ANC 6C Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee Report

ANC 6C Commission Meeting: Dec. 11, 2019

PZE Meeting Date: Dec. 4, 2019 6:30 pm

Meeting Location: Northeast Library
7th & D Streets NE

Committee Attendees: Mark Eckenwiler (Chair), 6C04
Mary Albert
Bobbi Krengel
Dru Tallant
Trish Thomson

Other Commissioners Present: Christine Healey, 6C01
Karen Wirt, 6C02 (6C Chair)
Jay Adelstein, 6C03

Agenda Items

1. 55 H St. NW (ZC 19-20) – Application of Georgetown University requesting voluntary design review approval pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 6 of the Zoning Regulations to develop the property located at Lot 93 in Square 622 with an address of 55 H Street, NW (the “Property”). The Property is located in the MU-9 zone and consists of approximately 33,040 square feet of land area. The Property is bounded by an office building to the east, an apartment building to the west, and Gonzaga College High School’s athletic fields to the north. To the south of the Property, across H Street, is the Government Printing Office and surface parking associated with that use. The Property is currently a surface parking lot.

   The Application proposes to construct a student residence hall with approximately 158 residential units (containing approximately 476 beds), retail space, and student-serving amenity space (the “Building”). The Building will have a floor-area ratio of approximately 6.49, and a building height of approximately 110 feet. Representative: TBD. Hearing date: Dec. 12, 2019. [ANC 6E, near 6C02/04/06] (Hearing notice; case file)

2. 19 4th St. (rear) NE (HPA 20-096) – Application of Hillsdale College to demolish existing structure and for concept review of new two-story building at premises 19 4th Street Rear NE (Square 816, Lot 18). Representative: Zach Williams, Esq. Hearing date: Dec. 19, 2019. [6C01] (Case file)

3. 50 F St. NW (BZA 20168) – Application of 50 F Street LLC, pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, for a special exception under the Capitol Security Sub-Area requirements of Subtitle I § 605.6, to construct a penthouse and a rooftop terrace addition to an existing mixed-use
building in the D-3 Zone at premises 50 F Street, NW (Square 628, Lots 896 and 898). Representative: Lawrence Ferris, Esq. & Lauren Kowall. Hearing date: Dec. 18, 2019. [6C02] (Case file) 

4. **Draft amendments to Comprehensive Plan** – Review of the following Draft Plan elements:

   a. Transportation
   b. Housing
   c. Economic Development
   d. Historic Preservation
   e. Community Services and Facilities

Deadline for ANC comments: Jan. 31, 2020. ([Notice of public comment period; draft Comp Plan amendments & supporting materials](#))
Agenda Item #1: Discussion and Recommendations

55 H St. NW (ZC 19-20) – Application of Georgetown University requesting voluntary design review approval pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 6 of the Zoning Regulations to develop the property located at Lot 93 in Square 622 with an address of 55 H Street, NW (the “Property”). The Property is located in the MU-9 zone and consists of approximately 33,040 square feet of land area. The Property is bounded by an office building to the east, an apartment building to the west, and Gonzaga College High School’s athletic fields to the north. To the south of the Property, across H Street, is the Government Printing Office and surface parking associated with that use. The Property is currently a surface parking lot.

The Application proposes to construct a student residence hall with approximately 158 residential units (containing approximately 476 beds), retail space, and student-serving amenity space (the “Building”). The Building will have a floor-area ratio of approximately 6.49, and a building height of approximately 110 feet. Representative: David Avitabile, Esq. Hearing date: Dec. 12, 2019. [ANC 6E, near 6C02/04/06]

Motion To recommend support with one condition (carried 5-0)

Key Discussion Points:

1. The project is as described above. David Avitabile, Esq. (Goulston & Storrs) and Amy Sanderson, AIA (Ass’t Univ. Architect) led the presentation.

2. PZE members expressed no concerns with the design, or with the associated request to provide only three parking spaces (accessible across the loading area, and thus not countable as legal spaces) given that residents will be students, who are prohibited from having cars except in cases of demonstrated medical need. The site is ineligible for RPP.

3. The project will also include approximately 2,000sf of ground-level retail accessible from the sidewalk.

4. The applicant noted that the glass curtain wall on the first level is intended to create a sense of space, as well as afford views through to the courtyard on the north portion of the lot. The PZE Chair suggested that the project include a requirement to have a depth-of-view minimum for the first floor, as was done for at least two PUDs in ANC 6C on H St. NE.

5. The PZE voted to support the application, subject to adoption of a depth-of-view minimum. Because the PZE did not have ready access to the standards for the earlier, similar requirements, this was left for further elaboration prior to the ANC meeting.

6. Since the PZE met, the Chair has confirmed that the order in ZC 12-18 (for the Apollo, 600 H St. NE) contained a depth-of-view minimum: “the project should include at least 50% of the ground level street wall on H Street to consist of display windows with unobstructed view, to which the Applicant agreed ....” ¶ 67.
7. Likewise, the order in ZC 15-07 (315 H St. NE) requires that “the retail spaces maintain a minimum six foot depth of view for at least 50% of the area between three and eight feet above grade ....” (Page 17)

8. Mr. Avitabile provided proposed language agreeable to the applicant, as follows:

   The ground story shall devote at least 50% of the surface area facing H Street to display windows or pedestrian entrances having clear low-emissivity glass and ensure that the view through the display windows and pedestrian entrances is not blocked for at least 10 feet in from the building face.

   Because this language is consistent with—and in some respects exceeds—the standards in the earlier PUDs, the PZE Chair suggests that it be adopted.

9. Because ANC 6C is not automatically a party to this case, the PZE Chair also suggests that the ANC request party status.


**Agenda Item #2: Discussion and Recommendations**

19 4th St. (rear) NE (HPA 20-096) – Application of Hillsdale College to demolish existing structure and for concept review of new two-story building at premises 19 4th Street Rear NE (Square 816, Lot 18). Representative: Zach Williams, Esq. Hearing date: Dec. 19, 2019. [6C01]

Motion  
*To recommend support with one condition*  
(carried 5-0)

Key Discussion Points:

1. This property has come before the ANC previously. Two years ago, the prior owner sought HPRB and BZA permission to rehabilitate and occupy the existing structure; ANC 6C supported those requests, and relief was granted.

2. In October, the new owner came before us to request a two-year extension of the BZA order, which we supported and which BZA approved.

3. The owner/applicant now reports that structural engineers have found the building too compromised to safely repair and rehabilitate. As a result, the current application is for complete demolition of the historic structure and construction of a new building similar in design and profile.

4. Some neighbors expressed concern about the future effect of the construction management agreement and recorded covenant adopted in the earlier BZA proceeding. The applicant has stated that it will need to return to BZA to amend the prior order/relief, with the result that zoning-related concerns can be addressed in that future process.

5. PZE members expressed support for the new concept. The one omission noted is that the lone window on the west elevation—which directly overlooks the rear yard of the street-facing house at 19 4th St.—is not shown with frosted glass. That was a condition of ANC support two years ago, and the PZE voted to recommend that this condition be repeated now. (There was also limited discussion of the possible need for special glazing or window placement on the north elevation to address potential privacy concerns there, but the PZE vote did not address that point.)

6. **After the PZE met**, the PZE Chair consulted the plans (dated Dec. 10) posted on the HPO website. Despite the discussion at the PZE, the window on the west elevation is still not shown with frosted glazing.
Agenda Item #3: Discussion and Recommendations

50 F St. NW (BZA 20168) – Application of 50 F Street LLC, pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, for a special exception under the Capitol Security Sub-Area requirements of Subtitle I § 605.6, to construct a penthouse and a rooftop terrace addition to an existing mixed-use building in the D-3 Zone at premises 50 F Street, NW (Square 628, Lots 896 and 898).

Representative: Lawrence Ferris, Esq. & Lauren Kowall. Hearing date: Dec. 18, 2019. [6C02]

Motion To recommend support with one condition
(carried 5-0)

Key Discussion Points:

1. The applicant proposes to convert an existing mechanical penthouse to habitable use, as well as to construct a small addition expanding the footprint of the current structure.

2. Many of the special-exception criteria applicable in this case relate to the site’s proximity to the Capitol, such as security concerns. PZE members did not express any objections or concerns on this front.

3. However, several residents of the Capitol Plaza Apartments (35 E St. NW), which sit directly south of the site, stated their concerns about potential noise from use of the penthouse’s outdoor terrace. They noted ongoing problems with other nearby office buildings & evening/nighttime noise from their roof terraces.

4. The PZE Chair noted that the zoning regulations explicitly authorize the BZA to “impose requirements pertaining to design, appearance, size, signs, screening, landscaping, lighting, building materials, or other requirements it deems necessary to protect adjacent or nearby property” as a condition of special-exception relief. 11-X DCMR § 901.4.

5. Accordingly, the PZE recommendation for support is strictly conditioned on the BZA imposing an absolute ban on the playing of amplified music on (or its projection into) the site’s rooftop terrace.

6. After the PZE met, Ms. Kowall provided a written statement that the applicant does not object to the proposed condition.
Agenda Item #4: Discussion and Recommendations

Draft amendments to Comprehensive Plan – Review of the following Draft Plan elements:

a. Transportation
b. Housing
c. Economic Development
d. Historic Preservation
e. Community Services and Facilities

Deadline for ANC comments: Jan. 31, 2020

Motion n/a

Key Discussion Points:

1. PZE members engaged in a free-ranging discussion of several of the elements, including Housing and Historic Preservation. However, owing to the press of other business, there was inadequate time to settle on specific recommendations.

2. The PZE Chair has committed to circulating specific discussion points and topics on these elements to the committee well in advance of the January meeting, at which time we anticipate that the PZE will consider these elements in greater depth.