

Square Guidelines

Square 491

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Square Guidelines: Square 491

Along with The Pennsylvania Avenue Plan – 1974 and its amendments, the General Guidelines, and other adopted policies, programs, regulations, and guidelines, these Square Guidelines will control development on Square 491 and form the bias for the PADC Board of Directors to grant preliminary approval to development proposals and for the Chairman to grant final approval to development proposals, as outlined in the Development Polices and Procedures.

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A. Introduction

Square 491 is bounded by John Marshall Park, Pennsylvania Avenue, C Street, and 6th Street. It is one of the squares on the eastern boundary of the Pennsylvania Quarter neighborhood, which is becoming a new residential community in the heart of Washington's downtown. The establishment of this residential community is one of the important objectives of the Plan. Square 491 has two parcels, A and B. Parcel A, the eastern half of the square is occupied by the Canadian Embassy, build in accordance with the PADC Square Guidelines. Parcel B currently has a District of Columbia four-story office building slated for demolition.

B. Planning and Urban Design Objectives

Square 491 occupies a critical location in the PADC area at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Constitution Avenue. It is also located adjacent to an important L'Enfant Plan vista along the axis of John Marshall Place, now known as John Marshall Park.

Along the axis of Pennsylvania Avenue, Square 491 is the first block along the processional route from the Capitol to the White House to establish the diagonal building line on the north side of the Avenue. Therefore, new development on the square must maintain the continuity of the Avenue facade and be compatible in scale with the buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Because of the large open area at the intersection of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, development on Square 491 will also be highly visible from Constitution Avenue. The design of new development should recognize the importance of the vistas along both Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues.

The new development on Square 491 must be designed so that it provides a gradual transition in scale and character from monumental buildings and spaces of the Mall and the John Marshall Park axis to the smaller-scaled residential and commercial areas of the Historic Preservation Zone, beginning immediately to the west on Squares 459 and 460, in the Pennsylvania Quarter neighborhood. Development on Square 491 should include active uses that are adjacent to the sidewalk setback area in order to encourage pedestrian movement between the National Gallery and the retail and arts uses in Pennsylvania Quarter neighborhood. Retail uses should provide services to residents, tourists, and office workers alike, and should also be planned with consideration given to the proximity of Square 491 to the National Gallery and the emerging arts community along 7th Street.

The new building on Parcel B should respect and respond to the adjacent Canadian Embassy, especially to the plane of the Embassy's Pennsylvania Avenue facade and its horizontal building lines.

C. Specific Urban Design and Planning Guidelines

1. Coordinated Planning Area

The coordinated planning area is comprised of Square 491 and adjacent sidewalk areas

2. Development Parcels

Square 491 shall be developed as no more than two development parcels as follows:

- Parcel A – That portion of the Square 491 east of a north-south line established 289 feet east of the 6th Street right-of-way line, but not including the Pennsylvania Avenue and John Marshall Park setbacks. (Land owned by the Canadian Government, as shown in Diagram 1.)
- Parcel B – The remainder of Square 491 west of Parcel A.

3. Comprehensive Planning and Design

Development on Square 491 shall be coordinated with the Corporation's overall treatment of John Marshall Park and Pennsylvania Avenue, and shall take into account existing buildings as well as developments anticipated by The Plan on the surrounding squares.

4. Uses

Square 491 shall be primarily devoted to office use, including chanceries and international agencies, with ground floor retail, museum and residential uses.

Parcel B shall contain approximately 410,000 gross square feet above grade. The ground floor shall be primarily devoted to museum and retail uses that will encourage lively activities at the street level. Uses that generate a low level of activity or engage in business for a limited period of time during the day are discouraged along Pennsylvania Avenue. The museum and retail space on the ground level fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue shall be directly accessible from the Avenue.

Off-street, below-grade parking, adequate to serve all uses is required to service the entire square. In determining the amount of parking provided, developers shall consider the following factors:

- a. The Corporation's Environmental Impact Assessment recommends several mitigating measures to ensure an adequate parking supply. The Corporation will review each development project to determine the potential to provide additional levels of off-street parking. Developers are encouraged to institute measures to ensure maximum utilization of parking facilities, including joint use arrangements and special rates for car pools and van pools.
- b. The parking policy described in the Plan and the General Guidelines establishes the maximum amount of parking allowed in the area as a whole. The policy is designed to maintain acceptable air quality, to encourage use of Metrorail, and to support the economic viability of development projects.
- c. Limitations on on-street parking in the downtown area will make it more difficult than in established residential areas for residents to find on-street parking.
- d. The area is well served by Metrorail, with the stations located at Archives/Navy memorial and Gallery Place/Chinatown. Vehicular access is not permitted from 6th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. A single access for off-street parking is permitted for each development.

5. Building Restriction Line and Sidewalk Setback

Building restriction lines are established as follows:

- Along the Pennsylvania Avenue and C Street frontages, the building restriction line shall be the property line.
- In accordance with the Building Code, architectural articulations, minor architectural embellishments, and canopies at ground level may project into the air space beyond the building restriction lines.

6. Build-to Line

Build-to lines are established at the following locations:

- Along Pennsylvania Avenue, with the design of the street wall taking into account the need to transition from the setback along

the Canadian Embassy to the street wall establish by 601 Pennsylvania Avenue to the west.

- Along the entire length of C Street, provided that an arcade of approximately seven feet may be provided on the first floor
- Along the entire length of the east property line of Parcel B, next to the Canadian Embassy from the ground level to the 80-foot height level. Above 80 feet, new construction must be setback a minimum of 25 feet to articulate the strong horizontal line created by the Canadian Embassy at this height. Above 80 feet, the C Street residential wing shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet next to the Canadian Embassy.

7. Height of Development

For Parcel A, the maximum height of development shall be the upper cornice line of the U.S. District Courthouse, which is approximately 90 feet.

For Parcel B, the building may include a terrace facing Pennsylvania Avenue at a height of approximately 80 feet. The building, including shade structures or trellises with open sides above the terrace, shall not exceed 95 feet in height for a depth of 50 feet from the Pennsylvania Avenue property line, except for roof structures which shall not exceed 105 feet. The roof structures on this roof shall not occupy more than ten percent of the roof area. The building shall not exceed 110 feet in height for a depth of between 50 feet and 100 feet from the Pennsylvania Avenue property line, except for roof structures which shall not exceed 115 feet. The roof structures on this roof shall not occupy more than ten percent of the roof area. The building shall not exceed a height of 140 feet for a depth of between 100 feet and 170 feet, except for roof structures which shall be permitted to extend 5 feet above the maximum height of the building. The roof structures on the highest roof shall not occupy more than twenty percent of the roof area. The portion of the building that extends for a depth of more than 170 feet from the Pennsylvania Avenue property line shall not exceed 127 feet, except for roof structures which shall not exceed 137 feet. New development exceeding the 80-foot height of the Canadian Embassy must be designed with great sensitivity.

8. Build-to Height

For Parcel A, along the entire length of the Pennsylvania Avenue and John Marshall Park build-to lines, development is subject to a build-to height equal to the lower cornice line of the U. S. District Courthouse, which is approximately 65 feet.

Parcel B is subject to a build-to height along the Pennsylvania Avenue property line of approximately 80 feet that is consistent with the lower cornice line of the Canadian Embassy, which is approximately 80 feet high.

9. Roof Structures

Wherever possible, roof structures should be located so that they are not visible from the street. All roof structures should be attractively designed as integral parts of the overall building composition. The designer should treat roof structures as positive elements in terms of the building massing and architectural expression, rather than attempting to meet only the minimum requirements specified in the D.C. Zoning Regulations. Roof structures should maintain the same quality of materials, design interest, and architectural detail as other parts of the building facade.

All permanent roof structures shall be set back a distance equal to their respective heights from the edges of the roofs that front all streets.

Roof structures shall comply with the District of Columbia Zoning Regulations.

10. Pedestrian Features

Weather protection is to be considered along Pennsylvania Avenue and the side streets.

11. Subsurface Restrictions

Vaults are permitted under public rights-of-way. Vault locations and configurations shall be consistent with the Corporation's Public Improvements Program, Side Street Program, and other applicable plans and programs.

Vaults may extend up to 12 feet from the lot line, but not within 20 feet of the Pennsylvania Avenue curb or 10 feet of the other curbs. Vaults between the Pennsylvania Avenue building restriction line and the Pennsylvania Avenue curb must be at least seven feet below the sidewalk.

Electrical transformer vaults are prohibited within the Pennsylvania Avenue sidewalk, sidewalk setback, and John Marshall Park setback areas. Where possible, all connections to water, gas, electric, telephone, and sewer lines shall be from C Street or 6th Street.

12. Curb Cuts

Curb cuts are permitted only on C Street. The number of curb cuts shall be limited to the minimum as prescribed in the District of Columbia Zoning Regulations.

13. Off-Street Loading

Each development is permitted a single access for off-street loading. Any loading berth that abuts any sidewalk shall be designed so as to minimize adverse visual impacts on the street. The hours when the bay doors of the loading dock will be open shall be limited. Trucks may not park on the sidewalk but must pull directly into the loading berths inside the bays.

14. Special Design Requirements

As stated under the Planning and Urban Design Objectives above, the development on Parcel B will play a very important role in defining space at the confluence of Pennsylvania Avenue and Constitution Avenue.

The architect of any development team is expected to work closely with the staff of the Corporation during the design phase of the project. Although all elements of the design for the building exterior and the interior public spaces will be subject to the Corporation's review, the following elements are considered especially important:

- The building footprint and massing;
- The facades along Pennsylvania Avenue and John Marshall Park, particularly with regard to cornices, edges, entrances, and other features of the street level frontages;
- The building configuration at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 6th Street, which will provide a visual anchor and architectural transition from the Canadian Embassy to the building at 601 Pennsylvania Avenue;
- The facades along 6th and C Streets;
- The treatment of any exposed walls along the lot line separating Parcel A and B;
- The transition from a lower height on Parcel A to any proposed higher heights on Parcel B;
- The portion of any proposed development above 80 feet;

- The pedestrian environment created at the ground level by the arrangement of uses and the physical setting along John Marshall Park and all streets, particularly Pennsylvania Avenue;
- The relationship to and coordination with public improvements along Pennsylvania Avenue and John Marshall Park;
- The retail plan;
- The coordination of office, retail, and service uses;
- Awnings, canopies, or other means of weather protection;
- Any interior court or atrium provided;
- Structures and planting incidental to rooftop use;
- Location of rooftop mechanical equipment areas; and
- Access to off-street parking and loading.

