DATE: April 4, 2006

SUBJECT: SP #218 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT to allow a smaller rooftop sign located at 4501 Fairfax Dr. (Gartner) (RPC #14-016-018).

Applicant:
Gartner, Inc.
4501 N. Fairfax Dr.
7th and 8th floors
Arlington, Virginia 22203

By:
Nancy Budny
ING Clarion Retail Services
601 13th St., NW
Suite 450N
Washington, DC 20005

Luc Brami
Gelberg Signs
6511 Chillum Place, NW
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C.M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the subject site plan amendment, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) amended condition.

ISSUES: None.

SUMMARY: The applicant requests a site plan amendment to replace an existing tenant identification sign which is mounted at the rooftop level of the office building at 4501 North Fairfax Drive. The proposed sign will identify a second tenant within the building, Gartner. The sign would be placed on the west (side) elevation of the building. The proposed sign’s small size, which is smaller than the originally approved sign, blue color, and orientation away from residential areas, would not have an adverse impact on the residential areas and are consistent
with the Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings. Therefore, it is recommended that the site plan amendment be approved, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) amended condition.

**BACKGROUND:** SP #218 (Fairgate at Ballston) consists of two office buildings on premises known as 1005 North Glebe Road and 4501 North Fairfax Drive. The Phase II nine-story building (4501 North Fairfax Drive) is located on the south side of the block bounded by 11th Street to the north, North Vermont Street to the east, Fairfax Drive to the south, and North Glebe Road to the west.

The following provides additional information about the site and location:

**Site:** The subject site fronts directly on North Fairfax Drive. To the west of the site is an office building of Marymount University. Phase I of the subject site plan is located to the north of the subject site. To the northeast is the Avalon at Ballston Condominium building. The subject building is across the street from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Building to the west across North Vermont Street. Across North Fairfax Drive, slightly to the southeast is the four-story office building for Wachovia Bank and the recently approved Fairmont building. The subject site directly faces the Arlington Gateway site plan project across North Fairfax Drive.

**Zoning:** “C-O-2.5” (Commercial Office Building, Hotel and Apartment)

**Land Use:** Medium Office-Apartment-Hotel (up to 180 units/acre)

**Neighborhood:** Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association

**Proposed Sign:** The proposed rooftop sign would be 9.8 square feet, which is smaller than the 25 square foot sign currently installed. The sign would be fabricated and installed as 17-inch high halo-lit blue aluminum channel letters spelling “Gartner.” The total sign length is 79 inches (6.58 feet). The sign would be lit using white neon tubing behind the letters. The material and lighting of the proposed sign will be consistent with the existing “ihr” sign.

**DISCUSSION:** The proposed sign would be on the top of the building facing North Glebe Road and would replace an existing sign. This west façade faces predominantly commercial and office use buildings. The Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings set forth standards as to the number and size of rooftop signs. They state that the total permitted area of rooftop signs for any building is to be computed on the basis of one square foot of sign for each linear foot of building wall length measured along the street frontage, and that no more than two (2) rooftop signs should be permitted per building.

The building has 111 feet linear frontage at the North Glebe Road side, allowing 111 square feet of rooftop sign area. The request for a 9.8 square foot replacement sign is within the parameters of the guidelines and is smaller than the previously approved sign. The subject site is located in the core of the Ballston Metro Station Area. Most residential buildings are either located at a
distance from the building or not directly facing the elevation where the sign will be located. Thus it would not have a significant impact on residential buildings in the area.

Civic Association: The President of the Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association sent staff an email to express that the association did not have an issue with the proposed replacement sign.

CONCLUSION: Staff concludes that the rooftop sign is consistent with the Sign Guidelines for Site Plan Buildings. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the site plan amendment, subject to all previous conditions and one (1) amended condition.

1. The developer/applicant agrees that the design, color, dimensions and placement of the two proposed rooftop signs will be in accordance with the drawings dated February 14, 2003 and as approved by the County Board at its April 26, 2003 meeting, and the drawings dated November 17, 2005 and approved by the County Board at its April 22, 2006 meeting which indicate the replacement of one (1) sign. Such signs shall be no larger than 25 square feet each. No additional rooftop sign is allowed on the subject building after the proposed signs are installed.
PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

March 7, 1964  Approved rezoning (Z-2126-64-2) a portion of the block from “R-5” to “C-O” and approved a site plan for an office building at 3.10 F.A.R.

June 13, 1964  Approved rezoning (Z-2126-64-4) for an additional portion of the block from “RA-18” to “C-O”.

July 25, 1964  Approved rezoning (Z-2126-64-4) for the remainder of the block “C-O” and approved a site plan amendment for an office development at 2.85 F.A.R. on the consolidated site.

July 24, 1965  Denied a request (Z-2126-64-4) for extension of the site plan.

July 29, 1978  Approved rezoning (Z-2126-64-5) for “C-O” to “C-O-2.5” as part of the Ballston area rezoning.

June 2, 1984  Approved a site plan {Z-2126-64-5 (SP-18)} for an 8-story and a 12-story office building.

May 17, 1986  Approved a site plan amendment (Z-2126-64-5) for the subdivision of the approved site plan subject to the previously approved conditions and two new conditions dealing with overall parking ratio (#33) and overall site density (#34).

October 1, 1988  Accepted withdrawal of the site plan amendment (Z-2126-64-5) to add 4,500 square feet for a children’s day care facility.

February 11, 1989  Approved a site plan amendment permitting the location of a satellite dish, and a UHF and VHF antenna within the open enclosure of the penthouse area, subject to a condition.

March 4, 1989  Approved site plan amendment (Z-2126-78-5) for two rooftop identification signs “Sato Travel”, subject to a condition.

November 17, 1990  Approved site plan amendment (Z-2126-78-5) for one window sign and one directional sign.
July 11, 1992  Approved site plan SP #218 for construction for an office building with approximately 201,817 square feet of gross floor area and associated parking with 348 spaces for the parcels of real property known as 1005 North Glebe Road and 4501 North Fairfax Drive subject to conditions.

April 26, 2003  Approved a site plan amendment to permit two rooftop signs on the Phase II building at 4501 North Fairfax Drive.
Previously Approved Rooftop Sign Condition for SP #218

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