

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

BZA Application 19080

Appeal of Adams Morgan Neighbors for Action
from Building Permit No. B1410380 for construction at 1770 Euclid St, NW
Hearing Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2015

Testimony of UNITE HERE Local 25
901 K St NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20001

My name is John Boardman, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of UNITE HERE Local 25. We are an organization of over 6,500 hotel workers in the D.C. metropolitan area, working to create middle class jobs within the hotel industry in the District of Columbia.

I am writing to express our support for the appeal of Adams Morgan Neighbors for Action.

In this case, the permit applicant's case rests on the claim that the hotel fronts on Columbia Road rather than Euclid Street, and that, therefore, the rear of the project could equally be considered to abut either Champlain Street or the lot line behind the hotel.

DCRA has argued that, based on the definition of *street frontage* from the zoning regulations, the developer has the option to select which abutting street to use as the street frontage, and that the developer "chose Columbia Road as the front of this project."

We agree that the developer has the option to select one street as the front—although Columbia Road would be a dubious choice. However, we do not believe the developer has the option to select Columbia Road as the front of the project for the purposes of choosing the lot line abutting Champlain Street as the rear lot line, because the developer already chose Euclid Street as the front of the project for the purposes of measuring the height. According to Zoning Commission Order 11-17, Fact 84:

84. As originally presented to the Commission, the height of the building was 92 feet. In its submission of August 17, 2012, the Applicant reduced the height of the building to 81 feet. In the final plans submitted to the Commission, after the Applicant had reached an agreement with the RCNA, the height was reduced to 72 feet, measured to the roof from Euclid Street, with a further reduction in height at the southeast corner of the building. All of the heights were measured from the level of the curb opposite the middle of the front of the building on Euclid Street, in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations. The height ultimately approved in this order is a maximum of 72 feet with a parapet permitted above the roof.

The Board has previously argued that "the prior designation of the front of a building should not bind the property owner as to future additions so long as the existing building will remain conforming." (BZA Order 18152) That interpretation seems reasonable to us in a case where an addition designates a different street as the front, since it seems fair that a prior designation

should not necessarily indefinitely bind a property owner. However, in this case, the developer is attempting to claim two different streets as the front, *at the exact same time*.

Furthermore, even though the regulations allow an owner to select which street a corner lot fronts on, it seems clearly out of line with the intent of the regulations to allow Columbia Road to be selected as the front. Columbia Road barely abuts the property, intersecting the lot only along 13.57 feet. The developer's plans do not provide for any entrance to the building along Columbia Road. Euclid Street, on the other hand, abuts the property for 131.80 feet. Moreover, the historic church's grand steps lead up to the entrance of the building from the middle of Euclid Street. Euclid Street is where guests will enter and exit the building. For all intents and purposes, Euclid Street is "the front," and if there ever was any doubt, the developer eliminated that doubt by previously selecting Euclid Street as the front.

Therefore, we do not find it reasonable to designate Columbia Road as the front of the building for the purposes of this building permit. We urge you to grant the appeal of Adams Morgan Neighbors for Action.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our testimony.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "J. Boardman", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John. A. Boardman
Executive Secretary-Treasurer