

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

DATE: January 10, 2007

SUBJECT: Modification to ZC # 06-46
Monument Half Street Zoning Commission Design Review

I. RECOMMENDATION

On January 8, the Office of Planning received a submission from Monument Realty regarding proposed modifications to the approved Zoning Commission design review application #06-46. OP has reviewed the materials, including a revised plan set and a written memo describing the changes. The original application proposed a mixed use project on the east side of Half Street, SE, between M and N Streets. The applicant proposes changes to the exterior architecture and some adjustments to the layout of the residential buildings. The overall design of the project remains unchanged. Most of the proposed modifications are not significant and are not inconsistent with the intent of the original approval. However, more information, as enumerated below, is necessary to fully evaluate some of the proposals:

1. Provision of more detailed renderings of the proposed Metro screen, including lighting and fritting patterns;
2. Show how 30% green roof commitment is met given inconsistencies in the plans;
3. Provision of supplemental calculations showing that retail space in the southern building has not decreased despite larger residential lobbies.

The Office of Planning originally requested the information several weeks ago and the applicant indicated that it will be made available by Friday, January 11. Until this information is received from the applicant, OP is not able to make a comprehensive recommendation.

II. PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The table below summarizes the modifications proposed by the applicant. An analysis of some of the items follows.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS					
# Within Portion	Modification	Approved	Proposed	Office of Planning Recommendation	Sheet (1/8/08)
Whole Project					
1	Adjust office area	277,600 sf	267,162 sf	Accept as minor modification (m.m.)	
2	Adjust hotel area	105,560	106,269	m.m.	
3	Adjust retail area	51,010	51,022 or 51,212	Plans should be internally consistent (analysis below – III.A.)	D1, A1
4	Adjust residential area	320,100	320,511	m.m.	
5	Adjust overall FAR	7.44	7.35	m.m.	
6	Green roof	Commitment to at least 30% green roof throughout project	Green roof plan not consistent with courtyard landscape plan	Applicant should show how they meet 30% commitment (analysis below – III.B.)	A1, A4
7	Interim plan for Half Street	Plans showed interim streetscape concept	Request flexibility to work with DDOT on interim design	m.m. (analysis below – III.C.)	
Residential Portion					
1	Reconfigure res. units	Units south of Cushing Place are too deep	Units are made shorter, floor area recaptured elsewhere	m.m. (analysis below – III.D.)	A5
2	Modified courtyard design and façade	Very basic courtyard layout; Split face block	More detailed courtyard layout; Metal panels, more balconies	m.m.	A4, A11
3	Enlarged lobby areas		Now include office space, mail rooms	Applicant should provide supplemental floor area calculations (analysis below – III.E.)	A4
4	Retail projections	4-foot projections along Half St. and N St.	Pending Public Space approval	m.m.	A13, A13a
5	Combine shuttle elevators	2 retail elevators, 2 hotel elevators	3 total elevators for both uses	m.m.	A13
6	Alter retail façades	Variation between glazed ceramic, metal panel, wood panel	Renderings seem to indicate more reliance on metal panels and less color variation	m.m. (analysis below – III.F.)	A14, A18
7	Reshape retail along N Street	Retail 7 extended farther to west	Envelope made more regular in shape	m.m.	A13
8	Remove terra cotta from retail level	N Street façade shows terra cotta extending to grade	Terra cotta terminates above retail level	m.m.	A8

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS					
# Within Portion	Modification	Approved	Proposed	Office of Planning Recommendation	Sheet (1/8/08)
Hotel Portion					
1	Modify hotel windows	Specific window pattern for hotel operator	Hotel operator has pulled out; new pattern for other hotels	m.m.	A8, A9
2	Modify hotel architecture	Strong framing elements	Wood paneling emphasized; more verticality; outside stairs to 2 nd floor bar	m.m.	A8, A14
Office Portion					
1	Change Metro screen wall	Curved, LED-illuminated screen	Straight, laminated glass with silkscreen frit, illuminated from behind	Applicant should provide more detailed renderings (analysis below – III.G.)	A2, A12, M1
2	Modify metal panel with sunscreen at Monument Place and Half Street		Sunscreen keeps horizontal element in architecture, but allows light to reach potential office uses	m.m. (analysis below – III.H.)	A14
3	Relocate fire control room	On M St., east of lobby doors	Interior to lobby, south of Retail 1	m.m.	A13
4	Change east and south façades	Metal panels and split-faced block	Entirely metal panels	m.m.	A9
5	Split level of Retail 1	One consistent elevation of floor	Existing WMATA bulkhead raises part of floor by 3 feet	m.m. (analysis below – III.I.)	A2

III. ANALYSIS

A. Adjust retail area

The applicant proposes to adjust the total retail area. The approved plans showed 51,010 square feet of retail space. Sheets D1 and A1 in the January 7, 2008 plans show 51,022 and 51,212 square feet, respectively. These figures represent an increase of either 12 or 202 square feet of retail. OP recommends that the plans be made internally consistent. According to the plans the percentage of retail in the ground floor of the south building would increase slightly, while the percentage in the north building would decrease slightly (see Note 5 on Sheet D1). These figures do not include projections into public space or potential second floor retail. OP notes that the residential lobby areas have been expanded. It is unclear how the retail area increases at the same time that the lobby areas have significantly grown in size. The applicant should provide more detailed calculations clearly demonstrating how both the residential and retail floor areas increased since the original approval. Please also see the analysis of #10 below.

B. Green roof

The applicant continues their commitment from the original approval to achieve at least 30% green roof. The plans include a roof plan indicating which areas will be green (Sheet A1). Comparing that plan to Sheet A4, however, reveals that some areas show as green are hardscape. These areas include the semi-circular courtyard areas, the hotel terrace and the private terraces for the adjacent residential units. The applicant should reconfirm that they are meeting their 30% green roof commitment and ensure the plans reflect this commitment.

C. Interim plan for Half Street

As part of the original proposal, the applicant showed a covered walkway on the east side of Half Street as a temporary condition during construction. Present plans call for pedestrian traffic to be directed to the other side of Half Street on non-game days, and for the entire street to be opened to pedestrian traffic on game days. Therefore there is no need for a covered walkway. The applicant has committed, however, to maintain a decorative fence at the edge of their construction zone as generally shown in the original plans.

D. Reconfigure residential units

Two tiers of units in the “Residential 2” building were deemed too deep and narrow to be functional. The revised layout, seen on Sheet A5, shows shorter, more practical units near the eastern end of the “Residential 2” hallway. The floor area lost from those units would be recaptured in units in the “Residential 1” building. The receiving units would protrude somewhat into the central courtyard.

E. Enlarged lobby areas

The revised design has enlarged the lobby areas for the two residential buildings to now include offices for staff and mail rooms. As noted in III.A. above, it is unclear to OP how the lobby areas can be enlarged yet the retail area of the ground floor would increase at the same time. OP does not object to enlarged lobby areas, but requires complete calculations showing how the lobbies and retail areas both increased in floor area since the original approval.

Sheet A4 shows “Potential Leasing Offices” for the residential buildings that would occupy space otherwise dedicated to retail. Sheets A1 and A13 do not show the potential offices. The applicant stated that the optional offices were not to be shown on sheet A4, but if found to be necessary would be part of a future modification before the Zoning Commission.

F. Alter retail façades

The proposed modifications show a revised retail façade along Half Street. The original treatment showed significant variety of materials and colors, creating an exciting and inviting pedestrian experience. The latest design, seen on Sheet A14, seems to rely more on metal panels, especially on the south building, and seems more monochromatic. The Office of

Planning encourages the sentiment expressed on Page 4 of the applicant's January 8, 2008 written submission, that individual retail tenants have flexibility in tailoring their own façade treatments.

G. Change Metro screen wall

The original design proposed an innovative LED-imbedded metal-mesh screen around the Metro escalators and queuing area. The screen curved to form a fillet between M and Half Streets, and curved again to pass behind the first structural column on Half Street before returning to the property line. The LEDs would have been capable of changing colors, thus bringing considerable animation to an otherwise unanimated street corner. WMATA disapproved of that design for security reasons. In consultation with WMATA, the applicant is now proposing glass panes, with differing levels of silkscreened frit. As seen on Sheet A12, the panels that appear grey in the rendering would in actuality be clear glass. The panels that appear white or light green represent glass that would have a medium to high level of frit. The applicant has stated that some kind of multi-colored lighting from the interior would animate the fritted glass panels, in an attempt to replicate the original animation of the LED screen. The glass wall would not be curved but would be parallel to M and Half Streets. Sheet M1 attempts to show samples of the potential frit patterns, but it is hard to tell from that drawing and from Sheet A12 how the glass will appear in person. A more detailed rendering is required, as well as a further description of the lighting to be installed.

H. Add metal panel with sunscreen at Monument Place and Half Street

The original application showed a two-story façade element at the northeast corner of Half Street and Monument Place, indicating the potential for two-story retail at that location. While the potential for two-story retail still exists, the applicant would also like to be able to accommodate office uses. To do this while maintaining the two-story feel of the façade element, the applicant proposes a sunscreen that would allow light in to any second floor office uses, but preserve the horizontal idea of the original concept. Sheet A14 shows the vertical and horizontal pieces of the brown façade element.

I. Split level of Retail 1

The small retail bay facing M Street, west of the office lobby, would be directly above the WMATA escalators. An existing WMATA structural element, undiscovered at the time of the original application, intrudes into the retail volume. The west half of the retail bay, therefore, would be three feet higher than the eastern half. OP feels that the retail articulation of M Street must be maintained and the retail should not be eliminated. The upper part of the retail could be used for storage or could be used to separate service and customer areas of the retail business.