

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING

2010 JAN 12 AM 10:42

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
7510 Brookville Road
Chevy Chase, Md 20815
2010 JAN 12 AM 10:42

January 8, 2010

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

**Re: Emory United Methodist Beacon of Light Church
6100-20 Georgia Ave. N.W., BZA #17964**

Dear Chairman Loud and Honorable Board Members:

I am writing in further consideration BZA #17964 case as a follow-on to the hearing of December 15, 2009. At that hearing, I was impressed by the Project's social intent and the hard work put into the effort. But, I also registered my opposition to the then-current proposal of the applicants based on threat to a historical event and site of national as well as city and community significance. While continuing to feel that the Church project remains too large and intrusive as well as endangerment to the historical landscape and site of Fort Stevens – I would like to invite your exploration of an Alternative below.

The Problem: Focus please on the west face of the overall project – that which will abut the National Park Service public park known as Fort Stevens. Under the present proposal both the western and northern parts of the planned edifice will block public understand and appreciation for the battlefield of Fort Stevens (and all that meant in terms of the Lincoln story etc.) that stretch north and north-east as well as east of the planned Project. But, the presently planned western portion (facing what has been termed “the Old Piney Branch Road” becomes particularly problematic in a different manner. The immensity of a solid-wall structure, the utilization of this being the rear or service area of the Project and the flush arrangement with “Old Piney Branch Road” is totally out of keeping with the public spatial dimensions of the area. It would, in short, effect a “canyonizing” or “Berlin Wall” edifice of no significant or redeeming quality. Moreover, it threatens to create a most unattractive interface with the National Park Service public park.

There is an attractive Alternative, however – aesthetically pleasing, functionally useful for the Project and compatible with public values of community, city and nation. I see here a “win-win” for Project, NPS and the American public as well as the Brightwood citizens and District of Columbia taxpayers

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia**

CASE NO. 17964
EXHIBIT NO. 55

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.17964
EXHIBIT NO.55

What would this Alternative embrace? In essence, there would be a reconstitution of the concept and configuration of the western dimensions of the Project. What might it look like? This would obviously depend upon a meeting of minds, a willingness to cooperate, an awareness of larger possibilities than merely the pros and cons of the present Project.

First, the Alternative would involve a major set-back and lowering of the western structure to mitigate the omnipresent, overpowering, visual blockage of the Fort Stevens battlefield – north and east of the overall Project site. This notion surfaced at the December 15 hearing and hopefully has made progress in Project/NPS discussions. At the same time, the notions of service area, loading dock, trash facilities and all the other unattractive (albeit necessary) functioning dimensions of Project and the Fort Stevens Historic Site property would be shifted elsewhere in the Project. This would necessarily dictate a redesign utilizing other public access to purely Project needs. In its place could be constructed a significant entrance and circular turnaround that could serve better both Project and certain dimensions of public visitation noted below. In truth, it could very well provide a totally new Entrance for the Project itself if not other public needs below.

Second, the Alternative would occasion a rethinking and reconstitution of the construction materials and focus of the western part of the Project structure. In essence, I can envision turning the lowered and set-back western portion (call it wall of the structure), into one of beauty, utility and marked architectural significance by substituting a glass face or façade (lightly and tastefully tinted, say in ecologically friendly green glass) - comprising the height and length of the structure. Examples exist in commercial structures across the region. Like such examples, this new Project West Face would create something of a mirror for the park-setting, a virtual artistic opportunity providing a dimension of light, space and depth for park visitors. It would especially provide psychic uplift to the residents and patrons of the Project itself – a source of pride in habitation, community potential and enlightening sponsorship by the Church. If innovatively done, it could also incorporate a see-through dimension to historically and religiously enhancing the superb present Emory church building (marginalized under the present plan).

Third – and capturing the Project's avowed and publicly announced intent to incorporate a public visitation facility into the structure, I would advance the idea of devoting a significant glass-enhanced entrance in the western section which would open into an accommodating (appropriately marked over the entrance) first or ground floor "Fort Stevens Visitor and Educational Center." This could be a public/private partner endeavor of Project and NPS and other private entities that would mitigate the absence of such learning facility and serve Project residents, community and nation. It would also afford employment opportunities (paid and volunteer) in keeping with the commercial opportunities noted by Project sponsors.

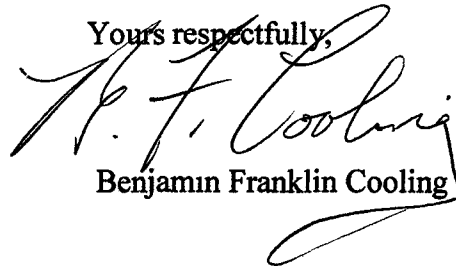
What could emerge from a re-thought and re-negotiated Project would be truly a "Beacon of Light" whereby the Emory and Fort Stevens sites would go forward as partners for marrying awareness of public historic significance with enlightened private

stewardship. Through re-exploration and reconsideration of how to make this a truly monumental achievement for present and future something truly notable can be achieved.

I repeat my availability to both the Board as well as Project sponsors and the National Park Service. Thank you for your further consideration.

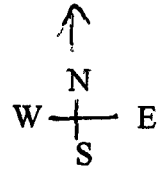
Attachment:
Alternative Proposal Sketch

Yours respectfully,

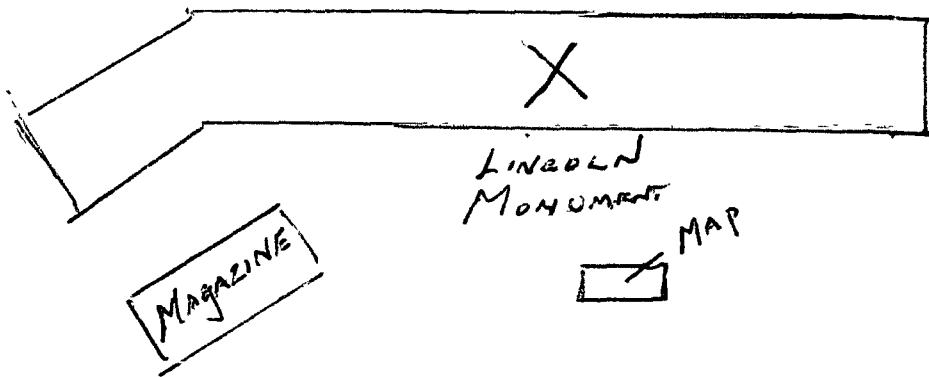
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. F. Cooling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Benjamin Franklin Cooling

Attachments - Cooling - Fort Stevens Alternative



RESTORED
PARAPET



LINCOLN
MONUMENT
MAP

FLAG
POLE

WEST FACADE

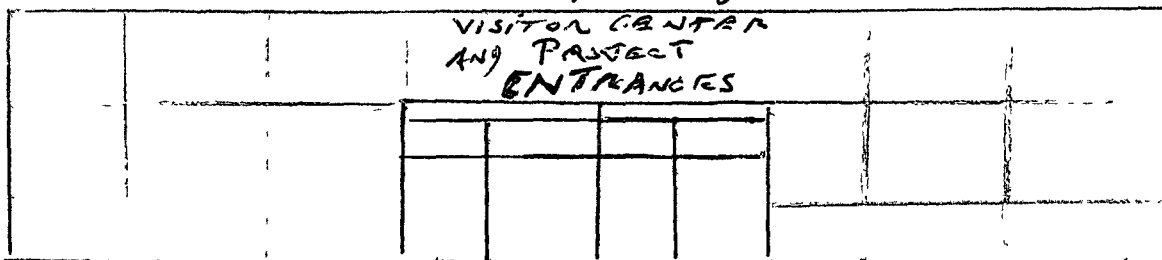
PROJECT

←
13TH STREET

STREET

GA
AVE
→

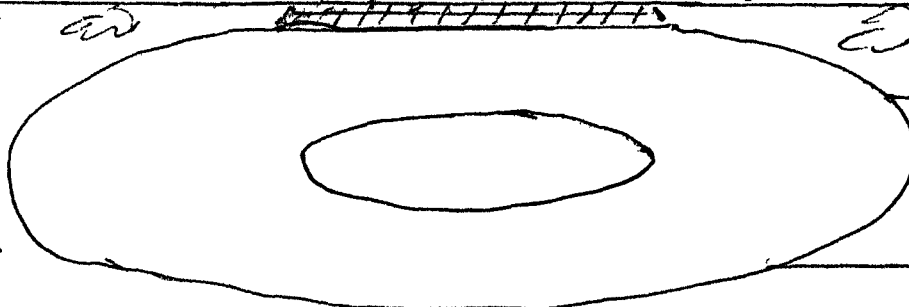
WEST FACADE



SW ED

ED ED

FORT PARK
↓



ACCESS
ROAD