that produce not less than 6.0 kBtu/ ft² multiplied by the gross roof area in ft² for single-story buildings, and not less than 10.0 kBtu/ft² multiplied by the gross roof area in ft² for all other buildings.
- 13.1.1.2 Alternate Renewables Approach: Reduced On-Site Renewable Energy Systems and Higher-Efficiency Equipment – If a building installs more efficient equipment (ie appliances) inside the building, they can install smaller solar systems, at 4.0 kBtu/ft² multiplied by the gross roof area in ft² for single-story buildings, and not less than 7.0 kBtu/ft² multiplied by the gross roof area in ft² (m²) for all other buildings