Joseph Foote

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October 8, 2003

Honorable Carol J. Mitten, Chair
D.C. Zoning Commission
D.C. Office of Zoning
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Suite 210, South
Washington, DC 20001

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Re: Case #03-30

Dear Madam Chair and Commissioners:

The applicant, Square 643 Associates LLC, asks the Zoning Commission for a map amendment to build an 88-foot high-rise apartment on a site mapped for 40'. I object.

As a nearby homeowner, I am concerned about how the building's height would affect area house values and quality of life. This proposed 9-story tower would sit close to 2-story townhouses on two sides and Randall School on a third. It would sharply alter this lovely Southwest neighborhood, which would forever rest in its imposing shadow.

Why does the developer seek additional height? He gives four reasons or what he calls "public benefits" (see Developer's Fact Sheet): the building would add modern design, animate an isolated neighborhood, remove a vacant building, and add landscape and a sculpture. Not one of these reasons or "public benefits" is related to height; all would apply to a 40' building as well. Why, then, must the building be 88' — 4 ½ times the height of nearby townhouses — except to generate a windfall for the developer?

I urge the Zoning Commission to dismiss the Case #03-30 application to amend the Zoning Regulations and Map from R-4 to R-5-D/PUD as inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood. I urge the Commission to maintain the integrity of the map and not to set this case down for hearings.

The height is not right for the site.

Thank you.

Joseph Foote

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 03-30
Exhibit 15

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.03-30
EXHIBIT NO.15

Developer's Fact Sheet

Fact Sheet
Proposed Apartment House – Delaware Ave. & H Street, S.W.
Square 643 Associates LLC - Steve Tanner, Principal
June 17, 2003

Basic Facts:

- Existing Use is a vacant church, which has been sold to the applicant, on the north frontage of H Street, S.W. near Delaware Avenue. See attached maps.
- Lot size is 16,643 s.f.
- Existing zoning is R-4. Nearby are areas zoned R-5-C, C-3-A, and R-5-D, reflecting the mixed-density development plan carried out in Southwest Urban Renewal.
- Surrounding and nearby uses reflect the planned mixed-density character of the neighborhood:

  +East – public park, play fields of former Randall Junior High School.

  +South – the complex of buildings comprising the former Randall School, currently Millenium Arts Center and shelter for homeless people, with high-rise Best Western Motel and church beyond.

  +North – condominium complex of townhouse and garden apartment scale units, with two 90-foot apartment buildings farther to the northwest.

  +West – townhouses and a very large, 90-foot apartment house, Capital Plaza Apartments, with low-rise Greenleaf Gardens beyond.
- Proposed Use: New apartment house, 4.0 FAR, 88 feet. This is R-5-C/PUD density but application would be for R-5-D/PUD to accommodate the proposed height.
- Other development data: 56% lot occupancy, 60 apartment units, 46 parking spaces.
- Public Benefits:

  +Modern yet contextual design complements Southwest development pattern;

  +Adds handsome building and population to help animate an isolated neighborhood near underutilized former school and homeless shelter;

  +Removes a vacant building that could become derelict;

  +As a public amenity, Applicant offers to landscape and create sculptural focal point in adjacent Delaware Avenue traffic circle.
- The site is within a large area designated Medium-Density Residential on the Generalized Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan.