



## **II. BACKGROUND**

In 2004, the Zoning Commission approved a comprehensive zoning package for the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) site, which included the creation of the SEFC Overlay District (ZC Case # 03-06). Since that time, the General Services Administration selected Forest City LLC as the master developer. The SEFC development (now called "The Yards") will include approximately 1.8 million square feet of office space, 2,800 residential units, neighborhood and destination retail uses, and a 5 acre waterfront park (now constructed), and is located roughly between M Street SE and the Anacostia River, and between the Washington Navy Yard to the east and 1<sup>st</sup> Street SE to the west.

Zoning Commission Case 10-24 was for the development of a new mixed use (residential and retail) building on the corner of M Street SW and 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE (Square 771, Lot 12) on a site zoned SEFC/CR (high density mixed use development). As approved, the project will include up to 225 residential units in two towers to a height of 110 feet, 110,000 square feet of retail space (including a 55,000 square foot grocery store), internal loading, and 347 parking spaces.

The public hearing for the design review was held on December 2, 2010. The applicant has now submitted a request for Zoning Commission approval of a number of minor design modifications to the approved design. The overall massing, height, square footage, use mix, parking, and loading plan are not proposed to be changed. The modifications also would not alter any of the areas of specific special exception or variance relief granted in the 2010 approval.

## **III. PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS WITH OP ANALYSIS**

The applicant outlined their proposed series of minor modifications in a memorandum and set of drawings dated October 12, 2011. The graphic submission, displays the approved and the proposed scheme side by side with the modifications highlighted. OP comments and analyses are organized similarly, with referenced page and modification numbers corresponding to the drawings. These modifications were also discussed with Historic Preservation Office (HPO) staff within OP; HPO comments on issues of concern have been included.

Page 2:

1. *Sunscreen to work with window manufacturer* – OP is not opposed to this change. HPO also supported this change which results in a slightly more industrial look, befitting this location.
2. *Roof structure reduced and access doors shown* – OP and HPO staffs support this modification to reduce the possible visual impact of the roof top structures.
3. *Residential entrance refined* – See OP analysis for Page 12, below, which details this change.

Page 4:

1. *Grocery sign introduced* – The original approval did not show a sign at this location, and a vegetated wall was shown. OP is not opposed to this addition of appropriately placed and sized signage, or the reduction in the height of the vegetated wall. HPO also was not opposed, provided the signage remains the single color scheme shown on the drawing.
2. *Grocery signage in windows; outdoor seating added* – OP supports the addition of outdoor seating, and is not opposed to the window signage provided that clear visual access through the windows to the interior (and vice-versa) remains. The applicant has confirmed this will be the case.
3. *Secondary grocery entrance removed, windows added* – While OP regrets the loss of the additional entry on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the street will be well animated by other entrances, windows, and outdoor seating. Circulation patterns along the street and in the neighborhood will not be significantly altered, and



providing secondary entrances to grocery stores has been shown to be problematic in other cases. As such, OP is not opposed to this modification.

4. *Parapet height adjusted* – OP is not opposed to this change which the application states does not alter the overall building height.

Page 6:

1. *Loading dock height adjustments, on the east side of the building* – OP has no concerns with this change to the loading dock entrance height on the service access corridor.
2. *Mechanical louvers added, also on the east side of the building* – OP has no concerns with these modifications.
3. *Secondary grocery entrance removed, windows added* – OP is not opposed to this modification as discussed above for Page 4 #3.
4. *Grocery signage in windows* – OP is not opposed to the window signage provided that clear visual access through the windows to the interior (and vice-versa) remains.
5. *Grocery sign introduced* – OP is not opposed to this addition of appropriately placed and sized signage. HPO also was not opposed, provided the signage remains the single color scheme shown on the drawing.
6. *Residential entrance refined* – The applicant proposes to revise the design of the entrance to the residential portion of the building from 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW. OP agrees that the structural glass enclosure now proposed will better define the entrance and add visual interest along the street, so OP is supportive of this change.
7. *Roof structure reduced* – OP and HPO staffs support this modification to reduce the visual impact of the roof top structures.
8. *Retail entrance doors added* – OP supports the addition of these retail doors on the 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW building elevation, to further enliven this important access street.

Page 8:

1. *Louvers added for mechanical equipment along the north (M Street) façade* – HPO is supportive of the addition of these louvers as being consistent with the design of the building and the character of the area. OP is also not opposed to their addition, as they would not result in significant noise or other impacts on pedestrians. They appear to have been well designed as a façade feature, but would be partially screened from M Street by the historic wall.
2. *Signage location shifted* – OP has no concerns with this minor modification.
3. *Roof structure reduced* – OP and HPO staffs support this modification to reduce the possible visual impact of the roof top structures.
4. *Sunscreen modifications* – OP is not opposed to this change. HPO also supported this change which results in a slightly more industrial look, befitting this location.
5. *Residential bridge vestibule adjusted* – On the south (Tingey Street SW) elevation, the vestibule providing pedestrian access from the residential units to the upper level courtyard has been modified from an angled vestibule (as shown on the key plan on Page 7) to a more standard rectangle (as shown on the key plan on page 8). OP agrees that this feature should not be highly visible from the street. While OP suggested to the applicant that the double-height design as shown on the Page 8 South Elevation could be reduced to one story, OP is not opposed to this modification as minor.



Page 10: *Parking deck / trellis* – The applicant is proposing to substitute a portion of the approved parking screen trellis with a shade fabric. Although not readily visible from the street, this element would be visible from residential units above, and would appear to provide a better and more varied visual screen. As such, OP is not opposed to this minor modification.

Page 12: *Residential entrance* – OP agrees that the structural glass enclosure now proposed will better define the entrance and add visual interest along the street, so OP is supportive of this change.

Page 16: *4<sup>th</sup> and Tingey streetscape improvements* – The applicant has proposed a series of modifications along these streets, mainly in public space. These include adding hardscape for the plaza at the corner of M and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets NW (adjacent to the historic wall and tower and beside the grocery entrance) and adding more outdoor seating; adjusting the location and size of planters to facilitate ease of access to the retail areas, adding additional trees along Tingey Street, and (as noted above) adding outdoor seating areas along both streets. OP is supportive of all of these changes as improvements to the public space; HPO was also supportive of the changes, particularly to the changes to the plaza area adjacent to the historic wall

Page 17: *Addition of signage banners to a portion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Street façade* – The series of banners would be affixed to the façade, and would have a depth of 1.25 feet and a height of 7 feet. They would be located over 10 feet above sidewalk level. The applicant did not detail what the banners would display, but OP feels that they would help to further enliven and animate this pedestrian way so is supportive of their addition.

JS/jl

