

the CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
of the District of Columbia



December 10, 2009

Mr. Marc B. Loud, Chairman
D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 2001

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

Dear Chairman Loud and Honorable Board Members

Attached is a petition signed by the members of the Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia requesting that you disallow the zoning adjustment request of the Emory United Methodist Church to construct a new building on the church grounds immediately adjacent to the site of Ft. Stevens. The church's intentions are doubtless praiseworthy, but the existence of a five-story building next to the fort will significantly degrade the historical legacy of Ft. Stevens and of the city of Washington itself. It is the sole significant remaining piece of the only Civil War battlefield in Washington, D.C. — and what a battle it was.

The battle at Ft. Stevens arguably changed the face of the war. The Confederate army which battled in front of Ft. Stevens intended to seize the city, burn it and run the President and his cabinet out of town just as the British had done in 1814. President Lincoln was up for reelection that year and the results were far from sure after over three bloody years of civil war—in fact, Lincoln himself thought he would lose. The Democrats were running on a platform of peace with the South. The seizure of Washington would likely have tipped the election against Lincoln with all its dire consequences for the future of the U.S. and the future of the millions of slaves Lincoln had freed. Thus, Ft. Stevens carries weight equal to such iconic fields as Antietam and Gettysburg. It must also be remembered that Lincoln cared so much about the outcome that he himself mounted the parapets of the fort to watch the battle and give heart to his men.

The National Park Service has neglected Ft. Stevens but many people are working hard to change that and the Park Service is responding. In fact, we hope that the District of Columbia Government will join us in our petitions to the National Park Service to give the Washington Circle Forts, of which Ft. Stevens is a part, their just due and place in the history of this great city. We further hope and anticipate that there will be a significant improvement in the interpretation of Ft. Stevens in time for the sesquicentennial of the battle in 2014.

The site is important to the history of both our nation and to the city of Washington, DC. Please do not allow this legacy to be degraded.

Sincerely,

Susan Claffey
President
202-306-4988

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 17964

EXHIBIT NO. 56

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17964
EXHIBIT NO. 56

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

The following members of the District of Columbia Civil War Roundtable ask that the District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment disallow the proposed development of multi-story housing by the Emory United Methodist Church. The size and height of the planned building would intrude on Fort Stevens, one of the most historic sites in the District, where on July 11 and 12, 1864, a determined Union force prevented the advance of a Confederate army into the heart of the Washington. It was here that President Abraham Lincoln came under fire while observing the battle. The proposed five-story development would destroy the visitor experience at a location of great significance to the nation, where Americans from north and south shed their blood for their differing visions of the United States. Ft Stevens commemorates those events and those men. Our decisions should respect their sacrifice.

Susan Claffey	Susan Claffey	616 Pershing Dr. SS MD 20910
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Kurt E. DeSoto	Kurt E. DeSoto	4916 Gadsden Drive, Fairfax VA 22032
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Jacqueline Greaney	JACQUELINE GREANEY	15 EVERETTMAN CT. ROCKVILLE MD 20852
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Twyla Jackino	Twyla Jackino	20887 Trinity Sq. Sterling, VA 20155
Carol Bessette	Carol Bessette	8051 Tanglewood Place Springfield VA 22152
John F. Bessette	JOHN F. BESETTE	8251 Tanglewood Place Springfield VA 22152
Bruce A. Hoffer	Bruce A. Hoffer	6417 Silver Ridge Circle Alexandria, Va. 22315
Sam Whit	Sam Whit	3332 Glenmore Dr. Falls Church, Va. 22041