

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

1770 Crystal Drive – Crystal Square Office 3 (SP #90)

SPRC Meeting #1

October 19, 2015

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Stephen Hughes, Chair; Jane Siegel, Erik Gutshall, James Schroll

MEETING AGENDA

This was the first SPRC meeting for a minor site plan amendment request for SP #90, Crystal Square. SPRC Chair, Stephen Hughes, opened the meeting with introductions amongst the committee and attendees. Staff provided an overview of the site and the original site plan approval and the applicant presented their proposal. After the presentation, the SPRC discussed the following topics.

SPRC DISCUSSION

Building Architecture

- Will column widths remain the same?
 - The columns along Crystal Drive are part of the structure holding the existing building up and will be maintained. Part of the exterior materials will be removed and then rejacketed again but the goal is for them to be more slender.
- How will building materials wear over time? Any examples of current applications?
 - Proposed coating is factory installed and very durable. It has been used in other applications without problems.
 - Base material is stone, which is more durable, for bottom 10 inches.
- Is EIFS still being proposed at the plaza level?
 - Yes, this is being treated as a temporary condition, depending on use of plaza level and future plans for this area.
- Proposal moves mall entrance; will distance between office entry and mall entry be covered? Make sure there is adequate room for pedestrian access between the two, even with outdoor sidewalk seating
 - Proposal includes covered walkway between both entrances; any outdoor seating would have to be approved administratively and provide adequate area for pedestrian circulation.
- Are there any changes proposed to the current driveway to the south and west of the building?

- No, this will still provide access to the adjacent office building and will not be changed as part of this request.
- Consider a requirement regarding maintenance of streetscape pavers to ensure they will be replaced if damaged. This is an accessibility issue.
- How is this proposal consistent with the Crystal City Sector Plan?
 - This is not a redevelopment request, only an update of an existing office building to remain. It is not economically viable to consider demolition and new office development given current market conditions.
- How will people see the plaza level retail? You can't see it from the street.
 - It would be more visible with a two-story retail tenant, which is the goal for this space. It would not likely work well otherwise.
- What is the short- and mid-term future of the plaza?
 - If the project has a 2-story retail space, it would help activate this area. A lobby entrance doesn't do much to activate it now.
 - Applicant is thinking about future plans for this and adjacent spaces
- Consider plaza as a potential location for outdoor recreation
- Please include drawings of all sides of the building as you move forward to the County Board. For example, show what the proposed EIFS will look like.
- Have you considered how long you will market the second floor space for retail vs. office uses?
 - Preferred option is to have two-story retail space. But, if single-story retail tenants are secured first, it's likely the upper levels will be leased for office space. Similarly, if a large office tenant wants all of the office floors, then it will likely be leased for office uses.
- What opportunities are there for rooftop signage?
 - The proposed design does not have the adequate width to accommodate large signs at the rooftop level.
- Are green roofs proposed?
 - There is limited access to the roof that would permit this to be an amenity space that would be enjoyed by building tenants.
- What is the proposed LEED rating?
 - Applicant has an internal policy of minimum LEED Silver for office buildings so that is the goal, which would be a significant improvement. Proposal is not seeking any bonus density.
- Consider reflectivity of windows in light of nearby residential as well as use of occupancy sensors for lights.
 - Proposed windows have glass with a reflective coating of roughly 13%; prefer to show material to community now and discuss rather than have it as a site plan condition. Reflectivity was not a design consideration in this case.
 - Occupancy sensors for office lights are standard component of LEED buildings now.

Landscape Plan

- Are there any plantings along Crystal Drive now? Consider adding more in portion of sidewalk further south. Would like to see it consistent with across 18th.
 - Sidewalks don't currently line up.
 - Existing WMATA vents and train location limits ability to plant large trees and sidewalk in front of building is only 7 feet wide. There is also a change in grade in area next to sidewalk, expanding it would require retaining walls.
 - As an alternative, please consider adding planters with seasonal color next to the vent.
 - Applicant agreed to consider this.

Construction Phasing

- What is the anticipated start date for construction?
 - US Marshal's lease ends in July 2016; earliest start date is Summer 2016
- Consider conditions/requirements to ensure that mall pedestrian entry remains open during construction. May be addressed via a phasing plan.
- Make sure that sidewalks remain open and that proper lighting is maintained during construction. Consider condition language to ensure this.
- Add condition to require community meeting prior to start of construction.

Other Comments/Wrap-up

- How does the temporary retail façade proposal compare to Retail Action Plan guidance for the site?
 - This feature has been approved elsewhere in Crystal City for new retail spaces
 - Staff will verify color coding for the street in the Retail Plan and guidance for redevelopment of existing buildings.
- Staff report should clarify that existing parking is shared by several buildings in a single underground lot.
- Who approves change of address? Why was it requested?
 - DES does and has already reviewed it. Change was requested to differentiate office building from general retail mall address (1750).

NEXT STEPS

The SPRC review is complete. The proposal will proceed to County Board in November 2015.