



Docket Item #2
Design Review Board Case #2011-0002
Hoffman Town Center – Block 8

Application	General Data	
Project Name: Hoffman Town Center – Block 8 Location: 2401 Eisenhower Avenue Applicant: Hoffman Company, represented by Ken Wire of McGuire Woods	Site Area:	88,356 sf (2.03 acres)
	Zone:	CDD#2 (Eisenhower Avenue Metro)
	Proposed Use:	Office building with ground floor retail
	Gross Floor Area:	673,642 sf office 22,175 sf retail 697,417 sf TOTAL

Purpose of Application	
Concept design review of an amendment to an approved office building to add 204,987 sf of floor area and increase the height by approximately 45 feet (4-5 stories).	
Staff Reviewers:	Tom Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov Gwen Wright, gwen.wright@alexandriava.gov Gary Wagner, RLA, gary.wagner@alexandriava.gov Katie Parker, AICP, LEED AP katie.parker@alexandriava.gov

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD ACTION:

I. RECOMMENDATION AND SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The Hoffman Company is requesting that the Design Review Board (DRB) provide advisory comments and recommend approval of an amendment to an approved building to add floor area and height within the original footprint. Staff believes the additional floor area has been successfully incorporated into the original design of the building and the additional height is consistent with the neighborhood considering the taller buildings in the vicinity. Staff recommends that the DRB **recommend approval** of the proposal.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

This building was originally approved through a DSUP reviewed in 2000 (DSUP 2000-0028). Since this was prior to the adoption of the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan and the creation of the Eisenhower East Design Review Board (DRB), the building design was not reviewed by the DRB. The DSUP for this building is still valid since the overall DSUP approval was for several buildings in the Hoffman Town Center and construction on the entire project has been ongoing since that approval. The applicant is currently hoping to attract a GSA tenant and needs to add floor area to the approved building to accommodate their needs. To do so, they will be transferring floor area from Blocks 2 and 3 and adding 4-5 stories to the approved building while keeping the original footprint. Since the DRB is now established for Eisenhower East and charged with reviewing any applications for property within this CDD, the proposed revision to the building requires advisory review by the DRB.

Location

Block 8 is located immediately west of the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station on the north side of Eisenhower Avenue. The existing AMC movie theater and parking garage is north of the site, the Hoffman office building is to the west, and the two Mill Race residential towers are to the east. South of Block 8, across Eisenhower Avenue, is property owned by the Hoffman Company (Blocks 9A and 9B) that is currently used as parking lots, but has Stage 1 DSUP approval for office, retail, and hotel buildings. Directly across from Block 8 will be the new Eisenhower Avenue Metro plaza that will be constructed as part of the Hoffman Blocks 11 and 12 development to the east.

Project Details

The original building was approved for two office towers connected by a 30 foot tall atrium for a total of approximately 470,000 sf of office floor area. The eastern tower closest to the Metro was designed to be 10 stories and the western tower was designed at 14 stories. The atrium component provided a pedestrian connection through the building from the new pedestrian plaza on Eisenhower Avenue to Grist Mill Place by the movie theater. Approximately 22,000 sf of ground floor retail was included at the base of the two towers and the atrium.

In order to accommodate the potential GSA tenant, the office floor area in the building needs to be increased. The applicant has proposed adding 204,987 sf of office floor area within the existing approved footprint by increasing the height of the building. Specifically, the eastern tower would be increased by 4 stories to a height of 173 feet and the western tower would be increased by 5 stories to a height of 233 feet. Under this revision, additional floor area would also be added to the area above the atrium, increasing the height to 14 stories to match the eastern tower. The ground floor retail would remain as originally approved.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Transfer of floor area

Block 8 is currently approved for 492,430 sf of office floor area. Since the potential GSA tenant needs a building that has between 585,000 to 690,000 sf of office floor area, an additional 200,000 sf of floor area is needed on this block. The Hoffman Company owns several other blocks within the CDD and is proposing to transfer approximately 100,000 sf of office floor area from Blocks 2 and 3. These two blocks are west of Block 8 and further from the Metro station. Given Block 8's location directly adjacent to the Metro station, shifting additional floor area closer to the Metro is an appropriate request that staff supports for the purpose of obtaining a GSA tenant. If no GSA tenant is obtained, then staff believes that the project should revert to the original floor area distribution and building design.

Additional stories

As discussed, Block 8 already has an approved DSUP for an office building with two towers. This request retains the approved footprint, but adds additional stories to the two towers. The eastern tower closest to the Metro is increased from 10 stories to 14 stories. The western tower is increased from 14 stories to 19 stories. The building would measure 233 feet at the tallest point and would be compatible with the surrounding buildings. To the east on the other side of the Metro tracks is the Mill Race residential building which is 241 feet tall. Diagonally across Eisenhower Avenue, the towers constructed on Blocks 11 and 12 will be significantly taller at 290, 340, and 370 feet. Blocks 9A and 9B are approved for buildings with maximum heights of 250 feet along Eisenhower Avenue across from Block 8.

Revision to the atrium component

Aside from the additional height, the most significant change to the building is the atrium component. This had originally been envisioned as a low, ground level linkage between the two towers that provided the necessary internal connection while allowing each tower to exist separately. Pedestrian access through the building was also to be accommodated here. With this revision, the space between the two towers would be occupied by office floor area and the floor plates between the two towers would be connected. While this does not provide the separation of the towers that occurred in the original proposal, this change is necessary to accommodate the GSA tenant since it provides the additional floor area and internal connections that the two separate towers do not.

As mentioned above, the existing footprint of the building remains the same. This means that the atrium component is inset between the two towers along the Eisenhower Avenue frontage approximately 25 feet from the eastern tower and approximately 55 feet from the western tower. This recess and the designed offset of the two towers provide a visual separation. Furthermore, the applicant has proposed using spandrel glass for the stories added above the atrium in order to differentiate this recessed area from the two towers and make it more of a background element. The use of precast along the sides of the towers further delineates the extent of the towers. Staff recommends that this area still be open to the public as a connection between Eisenhower Avenue and Grist Mill Place.

Parking

The original building had three levels of below grade parking for a total of 375 spaces, or approximately 0.7 spaces per 1,000 sf of office. With the additional floor area, the applicant has

proposed adding two additional levels of below grade parking for a total of 660 spaces, or approximately 0.9 spaces per 1,000 sf of office. Although this is a small increase in the parking ratio, the building's location immediately adjacent to a metro station provides a great opportunity to reduce the amount of parking for the building. By removing the fifth level of parking (127 spaces), the parking ratio is closer to what was provided with the original design. Although this may not be a specific DRB review item, staff wanted to bring this issue to the DRB and applicant's attention in the hope that it could be addressed prior to the public hearing for the amendment in the fall.

Metro access

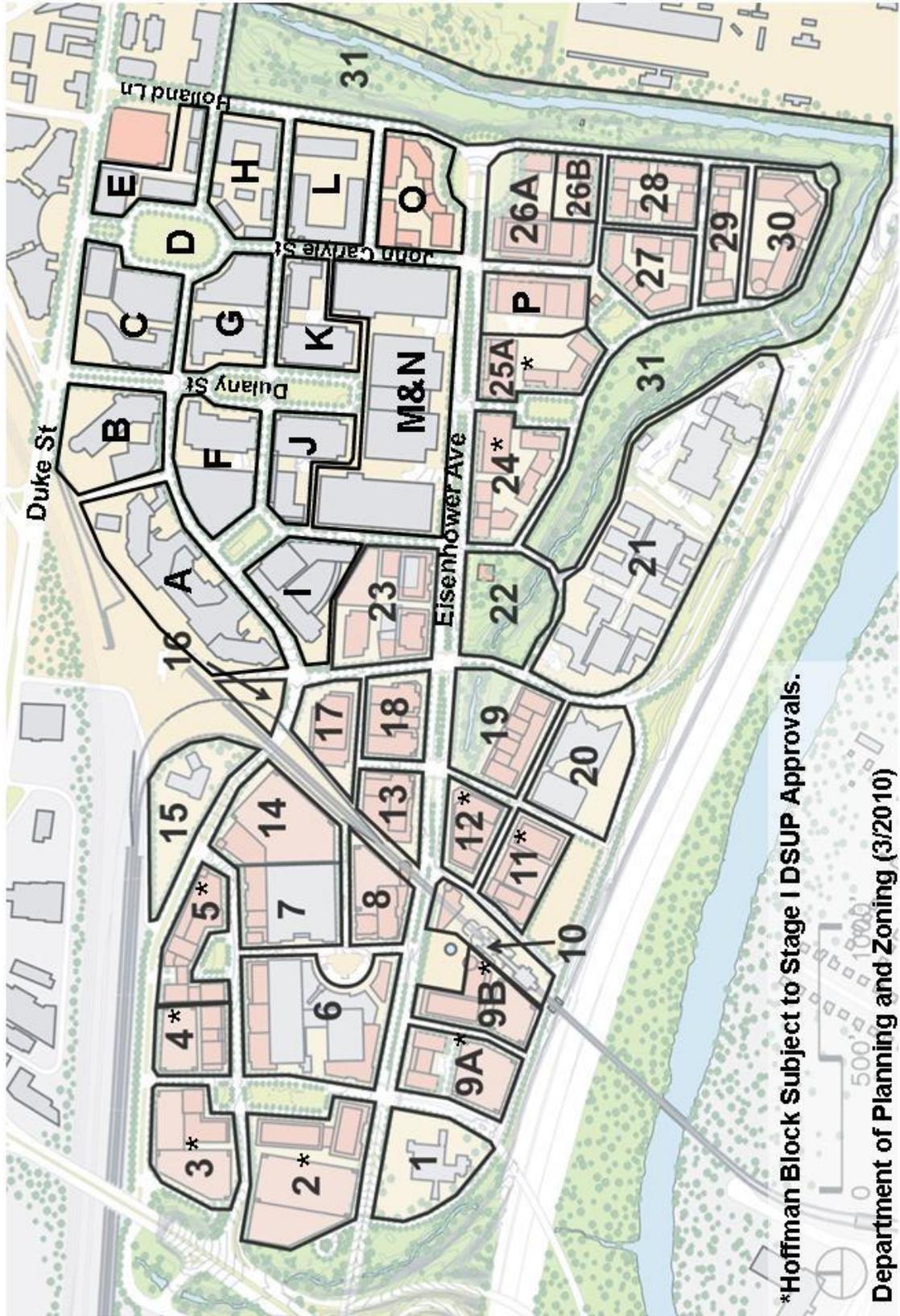
As discussed, the site is immediately adjacent to the Metro tracks and across the street from a Metro station. There are future plans for an entrance to the Eisenhower Metro Station on the north side of Eisenhower Avenue. Given how close the office building will be to the future entrance, the applicant should explore an opportunity to provide a direction connection from the building to the metro entrance.

IV. CONCLUSION AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the DRB **recommend approval** of the proposal with the following conditions:

1. The pedestrian access through the atrium from Eisenhower Avenue to Grist Mill Place shall be retained.
2. The applicant shall explore eliminating at least one level of below grade parking.
3. The building shall be designed to allow for a direct connection to the future northern Metro entrance.
4. If no GSA tenant is obtained, then the project shall revert to the original floor area distribution and building design.

Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks



*Hoffman Block Subject to Stage I DSUP Approvals.

Department of Planning and Zoning (3/2010)