

Mara Cherkasky
603 Rock Creek Church Road, NW
Washington, DC 20010
mcherkasky@verizon.net
202-997-1542

Re: Case # 19099, applicant RP 3701 NW LLC, Square 3030 lot 805

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

I attended the ANC 4C meeting on Wednesday evening, October 14, when Rooney Properties presented its plans for the Sweet Mango site, 3701 New Hampshire Avenue in Square 3030. After hearing the presentation and thinking about it, I would like to give you my thoughts.

In my opinion, the project is out of scale with the block – which is not on Georgia Avenue but east of it. The other buildings on this square are one- to two-story commercial and residential buildings. If you stand at the southern end of this large intersection, the problem is with the space over the east Metro entrance, not the Sweet Mango site. There, the current building height is just about right; it matches the scale of the rebuilt firehouse (now Metro cooling facility), the façade of which was moved from Georgia Avenue to the 3600 block of New Hampshire Avenue in order to build the Metro station.

The site is also too small for the proposed project. If Rooney cannot provide a single parking space, then it should find another property for its building. Those of us who live on nearby streets already experience difficulty in finding parking spaces, especially on street-cleaning days. The alley behind the 600 block of Rock Creek Church Road, where I live, is so narrow and the back yards so shallow, that we have no choice but to park on the street. The 500 block has no alley at all.

The parking study Rooney cited shows a number of available spaces in the new buildings along Georgia Avenue. Many people believe that these buildings have empty spaces because residents do not want to pay the monthly fee and would rather try to park on the street. I was actually surprised by how many of those spaces ARE filled. This is evidence that it is a mistake to believe, as city planners have claimed, that residents of these buildings will not have cars because of their location over a Metro station. Many residents of these new buildings obviously DO have cars. Rooney promises it will provide its new residents three years of free parking, but what will happen at the end of three years? The problem is simply deferred, not solved.

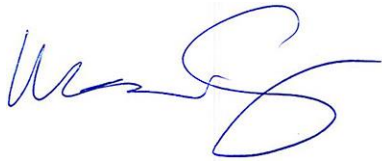
I understand that city planners would like denser development around Metro stations, but some of the buildings that have been constructed over and near the Georgia Avenue/Petworth station have not been able to lease all their space. A large commercial space in Park Place, at the southwest corner of Georgia Avenue and Rock Creek Church Road, has never had a tenant. The

plaza-like area outside the space is not kept up, adding further to the corner's abandoned appearance.

The developers spoke of their respect for history in designing the building. What could that possibly mean? Rock Creek Church Road is one of the oldest thoroughfares in the city; it predates the District and leads to a church established in the early 1700s. Rock Creek Church Road is also the route President Abraham Lincoln rode between the White House and his summer cottage on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home. Is that the history they are invoking? I doubt it.

The developers have proposed to have the Chuck Brown mural repainted on the north façade of the proposed building. In that location, it will no longer be visible to anyone except pedestrians walking south who happen to look up at the proper moment, or drivers heading south who should be watching the road, or passengers who happen to look out of the left side of their bus or car. It is questionable whether a repainted mural would even be visible to people entering/leaving the Metro station or waiting at the bus stop across from the proposed building. It will no longer be the landmark that we in the neighborhood love, and that's a shame.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'W. S.', written in a cursive style.