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Testimony in opposition to Clark Realty Capital's Planned Unit Development at 2950 Tilden Street, NW

The building that Clark Realty proposes to construct at 2950 Tilden Street is inconsistent with the current R-2 zoning, in place since 1968, and a stark contrast to the two and three-story townhouses on the north side of Tilden. Features of the project also appear to be inconsistent with the current Ward 3 section of the Comprehensive Plan and with the Rock Creek West section of the new draft plan.

Section 1402.1 of the current plan addresses the need for affordable housing. Displacement of the elderly and moderate-income families who cannot afford to live in Ward 3 is a current public policy issue. It states that Ward 3 has the highest population of elderly in the city and that housing for the elderly should be increased particularly along transportation routes like Connecticut Avenue. Conversions and redevelopment have caused and will continue to cause escalating taxes and out price people who might want to live in the community. I found no mention of a need for luxury condos in that section. I'm not trying to suggest that this property should be developed as housing for the elderly—just that there is an argument against luxury development and a need to provide affordable housing.

Section 1402.3 says that general development pressures must be controlled and that developers of new multi-unit dwellings should be encouraged to incorporate setting aside up to 20% of the planned units for moderate income residents. Three units out of 49 equates to 6%. Clark could do much better to serve Ward interests.

The Ward 3 Environment section states that ward policies focus on improving and protecting the environment particularly by minimizing development close to stream valley parks to prevent erosion or other adverse impact on the park. The Tilden Street neighborhood already has one major violation of this policy—3883 Connecticut. The community does not want another.

Preservation of the District's shade trees is an important issue in the Plan. Clark not only plans no shade trees, but they cut down the trees that remained on the property when they finished construction of 3883 several years ago. Street level gardens and a green roof are hardly a substitute for shade trees.

The Clark structure will occupy most of the property's land surface leaving no space for transitions between it and adjacent properties. The Clark structure will eliminate any view from the north side of 3883, tower over the Kuwait Embassy, and create a canyon out of the parking lot of 3901 Connecticut. Clark's most recent construction in the Tilden

area—3883 Connecticut—is a perfect example of a building that is too large for its site. 3883 also provides evidence that an acceptable, let alone attractive, transition between properties that includes green space is not guaranteed just because it's pictured in the developer's pre-construction drawings.

The Clark design for 2950 Tilden is a significant departure from anything in the neighborhood. The community has almost unanimously declared it inappropriate in size, style, and material. The Rock Creek West section of the draft Comp Plan raises concerns about new development, particularly planned unit developments, where density has had a negative impact on traffic, parking and neighborhood character. The current Comp Plan requires that adverse impacts on traffic and parking should be avoided in new development. The Clark team has made only superficial changes and continues to tell the neighborhood how well their design will fit in the community. It is better suited to a larger piece of property more distant from a major arterial.

The Tilden Street property should be developed but in a style appropriate to the neighborhood and a density that will not create negative impacts on neighborhood quality of life. Their current plan does not protect the scale and character of the surroundings. The community is ready and willing to negotiate development of traditional townhouses as Clark originally planned or even a more creative townhouse complex that allows for slightly more density than semi-detached homes but still within the current zoning.