

Government of the District of Columbia
ZONING COMMISSION



ZONING COMMISSION ORDER NO. 194
CASE NO. 76-28P
DECEMBER 8, 1977

Pursuant to notice a public hearing of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission was held beginning on June 27, 1977 and continued on August 18, 1977. At these hearing sessions the Zoning Commission considered an application by the Republic of France for preliminary approval of a planned unit development.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On December 27, 1976, the Republic of France filed an application for preliminary approval of a planned unit development, for property located at 3905 Reservoir Road, N.W., (Square 1320, Lot 802). The application also contemplates a change in zone from the R-1-B District to the R-5-C District. The property is part of the forty acre Archbold tract which is bounded by Reservoir Road on the south, 39th Street on the east, Whitehaven Parkway on the north, and Glover-Archbold Park on the west.

2. The entire 40 acre Archbold tract is zoned R-1-B. The area immediately to the west of the Glover-Archbold Parkway on the north side of Reservoir Road is also R-1-B. The Burleith area immediately to the east of the Archbold tract, the Glover Park area immediately to the north of the tract, and all the land to the south on the south side of Reservoir Road are zoned R-3.

3. The R-1-B district permits single family detached houses on minimum lots of 5,000 square feet with a maximum height of forty feet. The R-5-C District normally permits general residential uses, including single family dwellings, flats and

apartments, to a height of ninety feet and a floor area ratio of 3.5. Under the control of the PUD, the applicant is proposing to limit development of the site to the height and bulk standards of the R-1-B District.

4. The area of the subject site totals approximately eight acres, and it currently owned by the Republic of France.

5. The property is unimproved and is mainly grassland. There are a number of major trees on the north and east periphery. There is also a line of trees on the Reservoir Road frontage.

6. There are several existing non-residential uses in the vicinity, including the Georgetown University complex across Reservoir Road to the south, the German chancery on Reservoir Road west of Foxhall Road and Western High School and its athletic field to the east across 39th Street. With the exception of the house on the Archbold Estate, there are no private residences within 200 feet of any boundary of the subject property.

7. The preliminary application proposes the construction of a complex of facilities for the government of France, including a chancery, consulate, offices for various attaches and services of the French Embassy, reception, exhibition and lecture halls, residences for a concierge and guards, an outdoor reception area, tennis courts and a swimming pool.

8. The preliminary application proposes the construction of a complex of four main buildings to be constructed in sequence. The first building is the office of the ambassador and his staff placed at the north side of the tract against the wooded area which surrounds Mr. Archbold's home. It will occupy approximately 16,700 square feet of land (4.8% of the subject property). The second building will be placed Southeast of the chancery and will house the cultural and scientific services. It will occupy approximately 17,100 square feet of land (4.9% of the subject property). The third building will be placed Southeast of the first two and will house reception, exhibition lecture halls, meeting rooms and a private cafeteria and restaurant. It will occupy approximately 15,600 square feet of land (4.5% of the subject property). The fourth building will be placed behind the first three and it will house the commercial and financial services and the consulate. It will occupy approximately 17,100 square feet of land (4.9% of the subject property).

9. The total development is designed to house 400 persons, more than the immediate needs of the French government. The total development would not exceed forty feet and three stories in height, would have a floor area ratio of .36, which is less than the 4.0 maximum permitted in R-5-C and less than the 0.4 maximum permitted in R-1-B, and would have a lot occupancy of twenty-seven per cent, less than the seventy-five per cent permitted in R-5-C and less than the forty per cent permitted in R-1-B.

10. The facility would have a total of 617 off-street parking spaces, all of which would be underground.

11. The United States has an international obligation under Article 21 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations to facilitate the acquisition by foreign states "of premises necessary for its mission". The construction of the proposed chancery complex will allow the government of France to concentrate in one location all the activities which are presently located in eleven locations in Northwest Washington, and in New York City.

12. Consolidation of operations is required to permit a more efficient and effective performance of the French government's mission to the United States.

13. The only public street abutting the site is Reservoir Road, which is a four lane, secondary arterial type street. Through traffic movement on Reservoir Road is restricted to one lane in each direction by parked cars during off peak periods.

14. Reservoir Road can effectively handle all the traffic generated by the proposed development. In addition, the hours of operation of the chancery (9:30 am to 6:00 pm) would preclude any adverse effect on normal peak hour traffic. To further assure no adverse impact to Reservoir Road traffic, plans for improvements to the street in front of the site have been developed in cooperation with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation. These improvements would include a dedication by the government of France of land on the north side of Reservoir Road to provide a fifth lane for ingress and egress at the site, and the construction of a concrete island to provide a left turn storage lane for eastbound vehicles at the chancery entrance.

15. The Municipal Planning Office, by report dated June 22, 1977 and by testimony at the hearing, recommended that the Zoning Commission approve the preliminary application for a planned unit development for the following reasons:

- A. The application is consistent with the intent and purposes of the planned unit development process.
- B. The concentration of facilities by the Government of France in this location would be beneficial for the District of Columbia and the United States.
- C. The PUD process is an appropriate method for controlling development of the site as a chancery.
- D. The proposed chancery would not have unmanageable negative neighborhood impacts or environmental consequences.

16. The Department of Transportation, by memorandum dated October 13, 1977 and by testimony at the hearing, reported that the application would not result in unacceptable traffic impacts. The Department developed a preliminary traffic circulation plan for Reservoir Road adjacent to the French Chancery site. The plan involves dedication by the French Government of property along its frontage to allow for the reconstruction of Reservoir Road. The reconstruction will allow for the channelization of traffic, including a storage lane for left turns into the complex. Left turns into the Georgetown Medical/Hospital complex parking garage on the south side of Reservoir Road will also be accommodated. The Department advised that, subject to working out the details of the road improvements, Reservoir Road can handle the added traffic anticipated by the French Chancery complex, provided that the French agree to measures to reduce auto trips in and out of the site. Measures could involve an employee car pool system and a shuttle bus for employees moving to and from the site to the State Department, World Bank and other primary points of contact during the normal work day.

17. The Department of Environmental Services, by report dated June 13, 1977, reported that there are available water and sanitary sewer services in the subject area to accommodate the needs of the applicant. Storm sewer service in Reservoir Road is presently inadequate to handle the proposed development, necessitating the construction of additional sewer or the provision of on-site retention facilities.

18. There was opposition to the preliminary application from one resident of Burleith, one individual representing the Georgetown Citizen's Association, and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. There was support for the application from individual neighbors, Georgetown University and Mr. Archbold. The Burleith Citizens' Association took a neutral position on the application.

19. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3B filed no report on the application.

20. There was no report from National Capital Planning Commission. However, the Municipal Planning Office reported on the status of the Foreign Missions and International Agencies element of the Comprehensive Plan, being prepared by the NCPC. That element, which was still in draft form at the time of public hearing on this application, contains a clause which states that the element will not apply to those facilities for which an application has been filed with the Zoning Commission and upon which a public hearing has been granted, and that such facilities would be deemed not inconsistent with the Foreign Missions and International Agencies element. This application was set for hearing on March 24, 1977, while the Foreign Mission element was not adopted until October 6, 1977.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The planned unit development process is an appropriate means of controlling development of the subject site, since control of the use and site plan is essential to insure compatibility with the neighborhood.

2. The development of this PUD carries out the purposes of Article 75 to encourage the development of well-planned residential and institutional developments which will offer a variety of building types with more attractive and efficient overall planning and design without sacrificing creative and imaginative planning.

3. Approval of the application would be consistent with the purposes of the Zoning Act, "to promote such distribution of land uses as would tend to create conditions favorable to health,

safety transportation, prosperity, protection of property, civic activity and recreational, educational and cultural opportunities and as would tend to further economy and efficiency of supply of public services".

4. The proposed application can be approved with conditions which would insure that development would not have an adverse effect on the surrounding community.

5. The approval of the application would promote orderly development in conformity with the entirety of the District of Columbia zone plan as embodied in the Zoning Regulations and Maps of the District of Columbia.

6. The application is not inconsistent with the Foreign Missions and International Agencies element of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

DECISION

The Zoning Commission is of the opinion that it is appropriate for the Republic of France to locate its chancery in the subject square, provided that the development should be controlled to insure that it will not have unacceptable negative effects. It is therefore ordered that the application for preliminary approval of a planned unit development in Square 1320, Lot 802, be granted subject to the following guidelines, conditions and standards:

1. An application for R-5-C zoning shall accompany the application for final approval of the planned unit development.

2. The property shall be for the exclusive use of the Government of France for its chancery and other government offices, including associated supporting and accessory uses.

3. The maximum height of all buildings and structures shall be limited to forty feet, to be measured from the grade in front of the building as shown on Exhibits 16A and 16B of the record, exclusive of roof structures permitted under Section 3308. All buildings shall set-back from the property line at least the height of the building measured from the lowest point of the finished grade.

4. The maximum floor area ratio shall be 0.4.

5. The maximum percentage of lot occupancy shall be thirty per cent.

6. There shall be a minimum of 600 off-street parking spaces and a maximum of 620 off-street parking spaces.

7. Vehicular access shall be from Reservoir Road, with the location and provision of such access to be determined in conjunction with and approved by the D.C. Department of Transportation. The applicant shall submit with the final application a car pooling and shuttle service plan for review and recommendation to the Commission by the Department of Transportation.

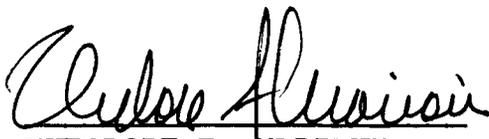
8. The final site plan shall be designed so as to satisfy the Department of Environmental Services concerning the collection and drainage of storm water run-off, so as to minimize erosion, prevent overflow of the storm sewer in Reservoir Road and minimize other adverse environmental impact.

9. The applicant shall submit a general landscape plan along with the application for final approval of the PUD. All areas not devoted to buildings, structures, access drives and above ground parking shall be appropriately landscaped so as not to change the character of the area.

10. No site grading or other change in the existing character of the property shall take place prior to approval of the final application by the Zoning Commission.

11. The final design of the complex shall be based on the plans presented to the Zoning Commission with the preliminary application, as amended at hearing, and marked as Exhibit No. 5 in the record.

Vote of the Commission taken at the public meeting on November 10, 1977: 4-0 (Theodore F. Mariani, Walter B. Lewis, Ruby B. McZier and George M. White to grant, John G. Parsons not voting not having participated in the case)



THEODORE F. MARIANI
Chairman



STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

This order was adopted by the Zoning Commission at its public meeting held on December 8, 1977 by a vote of 4-0 (George M. White, Ruby B. McZier, and Walter B. Lewis to adopt, Theodore F. Mariani to adopt by proxy, John G. Parsons not voting not having participated in the case).

In accordance with Section 2.61 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure before the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia, this order is effective on 16 DEC 1977.