

February 2, 2018

VIA IZIS

Chairman Anthony Hood
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Z.C. Case Nos. 06-11O & 06-12O
Applicant's Supplemental Posthearing Response – Signage

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

At the Commission's January 29 public meeting, Commissioner Turnbull asked for further clarification regarding the proposed signage for the Project. Four specific issues were raised: the height and width of the primary office tenant identification signage on the 21st Street façade, the use of blade signs by the ground-floor retail tenants, the proposed illumination of the signs, and whether any signs would be moving or digital signs.

As background:

- The Applicant prepared a detailed and comprehensive 9-page signage and storefront plan, which was submitted into the record prior to the hearing as Exhibit 18E. The package identifies the specific locations for retail storefronts along each façade, followed by detailed signage guidelines for each façade, with information on the location, height, character, and type of signage (building identification, retail, tenant, and window signage).
- Building signage was also incorporated into the project renderings of the approved plans (see pages A300 – A304 of Exhibit 18F of the record). These versions of the renderings were used in the Applicant's final presentation to ANC 2A regarding the Project at ANC 2A's September 19, 2017 meeting, and the Applicant specifically called

out the primary tenant identification signage to ensure the ANC was aware of the request. No issues were raised by the ANC or any other group regarding the signage.

- At the public hearing on October 12, Commissioner Shapiro noted the tenant identification signage on the upper portion of the building and asked for further clarification on the height of the letters. The Applicant summarized the comprehensive signage plan and then addressed the height of the letters. (Tr. Oct. 12 at 39-41.) Later in the hearing, the Office of Planning stated that it had reviewed the signage plan, found the plan as a whole acceptable, and specifically concluded that the size of the primary tenant signage was “reasonable” and “seemed fairly minimal given the scale of the building.” (Tr. Oct. 12 at 61, 66.)

No other comments were made or submitted regarding the signs.

Primary Tenant Identification Signage. The Applicant continues to believe that the proposed tenant signage on the 21st Street side is of an appropriate size given the overall height and scale of the facade. With that said, since the hearing, the Applicant has continued to work with the prospective tenant to further develop this element of the Project. Attached as Exhibit A is a more detailed page that illustrates the anticipated height and format of this identification sign. As designed, the letters themselves will be no taller than 36”, and the only element that will be 60” tall is the square insignia element. The number of letters in the example matches the number of letters in the prospective tenant’s sign and therefore accurately reflects the anticipated width of the sign. Although the Applicant would prefer approval with the current guidelines outlined in the signage package, including a sign element with letters up 60” for potential future tenants, the Applicant is willing to accept the more limited framework for the primary tenant signage shown on Exhibit A. This would limit the height of the letters to 36”.

Retail Signage. The Applicant is committed to delivering a street-activating ground-floor retail experience along I Street that builds on and continues the success of The Avenue (one block away), which was approved by the Commission as a PUD in Case No. 06-27. This success is grounded in attracting desirable retail tenants that may activate the street and engage the public realm with their storefront identity. The attached photograph of The Avenue’s I Street retail frontage, attached as Exhibit B, clearly demonstrates the ways in which each tenant’s storefront and signage can create a diverse and authentic urban experience that fulfills the shared goal of the city, developer and the University for an engaging I Street retail corridor.

The proposed signage plan for the Project employs a similar framework that offers a variety of sign systems, including wall-mounted or awning mounted signs as well as blade signs to address the goals of improving the pedestrian experience. Blade signs are an essential element, providing

important pedestrian-oriented visibility, particularly in areas with high foot traffic. (You can see blade signs are employed by Roti for this purpose in the image attached as Exhibit B.) As a result, they are a common feature in retail environments throughout the pedestrian-focused downtown and downtown-proximate areas of the District of Columbia, and for similar reasons the Applicant proposes the option for blade signs here.

The proposed signage plan for the Project also anticipates illumination for the retail signs, building identification signs, and tenant identification signs. Such illumination will likely be accomplished via backlit LED illumination, similar to the examples shown on Exhibit B. Backlit LED illumination is the preferred choice because it creates a crisp but soft and sophisticated look. Additionally, LED lighting technology has proven to be long lasting, virtually maintenance free, and more energy efficient.

The proposed signage plan for the Project does not allow for any digital or other moving signage, and the Applicant is not requesting the approval of such signage. The language regarding “depth, texture, and dimensional qualities to create a diverse, authentic, and creative environment” is meant only to convey that each tenant’s signage will have a different character, consistent with its own brand and creating differentiation from other establishments. Again, the examples shown on Exhibit B illustrate the different approaches that retailers may take with their signage.

We look forward to the Commission’s final action at the February 12 public meeting. To the extent that the Commission has further questions regarding the Project signage, the Applicant’s representatives will be available to answer questions at the meeting.

Sincerely,

/s/
David M. Avitabile

/s/
Cary R. Kadlecek

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on February 2, 2018, copies of the foregoing document were delivered via messenger, U.S. Mail, or email to the following:

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/s/ _____
Cary Kadlecek