Design Review Board Case #2014-0004
315 Stoval Street – Hoffman Block 2 – TSA

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Hoffman Block 2 – TSA Center **Location:** 315 Stoval Street (Block 2) **Applicant:** The JBG Companies, Inc, Represented by Cathy Puskar Architect: HOK	**DRB Date:**	December 18, 2014
	Site Area:	3.27 acres
	Zone:	CDD#2
	Proposed Use:	Office
	Proposed Gross Floor Area:	661,387 sf

Purpose of Application:

Stage II DSUP for an office building with above grade structured parking for the Transportation Safety Administration on Block 2 of the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan.

Staff Reviewers: Thomas H. Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov
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I. OVERVIEW

As mentioned in previous reports for this application, Hoffman Management, Inc is responding to an RFQ by the Transportation Safety Administration for a potential new headquarters building to be located on Block 2 of the Hoffman properties in the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan. Amendments to the Stage I DSUP, the Master Plan and CDD #2 have been approved by City Council in November, 2014 to transfer floor area from Blocks 4 and 9 to Block 2, and for increased building height up to 260 feet, in order to meet the requirement for an approximately 660,000 AGFA office building.

More recently, The JBG Companies have become the contract purchasers of Block 2 and introduced a different building design to the DRB in November than what was reviewed in October, 2014. Because of this sudden change, the applicant's architect, HOK, was not able to produce architectural plans and elevations until the day of the November 20th DRB hearing. Consequently, the DRB reviewed HOK's building design for the first time as a worksession. Comments from that session are provided herein as *Attachment #1*.

The applicant has filed a Stage II DSUP with the City for public hearings in February, 2015. It is anticipated that another DRB hearing will be needed in January 2015 for final design recommendations. An aggressive review schedule for final site plan and building permit approval is anticipated if Block 2 is awarded the contract in order to start construction in August of 2015.

II. BACKGROUND

Site Context

The site consists of approximately 3.2 acres and is bounded by Pershing Avenue to the north, Eisenhower Avenue to the south, Stoval Street to the east, and the Telegraph Rd/I-495 ramp to the west (see attached block map). To the south of the site, across Eisenhower Avenue, is Block 1, the existing Holiday Inn site. To the east, across Stoval Street, is Hoffman Town Center. The site is currently paved as a parking lot, although the lot is not being used for parking at this time. Access to the site will be from Taylor Road to the south and Pershing Avenue to the north. Taylor Road is accessed from eastbound Eisenhower Avenue, where it loops back under to connect to Block 2 to the north. The site is approximately 600 feet (0.1 mi.) from the Eisenhower Metro Station and the future National Science Foundation site to the east.

Process

The Hoffman blocks have an approval process that was created out of a settlement agreement between Hoffman Company and the City in 2006. As a result, a Stage I & II DSUP process was established outside the normal City DSUP process. A Stage I DSUP was approved for all the Hoffman blocks at that time, which established certain site design elements such as access, parking and loading, open space, sidewalk widths and building footprints, along with AGFA and building height in conformance with the master plan and CDD.

The Stage I DSUP, Master Plan and CDD were recently amended to reflect the additional floor area and building height needed to address the programmatic requirements of TSA. A Stage II DSUP has been filed with the City for full site and building design approval in February, 2015.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Site Access

Site access continues to be an issue being discussed by City Staff. There are two access points to the site that are shown on the site plan; from Pershing Avenue to the north of the site, which has been slightly relocated to the east from the original submission, and from Taylor Road to the south. City Staff are continuing to work with the applicant to resolve the access issue. One alternative that staff has asked the applicant to explore is access off of Eisenhower Avenue, directly into the second level of the parking garage. If it turns out to be a viable alternative, access from Pershing Avenue may not be needed. Additionally, the applicant has shown a layby/drop off area in front of the main entrance to the building along Stoval Street. Staff is not in support of this layby area in its current configuration. See discussion below under Entry Geometry.

Open Space

The applicant has provided some further information about the open space plan for this application. A significant portion of the open space will be located behind high security fencing along the property line (See Security discussion below). The majority of usable public open space area tends to be oriented near the main building entrance facing the corner of Eisenhower Avenue and Stoval Street where a wide entry walkway connects to the public sidewalk via an elevated plaza (See Entry Geometry discussion below). Behind the pedestrian plaza is a bosk of trees, and then the grade slopes down to light wells that allow light to the lower level of the building. The design is conceptual at this time, and the applicant should provide additional design information at the hearing for DRB consideration.

Building Design

Footprint and massing:

The typical floor plate has been enlarged since the last DRB meeting, and the tower height has been reduced by one floor (see Illustration A). The result is an even squatter-proportioned massing. This problem is compounded by the use of the same building skin on all sides, such that the entire form, in spite of its minor ins and outs in plan, reads as a single, heavy mass, with a flat top and a prominent mechanical penthouse.

In order to create a more elegant and vertical expression, staff recommends that the tower form be much more strongly articulated. This could be accomplished by breaking the mass down into two smaller, more vertical components, one of which could absorb the elevator and mechanical components and rise a story or more above the lower piece. Using a different, but

related, skin treatment for each of the two components would further refine the proportions of the tower. This would accomplish a number of goals: more variety in height and mass; a strong skyline; and integration of otherwise distracting mechanical and elevator functions, while potentially creating a large, useable rooftop open space on the lower tower half (see Illustrations B & C).

There is a suggestion in the current graphics of glassy hyphens between sections of the tower skin. These could play a strong role in achieving the massing refinements discussed above, but they should contrast much more strongly with the predominant building skin, and should also be made narrower and more dramatic.

Finally, the two low rise elements, including the large two story north wing that faces Stovall and Pershing, and the smaller glass "knuckle" at the building entry, appear to be completely unrelated to the rest of the building visually. Their design should be integrated with the overall concept for form and cladding. For example, the entry "knuckle" could be resolved as an evolution and outgrowth of the building hyphen facing east, while the large north wing could be either an integral part of the tower skin vocabulary, or read as a more solid plinth or base element (see Illustration D). Either way, both of these components read as tacked on in the current design.

Entry geometry:

Staff continues to have concerns about the lack of a geometric relationship between the entry "bridge" and the pedestrian arrival point at the corner of Eisenhower and Stovall, and points out that the rotation of this element *away* from Eisenhower has also resulted in a strongly pinched open space at the garden level to the north of the bridge. There is an opportunity to create a strong urban pedestrian connection here, which has not been fully realized (see examples, Illustration E).

Staff also does not support the layby area shown along Stovall Street in its current configuration. The layby as shown creates an awkward jog in the sidewalk. Staff would support parallel parking the length of the block in this location. This would provide a more generous arrival area for cars and a waiting space for taxis, shuttles and other vehicles serving the building.

Parking Garage:

Given the visual prominence and essentially 270-degree exposure of this large structure, it needs to receive considerably more design attention. The current proposal appears to be a bare-bones concrete structure, with a minimal covering of GreenScreen as the only gesture to the public. At a minimum, this structure should receive a substantial degree of architectural articulation, which could include such elements as: the use of more solid façade elements to break down the relentless horizontals and make this read as more of a "building"; highly detailed expression of the vertical circulation elements, incorporating glass and other quality materials; and a judicious use of GreenScreen or integral planters to soften the garage overall (see examples, Illustration F)

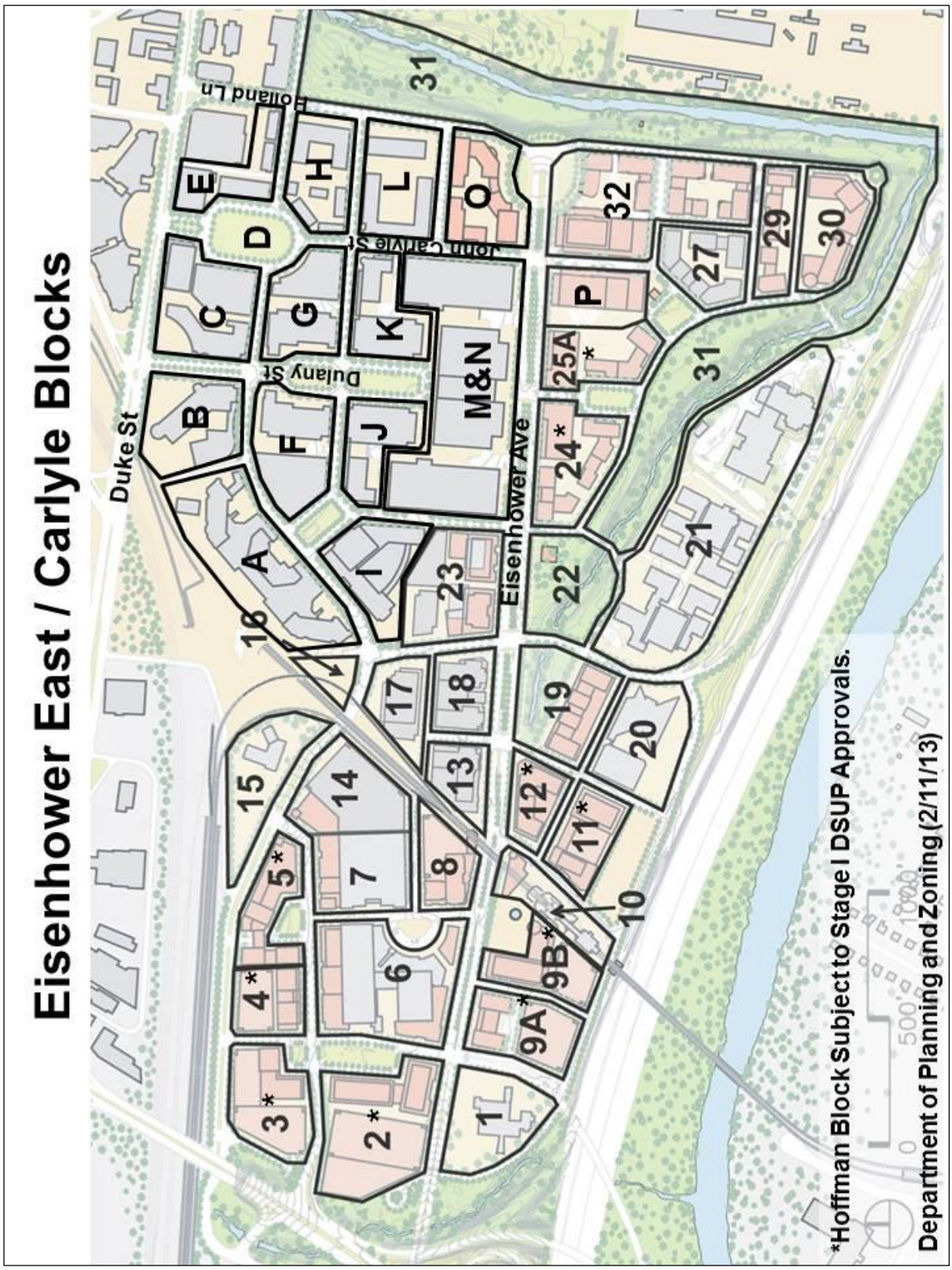
Security Measures:

Staff does not support the use of the high K-12 fencing along public rights-of-way where a high volume of pedestrian traffic is expected, since this is not an appropriate urban use or expression. Required security in these areas (essentially from the proposed entrance along Pershing, south along Stovall, and west along Eisenhower until it is not visible from the bridge) should be achieved through methods that read as landscape design elements, rather than a barricade (see examples, Illustration G).

IV. CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that the DRB give comment on building design, garage design, and the site design issues as discussed above. Another DRB hearing will be scheduled in January, 2015 to review refinements to the building and site design.

Figure 1


Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks
Duke St
Holland Ln
Dulany St
John Carlyle St
Eisenhower Ave
M&N
*Hoffman Block Subject to Stage I DSUP Approvals.
Department of Planning and Zoning (2/11/13)

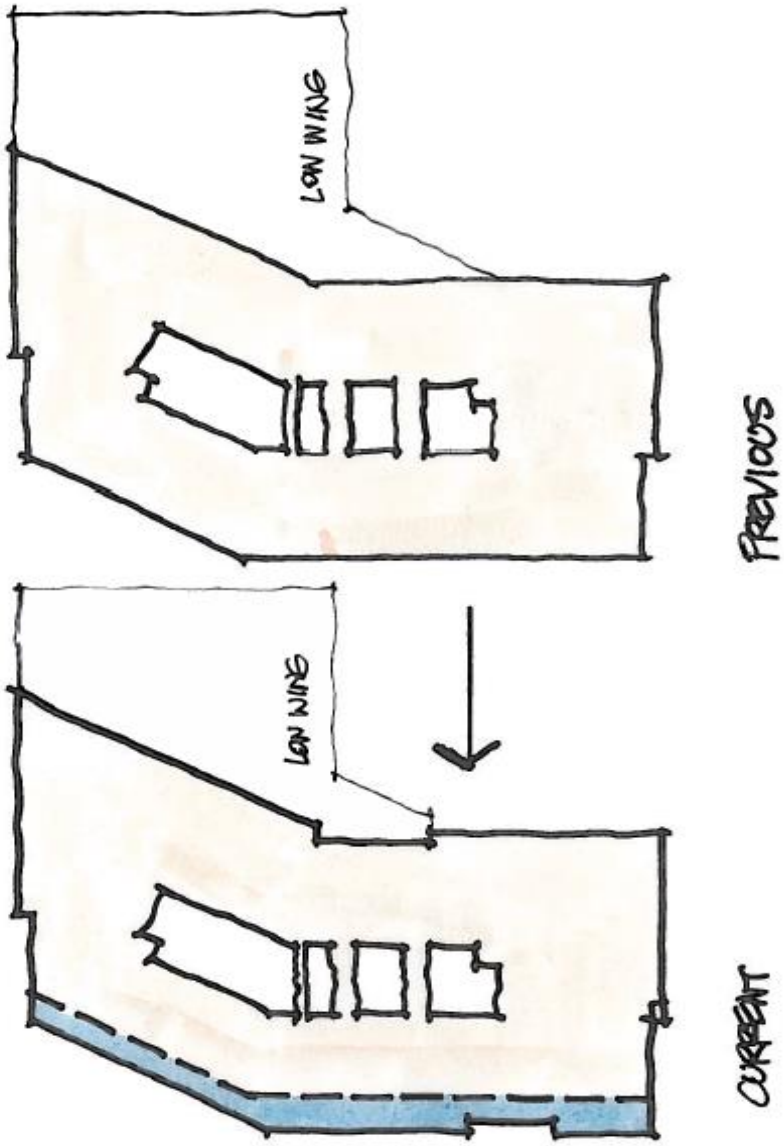


Illustration A

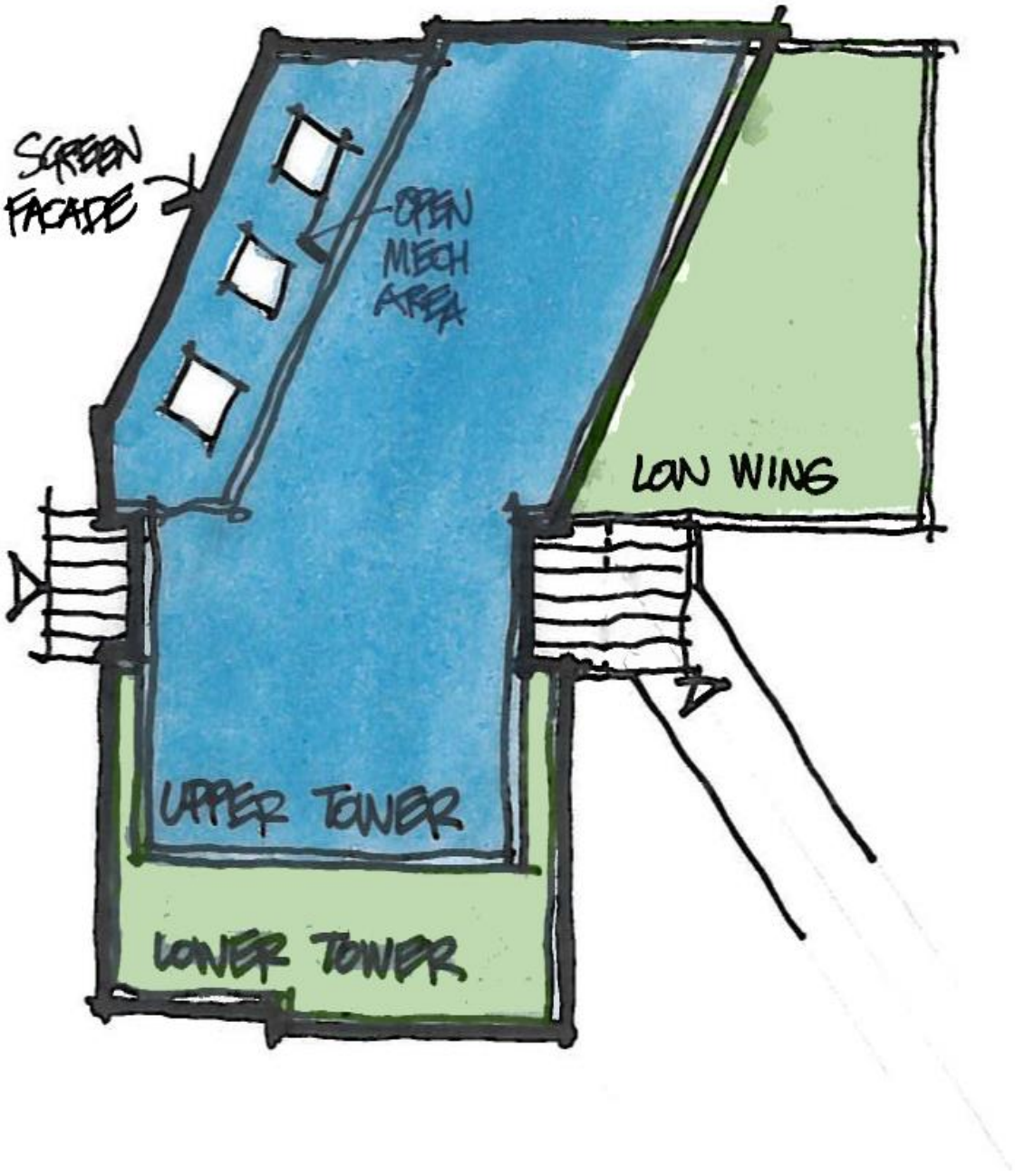


Illustration B

Illustration C

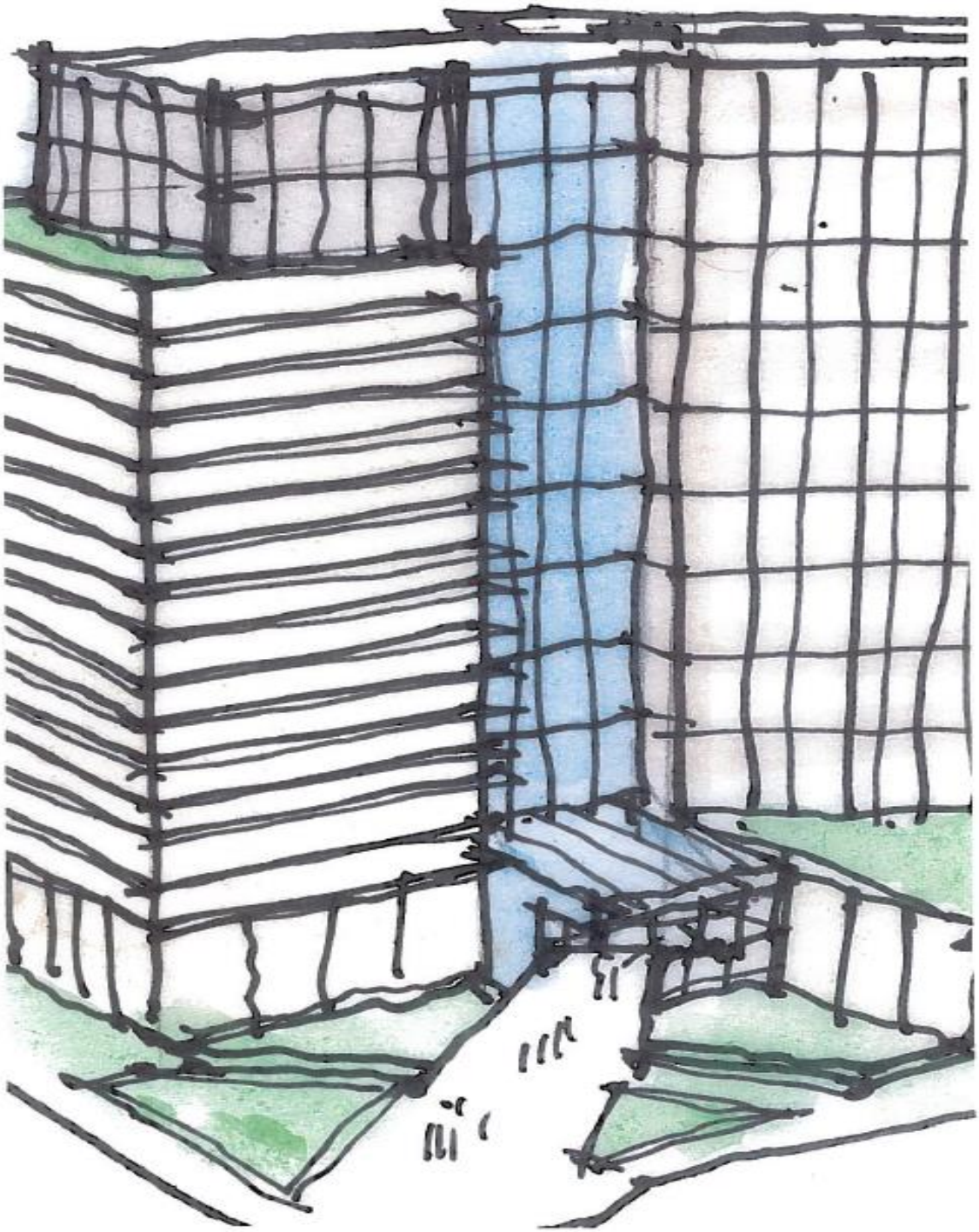


Illustration D

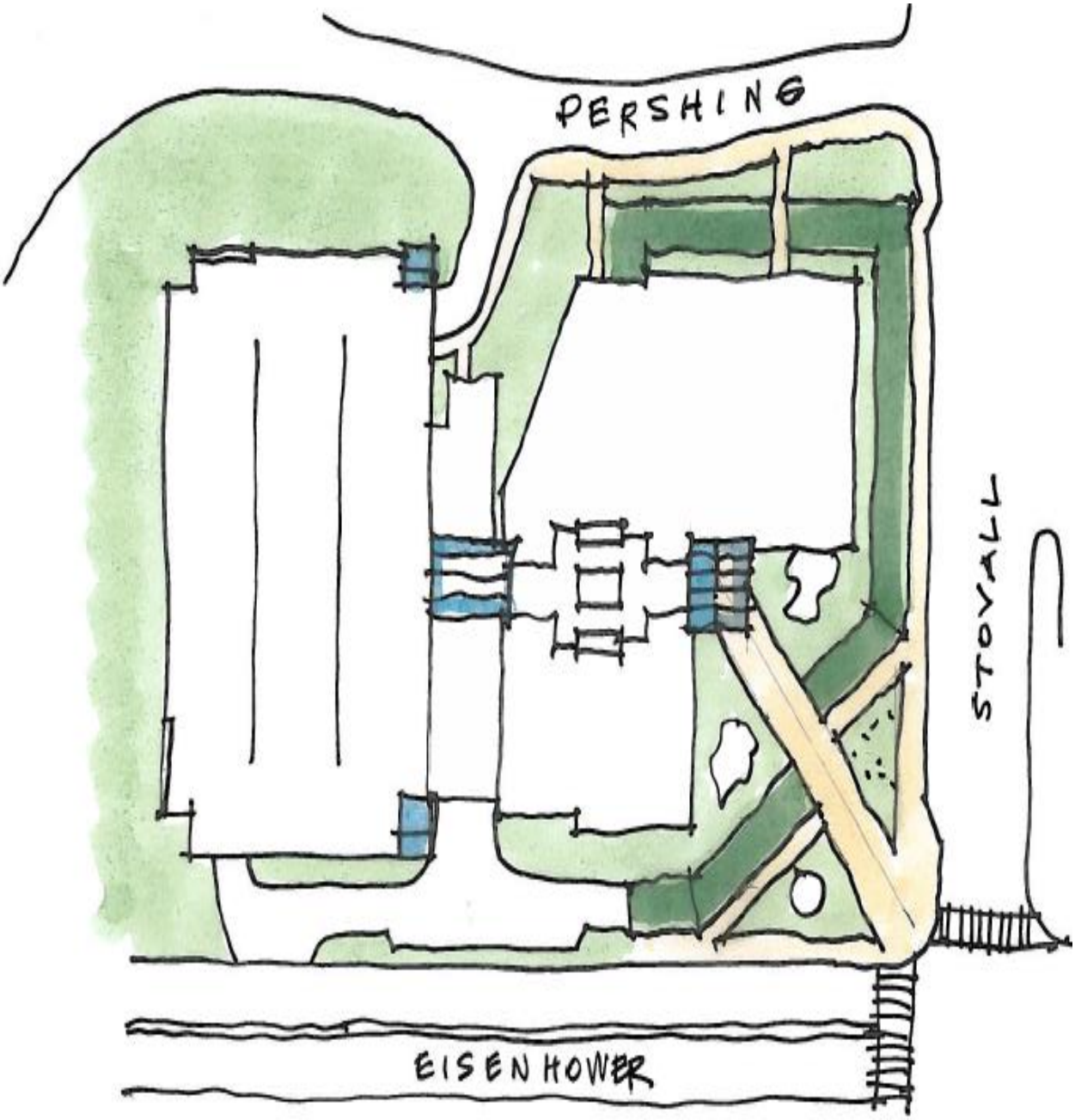


Illustration E

Illustration F

Illustration G

Attachment #1

City of Alexandria Carlyle/Eisenhower East Design Review Board Public Hearing *Agenda*

Thursday, November 20, 2014
7:00 pm
Chet & Sabra Avery Room
Room 2000, City Hall

1. Call to order

2. DRB #2014-0003: **Hoffman Block 2**
   315 Stovall Street
   Design review of an amendment to previously approved Stage 1 Development Special Use Permit #2005-0031 for increased density, height, and revised massing at a commercial office building at Hoffman Block 2.
   By: Kristi Smith, The JBG Companies; Chloe Hiyu, Bill Hellmuth, HOK; Michael J. Perine, Hoffman LLC.

3. Other Business

4. Adjournment

Summary of Notes (Hoffman 2)

1. Building Design (Eastern & Western Facades): The proposed design needs further interaction between the dark and light facades, including with the ground floors and (potentially) penthouse area. The lower floors need more interaction with the site and visual interest, including: Elements extending up from the ground floors; consideration of a rooftop terrace on level two and (potentially) the penthouse; and, emphasis on the pedestrian experience from the SE corner towards the main building entrance.

2. Parking Garage / Access: The proposed design continues to show left turn movements off of Pershing Ave. westbound into the parking garage, which is

prohibited in the Stage 1 DSUP conditions. Alternative design treatments for the deceleration lane off of the I-495 off-ramp have not been shown. Additionally, vehicular access across the SE corner of the site is challenging due to the loading dock requirements (i.e. screening) and location of Dominion Power transformers at the Stovall – Eisenhower intersection (location of transformers was not verified).

3. Building Orientation & Site Design: There is considerable interest in emphasizing the pedestrian experience as occupants enter the main entrance, through a coherent architectural treatment on the ground floors as well as an increased "bridge" experience, perhaps by the extension of sunken gardens.

4. Fencing: The applicant introduced a requirement for a K-12 security fence; clearer delineation of this fence on the drawings was requested, as was the consideration of alternative K-12 barrier systems.

Transcript Notes (Hoffman 2)

Comments Key: A/D = Architect/Developer; LQ = Lee Quill; RL = Roger Lewis; JC = John Chapman; AB = Alvin Boone; TC = Tom Canfield.

1. AD: K-12 fencing, min. 2400' feet = required.
2. AB: Is a K-12 barrier, rather than a fence, acceptable?

3. TC: The fence line needs to be clarified on the site plans.

4. KS: The tenant requires security screening to enter the loading area; a delta barrier is required. The loading area is considered "expendable," though it requires a separate HVAC system.

5. AB: It will be a building within a building.

6. RL: Tonight we need to focus on design, not security measures.

7. AD: The longer elevation faces E-W, which is not ideal from an energy perspective. The building contains precast facades in two colors, evoking two boomerangs intersecting.

8. RL: The building looks very heavy on the front side (facing East); the western side benefits from a stronger vertical grammar, but this results in a disconnect between the two sides.

9. LQ: The idea of how the front two plans work together is important. On the back, the view from the roads is important. The team should explore the

planar elements to create vitality, interest.

10. AD: It may be helpful to disrupt the front skin at the entrance with more vertical elements [TC, too].

11. RL: The second story roof treatment needs to be explored more thoroughly.

12. RL: Should the building feature 8' concrete beams on the corner rather than office areas? The corners are very visible, maybe something should happen here.

13. LQ: Is there an opportunity for first floor glass to rise up the façade? It may be possible to "get more play" with the same system by extending first floor elements up.

    Also, Stovall's one to two floors (i.e. conference area) need to liven up a bit.

14. TC: One opportunity is for the light skin or dark skin to grab the penthouse; it could improve the vertical/horizontal relationship.

15. AB: A rooftop terrace on the second level should be explored.

16. LQ: Green screens likely won't work on the north side of the parking garage; considering this, what is your plan here? What is the pattern beneath that will be revealed in winter on the north side? We should not see wires.

17. RL: What is the program for the park on the SE corner?

18. AD: It may be worth considering extending the sunken garden.

19. TC: Let the bridge experience be a true bridge experience.

20. RL: The pedestrian experience can really highlight/emphasize the main entrance.

21. LQ: It's important to ask "Who is this building for?" The amenities/park should speak to this.

22. RL: For SE corner access, could use a combination of soft- and hardscape surfaces.

23. AD: Dominion transformers at SE corner can't be moved. [Applicant envisions left of off Pershing Ave. westbound into parking garage.]

24. TA: Per the Stage 1 DSUP conditions, has the free right from Pershing Ave. eastbound been eliminated?

25. AD: Yes, but you can't shift building any closer due to the 50' setback requirements.