



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

DATE: October 3, 2023

TO: Old Town North Urban Design Advisory Committee (UDAC)

FROM: Planning & Zoning Staff

SUBJECT: Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) – Block C (First Review)

Introduction

The applicant, Hilco Redevelopment Partners (HRP), have submitted their Concept 2 submissions for Block C as part of the redevelopment process of the Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS). The applicant team is seeking UDAC's feedback on the proposed site configuration, architectural approach and conformity with the PRGS Design Excellence approach. The UDAC website contains a link to the applicant's presentation.

In addition to the presentation on the UDAC website, the applicant team has completed the Design Excellence Matrix for the sitewide prerequisites (to be confirmed by City staff) and the criteria (to be reviewed and potentially endorsed by UDAC) for each building and their justification for each building's compliance with the criteria. For this initial submission, staff has responded to each Design Prerequisite with our confirmation that the building complies, or in areas where compliance is not clear, suggested a continued refinement for the proposed building or site design to meet the Design Excellence Criteria. Please see staff responses below in addition to the Design Excellence Matrix.

Broadly, each building is either achieving or working towards achieving the Design Excellence Criteria and staff will provide with the next UDAC submission where we find continued work on the building or site design is important and still needed to achieve the Design Excellence Prerequisites and Criteria's intent for excellence.

Prerequisites:

Prerequisite 1: Superior Urban Form

- **Staff Response:** *Working towards.* Block C is one of the largest blocks on the site and a design intent of the CDD is that it be perceived as multiple buildings. From the water side and Road A, the block reads clearly as two distinct buildings, each with its own architectural character, materiality and design. However, the southeast elevation along Road B continues to appear too massive, without a clear building break between its

different vocabularies, which should occur at the alley (the CDD requires an alley on this block and allows for only *limited* portions to be closed to the sky). Recognizing the prominent location of this building on the site and adjacency to both the waterfront park and plaza, staff recommends that the design be further refined at the alley and along Road B to provide a stronger break between the two building elements on this elevation. A skylight for a portion of the enclosed alley (fully glazed if required for sound abatement) is also recommended. Additionally, the north side of the building, adjacent to the Central Plaza, should be designed to holistically interact with this key public open space and to limit privatization of the space, specifically, by reducing the size of the condo lobby on this frontage.

Prerequisite 2: Environmental Innovation Leader

- **Staff Response:** *Will satisfy.* As the PRGS site includes a Coordinated Sustainability Strategy that each block will employ, staff is comfortable that this will be achieved yet notes that sufficient information has not as of yet been provided.

Prerequisite 3: Quality and Durable Building Materials are Specified

- **Staff Response:** *Satisfied.* The proposed materials are high-quality, durable, and will withstand the test of time.

Prerequisite 4: Off-street Parking is located below grade.

- **Staff Response:** *Satisfied.*

Prerequisite 5: Exceptional Site Response

- **Staff Response:** *Working towards.* The applicant team should continue to work on this prerequisite to ensure that the building is integrated with its waterfront and plaza setting, with a welcoming and dynamic interaction with the adjacent public open space. The applicant should develop unique amenities, such as rooftop open space with elements that activate the roofs. This building should be designed to engage with the public and adjacent open space rather than unintentionally privatize the adjacent plaza. The building should frame views and access to the waterfront, and the retail and lobby portions of the base should reflect a high degree of design, variety of materials, and thoughtful detailing.