



FOREST HILLS CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

DEDICATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT, MAINTENANCE, PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF
A POSITIVE COMMUNITY SPIRIT IN THE FOREST HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD

GEORGE R. CLARK
PRESIDENT
PRESIDENT@FORESTHILLSDC.ORG

May 26, 2006

Sharon Schellin
Acting Secretary
Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, N.W. Suite 210S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Case 05-26

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2006 MAY 26 PM 4:02

To the Members of the Commission:

On behalf of the Forest Hills Citizens Association ("FHCA"), we hereby oppose the application for the planned unit development of a 49 condominium structure that fills the entire vacant lot at what is now called 2950 Tilden St., N.W., and which is zoned R-2 for eight townhouses. The North side of Tilden Street is occupied by many members of FHCA, and the issue affects the entire Forest Hills neighborhood.

This site is completely inappropriate for the development of a large condominium project. Tilden Street is a scenic Parkway that winds and descends from Connecticut Ave. to Rock Creek Park. Indeed the median contains the nation's smallest National Park. More importantly, Tilden Street is lined with townhouses, single-family homes, and large residences, many of which have now been converted to Embassies and Embassy residences. Granting this PUD application may well lead to a flood of other applications to convert some of the large Embassy properties to condominiums and to destroy the residential character of this fine street. You can be assured that it will be cited as a precedent for other attempts to develop large condominium projects on the residential streets leading into Connecticut Ave.

The development is inconsistent with the Ward 3 elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Because it is "inconsistent" with the Plan, it fails to meet the standard of not being "not inconsistent with" the Plan. The Ward 3 plan provides in § 1409.4(A)(3)(B):

FOREST HILLS CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
4401-A CONNECTICUT AVE., N.W., #209 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008
WWW.FORESTHILLSDC.ORG

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 05-26
EXHIBIT NO. 13

Examples of inappropriate infill locations include the swaths of green space fronting many apartment buildings, particularly along Connecticut Avenue (such as Cathedral Mansions, the Kennedy-Warren, and the Broadmoor); the few large interior spaces of certain blocks on Connecticut Avenue, particularly those behind historic apartment buildings or adjacent to park lands; and on very large lots in single family neighborhoods;

This proposed project fits the very definition of "inappropriate infill." It would occupy one of large interior spaces behind the historic Tilden Hall, and is adjacent to Melvin Hazen Park and is in a single-family neighborhood. The project should be disallowed for this reason alone.

But the sad history of this location provides another reason for the denial. Until a short time ago, this lot was completely wooded and added tremendously to the character of the neighborhood. This was even after the construction of the project at 3883 Connecticut Ave NW. A large stand of trees was removed shortly before the tree cutting regulations under the city's tree bill went into effect.

And when the 3883 building was built, the applicant advertised that it was building a ten story luxury apartment building and eight luxury homes. Those eight luxury homes are the ones that are allowed by the current zoning, and are shown in the sketch that the applicant showed with its promotional material for 3883. This is completely consistent with the recollections and position of the neighbors, as well as purchasers of the condominiums at 3883.

This project will face a row of townhouses which are among the oldest homes in the area. Having townhouses face them across the street is far more fitting with the character of the street in the neighborhood.

Parking on this street is already almost impossible at any time of day. Planning for 110 parking spaces in the 49 unit building will not solve the problem of parking for guests and other visitors. The amounts of parking (and the proposed prices for the units) also indicate that this is not a transit oriented development, but rather a luxury development close to transit.

The developer has not made any plans for the additional traffic that will be dumped onto eastbound Tilden Street. Any observer of that street will tell you that at rush hours the traffic at the light at Connecticut Avenue backs up past 29th St, which is where all the vehicles leaving the building, including trash trucks, delivery trucks, and moving vans, will have to do a U-turn on a street with only one lane of traffic in each direction with parking next to it. There has been no plan to deal with the situation.

The applicant's plans for landscaping are wholly imaginary. The entire lot would be excavated for parking and there will not be enough room to grow trees of any size at the site. Because the site was formerly occupied by many large and graceful trees, placing a concrete

Sharon Schellin
Acting Secretary
May 26, 2006
Page 3 of 3

building there with ornamental trees does not do the site justice. Eight townhouses are consistent with current zoning, the Comprehensive Plan, the previous representations of the applicant, the ability to make a large profit, and the ability to grow large trees.

There are also substantial safety concerns about the Kuwaiti Embassy. The project will have at least five balconies which overlook the Ambassador's office. We are offended that the applicant refused to allow a representative of the Kuwaiti government to speak at a meeting about the project. We have many embassy residences in Forest Hills. They are our neighbors too.

The applicant has also not revealed its "shadow study" which likely will show that there will be insufficient sunlight to grow trees or other plantings of any size.

Finally, this project shows no public benefits and no project amenities. Specifically, there is no project amenity relating to any benefit to the immediate neighbors as is required in section 2403.7. The only thing "special" about this project is that it will allow the applicant to make a greater profit than if it developed under matter of right zoning as it told everyone it would. There is no public benefit from impairing a 100 year old neighborhood, violating the Comprehensive Plan, and starting a march of condominiums onto our residential streets. The architecture is pedestrian at best, and even the applicant claims no more public benefit than that.

On behalf of the Forest Hills neighborhood, we ask that our residential character be respected and that the applicant be restricted to very profitable matter of right zoning.

Respectfully submitted,



George R. Clark
President
202-331-3200
GRClark@GeorgeRClark.com