3401 Water Street Washington DC

OGB concept submission
10 November 2021

owner and client:
Washington Georgetown Properties LLC

architect of record:
Baskervill
1051 E. Cary Street
Richmond, VA 23219

design architect:
concrete
Oudezijds Achterburgwal 137
1012 DR Amsterdam, NL
site and context

3401 Water Street
3401 Water Street is located East of the Key Bridge, South of the C&O Canal and North of the Whitehurst Freeway. The building lies at the transition of the green zone at the West of the Key Bridge running towards the former Georgetown industrial zone.

A series of red and brown brick warehouses, many of which are hidden beneath the Whitehurst Freeway, can be found along Water Street. They remain some of the last vestiges of industrial Georgetown.
Looking at the waterfront along the Potomac River this series of warehouses starts at the Rock Creek Park and ends East of the Key Bridge. At a larger scale they mark the former industrial area of Georgetown and make a transition from this large scale to the small scale along the Canal.
Along the C&O canal the new massing proposal needs to address the small scale of the old industrial buildings of Georgetown. The overall massing of the building therefore shows two sides: the large scale facing the waterfront and a smaller scale facing the Canal.
Since the late nineteenth century and 1946 the building at 3401 Water Street has transformed significantly: from a four story flourmill to a two story warehouse the way it currently is.
The new massing proposal starts at the 2F, keeping the existing facade in place.
massing concept: step 2
massing concept: step 3

Breaking the volume into two parts to scale down the waterfront massing and aligning the smaller leg with the Canal to embed the massing in its context.
massing concept: step 4

By creating a setback floor and lowering the volumes the massing along the C&O canal will be perceived as two smaller buildings, which relate to the smaller industrial buildings along the canal.
Looking at the waterfront along the Potomac River a series of warehouses starts at the Rock Creek Park and ends East of the Key Bridge. The building at 3401 Waterstreet marks the end (or beginning) of this series introducing the former industrial area of Georgetown.
treatment of the existing building
photos existing facade
existing facade Water Street

- Aluminium frames
- Metal flashing / parapet
- Painted CMU blockwork
- Wooden sliding frames
- Painted masonry
treatment existing facade Water Street

- painted CMU blocks
- painted masonry
- precast frame, no glazing
- service entrance
- roll up door
- doors
- entrance canopy
- storefront system
Sketches and considerations

Study faux steel frames without glazing on 2F.

Proposal 2F window infill.

Section hotel FoH and the street.

Reference: storefront 1046 Potomac Street
**detailed elevation**

- Metal parapet flashing, to match existing
- Existing masonry, painted in color; dark grey
- Existing flush string course, vertical brick pattern
- Precast fair faced colored concrete
- Existing CMU blockwork painted in color; dark grey
- Black anodised aluminium frames
- Vision glass
- Entrance vestibule
- Full glazed automatic sliding doors
section existing warehouse

existing facade / wall
section proposed

courtyard
retaining wall along C&O canal

All three new build volumes have a different architectural relation to the existing warehouse.

Treatment of the existing facade along the canal.
materiality and context

The transition of a retaining wall and a building facade is characteristic for many buildings along the canal.
detailed elevation: planter at retaining wall C&O canal

red masonry panels, colored grout

anodised aluminium frames, vision glass

landscaping

existing wall

Tow path at C&O canal
facade design - addition
materiality and context

Warehouse inspiration.
brick detail references

Contemporary brick inspiration.
Generic design of a repetition of individual bedroom windows, lacks relationship to the context.
Fenestration of grouped windows creating a vertical repetition, decoration of vertical masonry pattern at the floorslab.
facade design development: creating contrast

Translation to a contemporary warehouse.
facade design development: adding hierarchy

Addition of a continuous rhythm on the top floor to create a crown.
facade design development: horizontal layering

Opening up the lower floors to create a horizontal transition and plasticity.
facade design development: reference two materials

Jane Street NY, David Chipperfield architects
Creating contrast between the different volumes
side elevation
facade design proposal C&O canal
detailed elevation: Water Street

- recessed precast lintel
- red masonry panels, colored grout
- anodised aluminium frames
- vision glass
- ceramic fritting at face#4
detailed elevation: stacked pattern

- recessed precast lintel
- red masonry panels, colored grout
- anodised aluminium frames
- vision glass
- ceramic fritting at face#4
detailed elevation: vertical pattern

- recessed precast lintel
- red masonry panels, colored grout
- anodised aluminium frames
- vision glass
- ceramic fritting at face#4
detailed elevation: stacked pattern C&O canal

- recessed precast lintel
- red masonry panels, colored grout
- ceramic fritting at face#4
- anodised aluminium frames
- vision glass
- existing wall
- landscaping
facade design Water Street
facade design C&O canal
facade design view from key bridge
brick materiality and context

The characteristic local red brick facade varies in shade from a lighter appearance to a darker or more saturated colour
brick studies; color contrast between blocks

Option A
2 types of bricks
gray grout

Option B
2 types of bricks
colored grout

Use of different colors in burned wasserstrich brick, mortar and concrete to achieve contrast between the different blocks.
floor plans
existing ground floor plan

bedrock

third party property

level difference
proposal ground floor plan
existing 2F plan
proposal 2F plan

- courtyard / patio
- existing wall
- continue public gravel path
- existing retaining wall
- new facade
- landscaping
- facade aperture
  - no glazing in existing windows
- green area along facade
- BoH
- MEP
- gym
- courtyard / patio
4F - 6F plan

corner ADA room

BoH

corner ADA room
roof plan

elevator overrun

MEP bulkhead
appendix
**PROPERTY OVERVIEW**

**Address:** 3401 Water Street, NW (3401 K Street)

**Square/Lot:** 1183/813

**Original Owner:** Crystal Ice, Co.

**Architect:** Multiple (George T. Santmyers; Porter & Lockie)

**Builder:** Multiple (Warren F. Brenizer Co.; Prescott Construction Co, Inc.)

**Original Purpose:** Crystal Ice Co. Factory

**Historic Status:** Property is located within the bounds of the Georgetown Historic District

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**BRIEF PROPERTY SUMMARY**

Since the late nineteenth century, the property located at 3401 Water Street, NW has been occupied by a grouping of commercial warehouses and manufacturing facilities. The extant building on the site, however, largely dates to the twentieth century between the years of 1926 and 1946.

By the late 1880s, the western portion of the site was occupied by a four-story brick flour mill and the eastern portion of the site was occupied by a four-story brick coal house, two one-story sheds, and a coal trestle. By 1903, it appears that the four mill had been razed and replaced by a one-to-two story warehouse building with freezing tanks (an ice house) for use by the Crystal Plate Ice Co.

In April 1926, the Crystal Ice Co. applied for a permit to erect a one-story addition designed by George T. Santmyers and W. F. Brenizer along the central block of the building. A new slab to support can ice making tanks was also constructed during this time. In 1934, a large addition was added to the eastern block of the building which included a new two-story building, and an additional story added to the existing structure. In 1938, the Crystal Ice Co. submitted a building permit to erect a two-story brick, tile, and concrete addition at the cost of $15,000. Melvin S. Rich served as the engineer, and Prescott Construction Co, Inc. were responsible for the construction.

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1 District of Columbia Building Permit #7466, 16 March 1926. DC Public Library, The People’s Archive.

2 Permit to Build #170744, 25 April 1934. DC Public Library, The People’s Archive.
list as the builders. The last major addition took place in 1946 when a two-story masonry warehouse was constructed in the western portion of the site. The building, which appears to have replaced the nineteenth century warehouse building, was designed by architects Porter & Lockie and constructed by the Warren F. Brenizer Co.

3 "Permits for 68 Homes and Seven Apartments are Approved," The Evening Star, 24 December 1938. Page 20.; District of Columbia Permit to Build #219097, 17 December 1938. DC Public Library, The People’s Archive.

4 District of Columbia Permit to Build #282693, 6 February 1946. DC Public Library, The People’s Archive.