



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Capital Region

Rock Creek Park

3545 Williamsburg Lane, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20008-1207



H2215 (NCA-ROCR)

SEP - 3 2009

Dr. Joseph W. Daniels, Jr., Pastor
Emory United Methodist Church
6100 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Pastor Daniels:

Thank you for meeting with Rock Creek Park staff to discuss the Beacon Center development plans for Emory United Methodist Church.

As we stated during our meetings with you, the National Park Service is very concerned about the potential impact and adverse effect upon Fort Stevens, a site that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites. As presented to the National Park Service, it is our opinion that the proposed massing and design of the Beacon Center complex is out of scale as it is situated adjacent to Fort Stevens. The building will loom over this important historic site and cause a severe visual impact on the landscape. Although the Brightwood neighborhood has been substantially developed since the Civil War, the scale of the residential buildings to the north across Rittenhouse Street, the open space to the west across 13th Street, the setback for the church to the south across Quackenbos Street, and the site location of the buildings on the Emory United Methodist Church property (the out building, the two-story residential building, and the church building itself), provides a buffer zone and relatively open landscape around the fort. The Emory United Methodist Church property, which has historically been associated with Fort Stevens, also provides a visual break between the activity along Georgia Avenue, NW and the fort.

Of specific concern, the west elevation of the proposed building (Drawing A2-3A) as designed, would introduce a five-story wall along Old Piney Branch Road. There is no true visual break at this façade despite the use of various materials for the walls. As proposed, there would be no practical way that this massive building could be screened or visually mitigated from the fort. In addition, there are three loading dock areas at this elevation (non-parking uses) that, it is assumed, will be used by various delivery trucks, dumpsters, and other vehicles. The vehicular traffic for this access road alone will negatively impact the site, not to mention the substantial increase in vehicular traffic for the development as a whole. Small design modifications alone cannot address the elemental cause of the problem—the sheer massiveness of the structure.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 17964
EXHIBIT NO. 27

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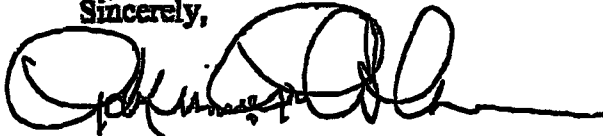
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Finally, the relationship between Fort Stevens and the Emory United Methodist Church has been intertwined since the Civil War. Although the church building that is currently extant was constructed during the early 20th century, the loss of the visual connection to the church is detrimental to the interpretative relationship between our two properties. The construction history and design of the fort during the Civil War and the uses of church land is an important story that is relayed to visitors. In addition, the fact that the fort historically extended onto portions of the Emory United Methodist Church property brings up concerns related to possible archeological artifacts being disturbed during ground disturbance activity.

We therefore request that you consider scaling back the proposed project and moving it away from the entrance to Fort Stevens. In addition, it would be beneficial for you to consider the archeological potential for the site and possible ways that this important historical record could be properly surveyed as part of any ground disturbing activities.

If you need any additional information regarding our concerns, please feel free to contact me on 202-895-6004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrienne A. Coleman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adrienne A. Coleman
Superintendent, Rock Creek Park