

Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment,

Regarding the Church St. Project (BZA No. 16358, First Sussex Development Corporation), I am writing to express my support for the project.

I live one half block up 18th St. from the development in question. I am a long-term resident of Dupont Circle (30+ years), have been active in community management (many, many years as a board member and/or officer of the nearby Imperial House Condominium), and head the DC Concert Orchestra Society whose office is in the neighborhood. St. Thomas Church is an important part of the neighborhood. Should the BZA rule against First Sussex, or should pending lawsuits prevail, St. Thomas Church would move elsewhere, which I would regard as a tragic loss of a good neighbor and historic parish here in Dupont. Churches are regularly being driven out of the city due to lack of parking or urban changes otherwise inhospitable to sustaining their congregations. Can we stanch the losses here?

The park, which so many lay claim to, is private property. Whether St. Thomas stays or goes, the park will be gone. That's a shame, so it must be. It's to St. Thomas' credit that they have provided and sustained the park and made it publicly available for decades now.

I've seen the preliminary design for the development. It does not appear that it will block any of the Church Street residents view, or significantly impact light (that block of Church St. is already rather dark, pretty much throughout the day). The exterior design is very pleasing, and I believe the plans for the church side of the development include elements which will be very helpful for community organizations, such as meeting spaces, etc.

Another "complaint:" the temporary disruption of the actual development process. Dupont is a remarkably quiet neighborhood, but like any city environment, has considerable noise during business hours. I don't think it a reasonable argument to defeat this project on the basis of temporary inconvenience. The block survived the redevelopment of the Carriage House of the Mathematical Association of America, and that is an attractive addition to the block.

Finally, the neighborhood has a significant lack of properties eligible for (re)development. This development would prove an attractive addition to the housing stock in the neighborhood.

I do hope you will support the project.

Thank you,

Bob Myers
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