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December 14, 2009

Mr. Marc B. Loud, Chairman
D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St. N.W., Suite 200 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re BZA Case # 17964 - Emory United Methodist Beacon of Light Church,
6100-20 Georgia Ave NW, Washington DC

Dear Chairman Loud and Board Members.

I am writing in opposition to the zoning relief sought for this proposed development because of the devastating impact it would have on historic Fort Stevens and the surrounding community.

By way of background, I have lived in the adjacent Takoma neighborhood for 35 years. I served as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (4B02), president of Neighbors Inc., and co-founder/former vice president of Historic Takoma. I was for six years a member of the board of the DC Preservation League and served as its vice president. I am currently a trustee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, a founder and vice president of the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington, and president of the Takoma Theatre Conservancy. This statement is my own; the above organizations are noted only to establish my credentials with you.

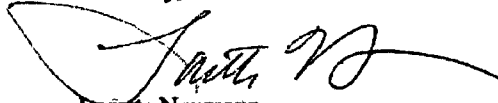
I agree with the comments of the National Park Service and other experts who note the adverse impact the proposed five-story new housing "wall," especially along its northwestern and western property lines, would have next to one of the most significant historic sites in the nation's capital. As a resident and active member of DC's upper Ward 4, I also feel that it would have a negative impact on our community. Fort Stevens (located in Brightwood) and the nearby Battleground Cemetery (in Takoma), along with Walter Reed (in Shepherd Park) all flank Georgia Avenue, a key transportation and historic corridor that links our communities together.

Indeed, in just a little over a year, the nation will begin the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War. One of the pivotal battles was in 1864 at Fort Stevens, which stopped the confederates from entering and conquering Washington. Commemorations of this event will undoubtedly bring many thousands of visitors to our area. What they see should bear some semblance of what our courageous defenders (including President Lincoln himself) saw here. Hopefully those visitors will also stay to visit other parts of our community.

In summary, there does not seem to be a compelling reason to change the zoning for the area to accommodate this proposal but many significant, public interest reasons to disallow it. I urge you to encourage the church to develop a more compatible plan for their property.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my views.

Sincerely,


Loretta Neumann

cc. Council Member Muriel Bowser
ANC4B01 and 4B02 Commissioners Farth Wheeler and Sara Green

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO.

17964

EXHIBIT NO.

42

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17964
EXHIBIT NO. 42

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