

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2018

TO: URBAN DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (UDAC)

FROM: ROB KERNS, CHIEF OF DEVELOPMENT, DEPT. OF PLANNING & ZONING

SUBJECT: 600 N. ROYAL STREET (WMATA BUS BARN SITE)

The Urban Design Advisory Committee (UDAC) is scheduled to review the proposal for redevelopment of the WMATA Bus Barn site on December 12. This will be the Committee's third review of the proposal. This third submission focuses on the N. Royal Street elevation, which UDAC last tasked the applicant with developing further to address: 1) The treatment of the parking garage entrance as viewed from the pedestrian level, and 2) Providing additional depth to the 70-foot high portion of the N. Royal Street façade. Staff finds the exhibits provided in this current submission successfully satisfy these comments by bringing the parking garage door closer to the street, expanding the courtyard amenity space above the garage ramp, and softening this edge through the use of planters which step down to the street level. Further, additional depth and projection is introduced on the N. Royal Street façade with a 2-foot setback between the lower and upper façade elements, incorporation of inset bays with brick returns at the columns at the lower façade and the addition of Juliet balconies on the second floor.

Overall, Staff finds the project complies with the Old Town North Small Area Plan (OTNSAP) and the principles set forth by the OTNSAP Urban Design Standards & Guidelines with exception of the 2 standards listed below. Variation from an Urban Design Standard must be reviewed by UDAC and considered as part of the Committee's endorsement of the project.

- **Standard 2.2. Building Heights-Transitions:** Building height transitions shall be required at the locations shown on Figure 2.04 and shall utilize approaches such as building setbacks, stepbacks, building shoulders, landscape buffers and/or courtyards, but not limited to those depicted in Figure 2.05.

Staff Analysis: Figure 2.04 indicates that building height transitions are required on N. Pitt Street and Pendleton Street. The transitions proposed on these streets include a courtyard on N. Pitt Street and landscape buffers along both frontages. While the proposed transitions strive to meet the intent of this Standard, the extent of the height transition is limited on these specific blockfaces in comparison to the diagrams shown in Figure 2.05.

- **Standard 2.3 Building Heights-Variety:** Each multi-family building (excluding 2/2 stacked townhouses) shall provide a minimum of 15% to 25% of the building footprint below the maximum provided height (Figure 2.06). The specific allocation of the variation shall be determined as part of the development review process.

Staff Analysis: The applicant proposes variation in building height throughout the entire building (or block), rather than within the individual 50-foot portion and 70-foot portion of the building as the Standard implies. Variation from this standard is requested as the project is utilizing Section 7-

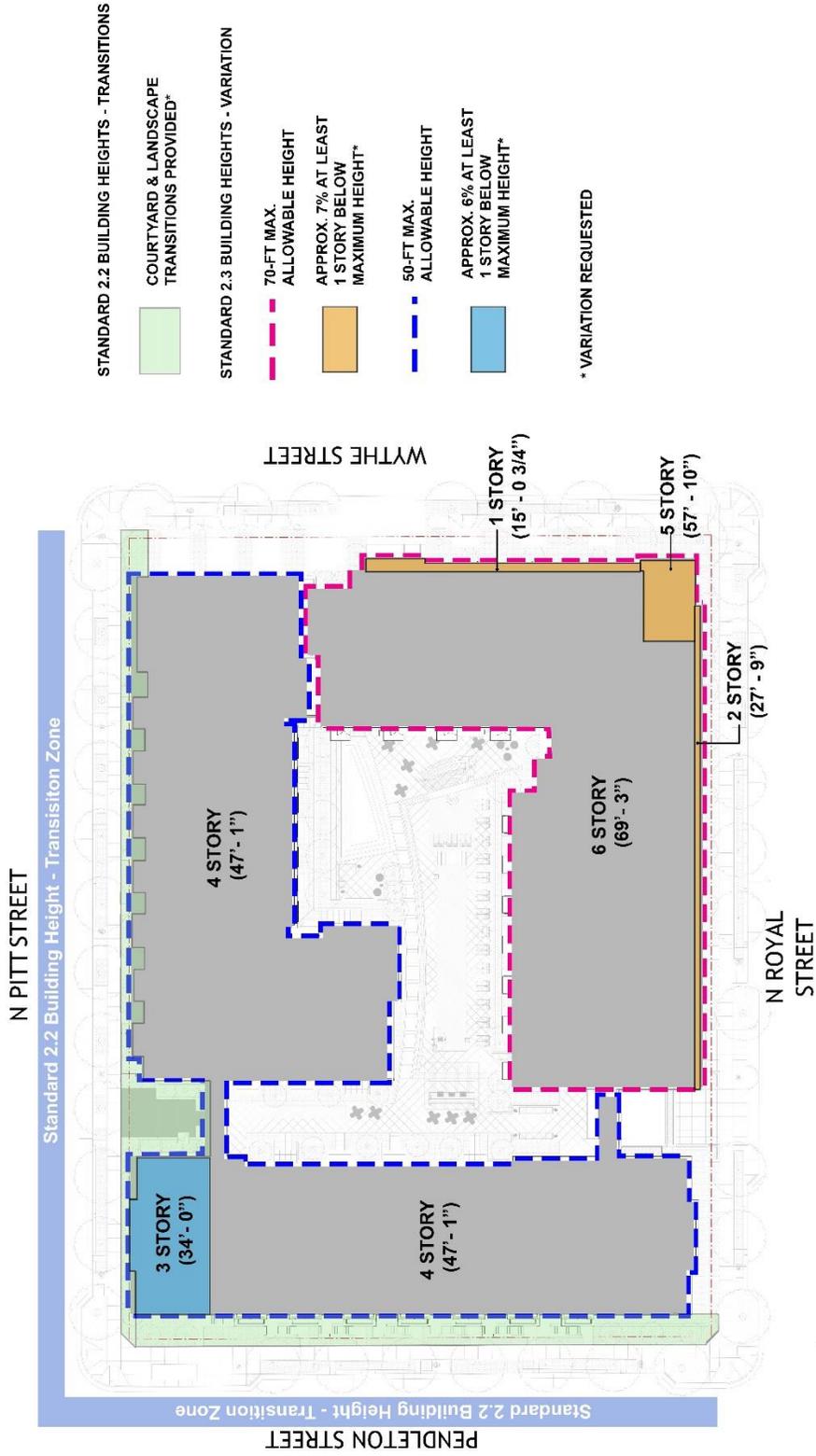
700 of the Zoning Ordinance for the provision of affordable housing, which is a recommendation of the Old Town North Small Area Plan, without an increase in the maximum allowable building height.

The attached diagram (Attachment #1) illustrates the variety of building heights as proposed and the areas of proposed building height transitions on N. Pitt Street and Pendleton Street. A memorandum prepared by the applicant is included with this submission which further demonstrates the proposal's compliance with each of the Urban Design Standards & Guidelines to assist in UDAC's review.

Staff Recommendation

Staff finds that the applicant has responded positively to both Staff and UDAC's comments since the initial submission of the project in September 2018 and supports the variations as described above. Staff recommends UDAC's endorsement of this project for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council in February 2019.

Attachment #1 – Proposed Building Height Variations and Transitions



Applicable Pages From Old Town North – Urban Design Standards & Guidelines

2.2 Building Heights – Transitions

2.2 Building Heights - Transitions

To ensure appropriate massing and scale between new and existing developments, the Design Standards and Guidelines require appropriate building height transitions where buildings either step down in height and/or provide courtyards, building setbacks, building shoulders, and/or landscaping is provided to buffer new developments and adjoining lower height properties in the areas depicted in Figure 2.04. The appropriate transition approach will be approved as part of the development review process, based on the context of the site.

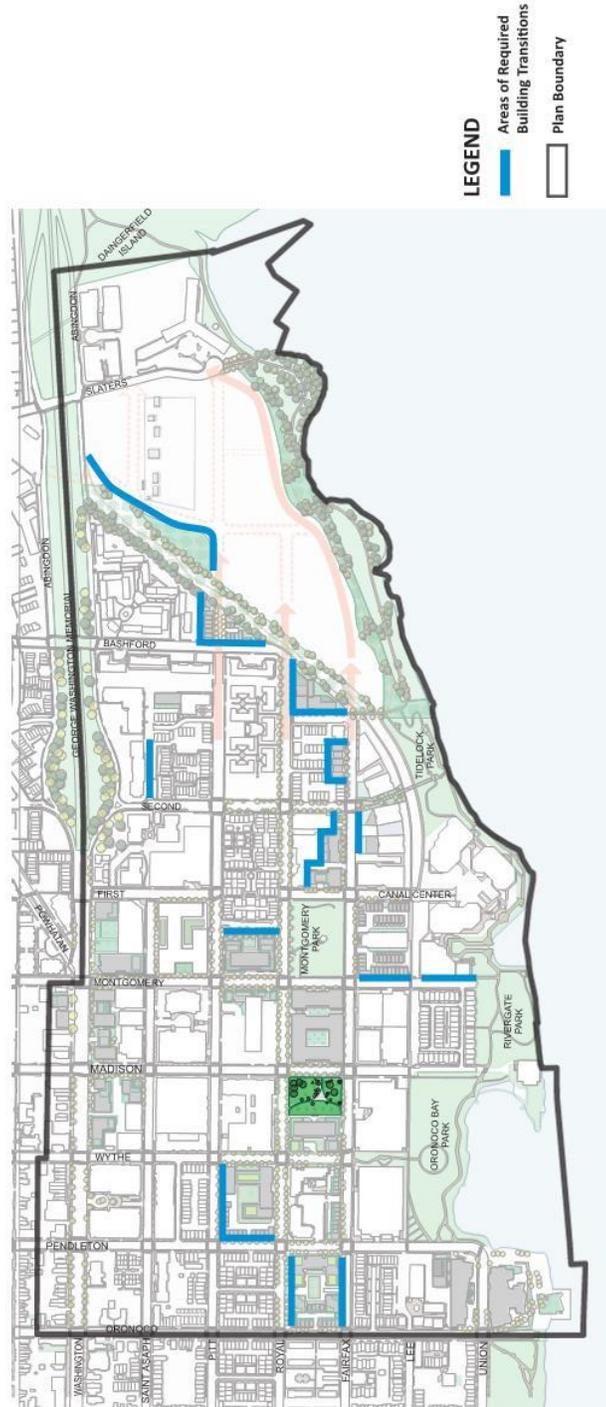


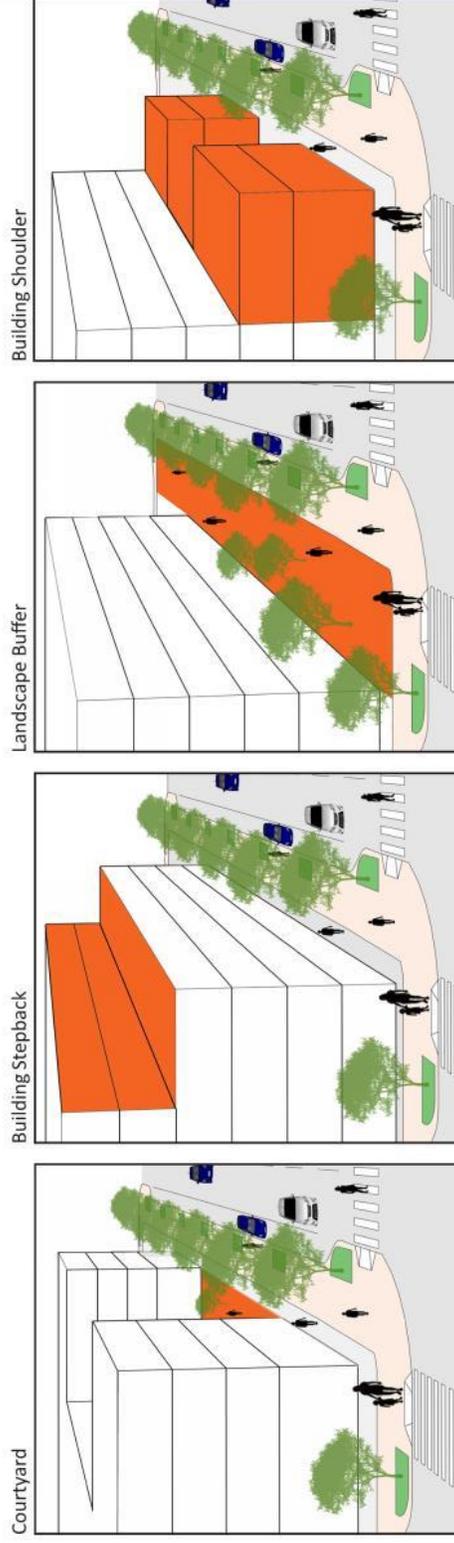
Figure 2.04: Building Heights Transition Zones

* Note: The potential buildings, open spaces, and roof-top open spaces depicted on this drawing are for illustrative purposes. The final design and configuration of buildings, open spaces and roof-top open spaces will be subject to the OTN SAP, the OTN Urban Design Standards and Guidelines, the Zoning Ordinance as amended, and as part of the development review process.

Transition Standards:

1. Building height transitions shall be required at the locations shown on Figure 2.04 and shall utilize approaches such as building setbacks, stepbacks, building shoulders, landscape buffers and/or courtyards, but not limited to those depicted in Figure 2.05.
2. Transitions may be required at other locations for the redevelopment sites if deemed necessary as part of the development review process.
3. The type and configuration of the required building transition will be determined as part of the development review process based on the context of each site.

Figure 2.05: Transition Approaches



2.3 Building Heights - Variety

Each new townhouse, multi-family, office and hotel building will provide a variety of heights. The intent of this provision is to ensure a significant variety of height for each new building and to enable dynamic urban and architectural forms.

Standards:

1. Each multi-family building (excluding 2/2 stacked townhouses) shall provide a minimum of 15% to 25% of the building footprint below the maximum provided height (Figure 2.06). The specific allocation of the variation shall be determined as part of the development review process.
2. Office and hotel buildings shall provide a variety of height which shall be determined through the development review process.
3. For townhouses and 2/2 stacked townhouses, a variety of heights shall be provided within each row of townhouses. This can be achieved through variation in roof form, setbacks and height. The location and amount of variation will be determined as part of the development review process.
4. For the former power plant site, design standards shall be required to address variety of building heights, spacing, coverage, and envelopes, as part of the Coordinated Development District (CDD) Concept Plan approval process, to ensure a unique and dynamic skyline for the site, both from the neighborhood and from the Potomac River.

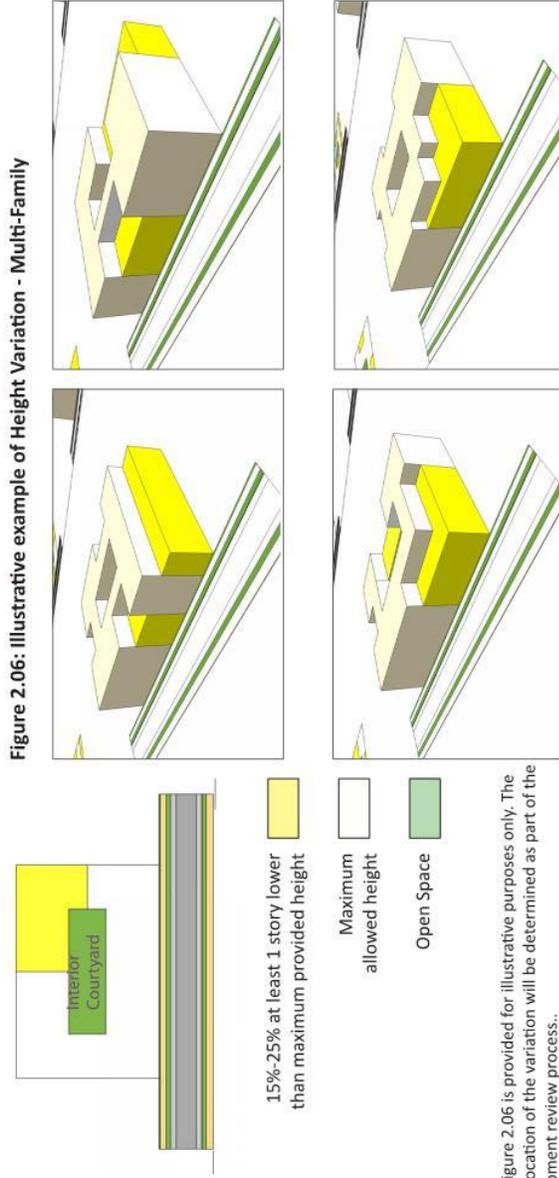


Figure 2.06: Illustrative example of Height Variation - Multi-Family

Note: Figure 2.06 is provided for illustrative purposes only. The final allocation of the variation will be determined as part of the development review process.

