

September 25, 2007

Patrick J. Lally
715 Third Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Chairman Carol J. Mitten
Zoning Commission
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street NW
Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Capitol Place, Zoning Commission 05-37

Dear Chairman Mitten:

As a resident of the 700-Block of Third Street, NE, I have been participating in community negotiations since early 2005 with representatives of the Louis Dreyfus Property Group on the Capitol Place planned unit development (Zoning Commission 05-37) scheduled for a hearing on October 1, 2007. The development site is directly across the street from my residence.

I support of this project and outline my reasons in this letter.

I have lived on the 700-Block of Third Street, NE, for 22 years and participated in negotiations on a PUD at this site in various forms since the Amy Weinstein/Potomac Development project proposal of 1988 (and subsequent permit renewals terminating in 1993. I care very deeply about this block and the adjacent neighborhood. One of the main reasons why I've participated in negotiations for two years since the very beginning is that all said and done whatever ultimately happens on the Dreyfus site will be right across the street from me and directly affect me.

In September of 2005 Dreyfus first met to discuss Capitol Place with a small and informal working group of neighbors directly affected by the proposed development. From that very time it became an iterative and growing process that soon included SPNA, CHRS, Sharon Ambrose, and the ANC -- all key stakeholders for the larger community. At each turn when it became clear that there was a need to include a key representative it happened and it originated at the behest of the working group...not LDPG... and the developer consented each time. The result has been an extraordinarily inclusive consensus process -- culminating in mediation of the final details these past few months -- and the result has been extremely positive. The Louis Dreyfus Property Group (LDPG) has accommodated the concerns of area residents at almost every step of the way and the result is a project that I wholeheartedly and enthusiastically support.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO.

EXHIBIT NO.

05-37
95

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 05-37
EXHIBIT NO. 95

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Let me give you an example. We have had direct and unfettered access to the project architect in an effort to improve the PUD's design. On the 15th of August, 2006, we all met with LDPG to discuss the PUD anew after it went "back to the drawing board." At that meeting SPNA's representatives specifically advised that any question on the merits of up zoning should factor in "quality architecture" as one of the "amenities" that we would weigh in the balance of considering an up zoning. Within a week of that meeting, Dreyfus asked for some examples of "quality architecture" that Cook + Fox could use in refining Capitol Place's design. I provided extensive examples with photos of District-based projects that have received recognition in successfully integrating new construction into historic districts and I sent these examples to our entire group. Cook + Fox incorporated many of these suggestions into their design for the PUD. I am attaching that document for your reference.

At the hearing you will listen to some outstanding concerns about up zoning of the PUD site. I have made it clear from the beginning of our negotiations with LDPG a PROPERLY DESIGNED project can accommodate both height and density without adversely affecting my block or the H Street corridor. I do not believe that this project would "blow up" the overlay as an organic planning device that must take into consideration the corridor's varying site conditions – especially considering the Office of Planning's good stewardship of the overlay since it was approved. And furthermore, I actually contend that there are factors at this particular portion of H Street that warrant additional height and density from a good urban planning perspective. You will have all that information in the Planning Office's report.

I am very pleased with the design that Dreyfus has come up with after these three years and it achieves a very good transition between the vast maximum commercial densities of NoMA to the west just separated from our street by a mere alley and the contiguous rowhouse neighborhoods to the east. The closed alley, no curb cut on Third Street, and discreet service access limited to the northwest portion of the site are all important concessions that the LDPG has made to the affected community and noteworthy considerations in the overall design that significantly limit adverse affect and I like these.

Cook + Fox has been very responsive to many of the design suggestions that have been proffered by the community these many months and I think they've come a long way. My overarching interest on this front is to produce a design that is elegant and new without replicating historic details and utilizing a lot of contextual elements that create a false sense of history or compromise architectural integrity. I think that this gateway block deserves something exceptional and not contextual.

My principal concern has always been historic preservation and I am always impressed when the adjacent historic fabric can be highlighted and celebrated by new design that respects not replicates historic buildings. More importantly, I am extremely wary of proposals to preserve façades and incorporate them into new construction. Absent saving historic structures in their entirety, engrafting a façade onto a new building is very rarely an acceptable preservation solution. In all of the years of work I did with the DC Preservation League, I know of only two projects citywide that really constitute "good

preservation" using the façade preservation methodology.

Historic Preservation I continue to believe that that single most important factor in preventing further incursions into our neighborhood is historic district protection. The irony here is that we wouldn't even be engaging in this PUD/up zoning debate if this were in the historic district. I look at the boundaries of NoMA coming right up my street...I see the proliferation of PUDs nearby in and around the corridor...and I see a future where development pressures in this northwest corner of Capitol Hill will only increase. This not only has all the potential to decimate my small corner of the world, but it has severe implications for the future of the northern boundary of the existing historic district along F Street. While the overlay and certain zoning measures are important safeguards in fostering our long-term viability as a neighborhood, the one law that consistently and definitively fends off incompatible development is DC Law 2-144, the Historic Preservation Act.

To help achieve this goal and mitigate any adverse affect on historic resources on the PUD site, the LDPG gas agreed to survey and nominate the most adversely affected areas of our community. This will 1) move the ball forward in providing residents with the tools they need to avail themselves of these protections should they wish; and 2) document any loss of historic resources should further demolition and encroachment take place.

Madam Chairman and members of the Commission, for the reasons I outlined above, I support this project and strongly encourage you to approve the Capitol Place project.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Lally

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mark Rusitzky
FROM: Patrick Lally
DATE: July 26th, 2007
RE: Successful Residential Projects

I have selected six recent residential projects in Washington DC that are among my very favorites. Any of these would greatly enhance H Street, NE, and add real and complimentary architectural value to the surrounding nineteenth century neighborhood. The common thread through all of these is that each is distinctly modern in its design approach, but accommodates either noteworthy historic resources or is located in an historic setting. Every one of these developments was considered by the city's Historic Preservation Review Board. I have noted in some of the narrative I provided where appropriate that some of these projects would not have achieved architectural merit without certain height and zoning allowances that enabled the architect(s) to create distinctive design features that heighten aesthetic appeal. Furthermore, these structures are "of their time and of their place" in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation and they avoid unnecessary contextualism, replicated historic details, or phony contexts where none had previously existed.

Lastly, I added a small final section on successful commercial projects in order to highlight the potential of what H Street could provide in terms of compelling retail and commercial design.

Residential Project List:

1. The Ventana
Shalom Baranes
2. Lofts 14/Cooper-Lewis
RTKL
3. The V:sio
Sumar Sorg
4. The Park Hill
Cunningham + Quill
5. Adams Row
Hickok Cole
6. The Tapes
Bonstra

1. The Ventana

912 F Street, NW

Shalom Baranes Associates, PC – Architect

Douglas Development Corporation – Owner

Faison – Developer



The Ventana was named one of “The Best of 2006” by Architecture DC magazine. The architect was given a 2006 Award of Merit for Architecture in the Winter 2006/2007 issue of “Architecture DC.” The award citation praised the unique design of the building and stated that it “contributes to the area’s rejuvenation while respecting its rich architectural heritage, which includes many beautiful commercial structures built early in the last century.” The Washington Post recently listed Faison as a “Top Five Condo Builder” in the Washington DC metropolitan area.

The Ventana is a mixed-use project with condominium units and 10,000 of street level retail. The cast-in-place concrete building features a dramatic 10-story curtainwall tower that sits adjacent to three, three-story historic rowhouses that have been carefully restored and reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board. The retail area includes a large skylight between the structures and creates an enclosed four-story courtyard behind the historic buildings. The adjacent historic structures and a tight site presented significant architectural challenges that are not dissimilar to those found on Square 752. During preconstruction, the neighboring buildings were found to have very shallow foundations that required underpinning. Existing soils were very poor, requiring the need for bracket piles and imported backfill. DAVIS installed 170 auger cast piles below a web of grade beams and pile caps.

2. Lofts 14/Cooper Lewis

Corner of 14th and P Streets, NW

RTKL – Architect

EHT Traceries – Architect

Metropolis Development Company – Developer



Cooper-Lewis



Lofts 14

Lofts 14, part of a four-part residential development that includes the Cooper-Lewis Condominiums and the Metropole, were all designed by RTKL. The project received the 2006 AIA Washington, DC Chapter "Washingtonian Magazine" Residential Design Award; the AIA Washington DC Chapter 2006 Residential Architect Award of Merit; and the 2005 AIA Potomac Valley Citation for Architectural Excellence. Transwestern and Delta Associates also gave the Lofts 14 project its 2005 Apartment and Condominium Industries Honor Award for Excellence as the "Best Overall Mid-Atlantic Condominium Project."

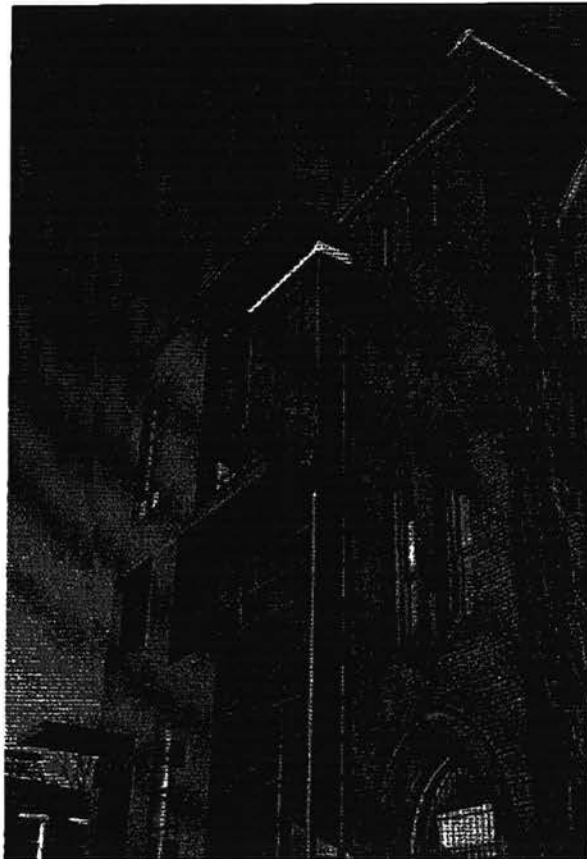
The Cooper-Lewis is particularly noteworthy for deftly handling a high-profile corner at one of Washington's major commercial corridors, now designated as the Greater 14th Street Historic District. This thoroughfare, with some exceptions, has the most similarity to H Street, NE, and it is useful place to draw parallels with H Street in successful new construction and PUD projects. The Cooper-Lewis employs a wonderful corner element to draw attention to the intersection of two prominent streets and uses a dramatic fusion of glass, steel, brick, and granite. It is also important to note that the overall design successfully incorporates existing historic commercial structures on 14th Street.

3. The Visio

2109 10th Street, NW

Suman Sorg -- Architect

Robertson Development -- Builder/Developer



The Visio received the AIA DC Chapter 2006 Washington Residential Design Award and the 2006 AIA Potomac Valley Chapter Honor Award for Architectural Excellence. Architect Suman Sorg designed a compelling new building with great respect for the historic church adjacent to The Visio. In accepting his award, Sorg said to the AIA, "The project is driven by context, but the point is not belabored. I wanted to start a dialogue with the church so I echoed the brick and used a similar scale." The Visio is similar in proportion to its neighboring structure, yet its generous glass, metal overhangs, and other modern elements give it an aesthetic that is "of its time and place" and a very modern, contemporary look. To maximize light penetration into the deep building, Sorg specified aluminum store-front windows, installed on a "cut away" corner of the building. This brings in light and provides a view of the old church from the interior. "The whole experience of the units is about looking outward," said Sorg.

4. Park Hill

4025 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Cunningham + Quill PLLC – Architects
PN Hoffman -- Developer/Builder



The Park Hill received the 2002 Merit Award from "Residential Architect Magazine."

This building establishes a precedent in bringing a very modern architectural vocabulary to an historic neighborhood and accomplishes it by integrating the overall design with the surrounding turn-of-the-century embassies and rowhouses. The new structure is composed of two brick and cast stone "bookends" that anchor the building to the ground. While these are fine, bridging these two pieces is a wonderful metal and glass facade and tower that rises eight stories to a penthouse. This is what I really love about the project.

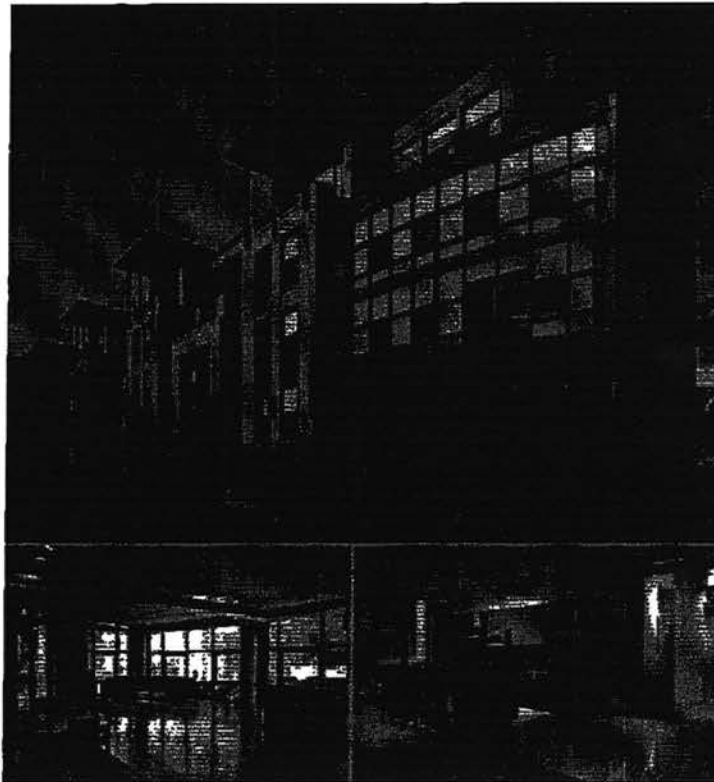
Explains Quill, "The idea was to pick up the height and scale of adjacent buildings with matching masonry bookends, and then insert this modern glass-and-steel mass in between. Zoning allowed us to go higher, so we created this light, airy sort of glass lantern that floats on top." The architects produced an attractive design within 80-foot-wide-by-90-foot-tall constraints. Cunningham and Quill's work in contemporary design maintains some of the high level of detailing found in historic architecture, but it does not replicate it and makes clear distinctions by using 21st-century materials. The HPRB described the project as "clearly modern but ... quite at home in its surroundings."

5. Adams Row

2301 Champlain Street, NW

Hickok Cole – Architects

PN Hoffman and Adams Investment Group – Developers



Adams Row received the 2006 AIA Washington, DC Chapter “Washingtonian Magazine” Residential Design Award; the 2006 “Residential Architect Magazine” Award of Merit; and the 2005 AIA Potomac Valley Citation for Architectural Excellence.

Located in Adams Morgan, the challenge for Hickok Cole was to fit this comparatively large building in a dense mixed-use environment. I think they came up with a wonderfully modern and playful massing solution that maintains the scale of the surrounding rowhouses and narrow storefronts. The architects used a variety of techniques to manipulate the 300-foot-long structure and respond to its site. These include interwoven balconies, a façade that steps back and forth, and a glass four-story volume at the south corner that resembles the prow of a ship. The last element is my favorite and I think it would work very well on H Street. The project architect Lawrence Caudle said “We held the building three feet off the street because it was so narrow and we asked for additional height to get the density the client wanted.” I also like the floor-to-ceiling metal-framed windows, sliding barn-style doors, and transparent partitions that are very responsive to the urban aesthetic.

6. The Tapes

1612 16th Street NW
Bill Bonstra -- Architect



The Tapes received the latest DC AIA "Washingtonian Magazine" Award for Distinctive Residential Design and it is published in the fourth edition of the "AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, DC" by Martin G. Moeller, Jr. This publication provides tourists, residents, and architecture aficionados information on nearly 400 of the city's most important architectural landmarks.

Located on a 27 feet wide site and flanked by two historic early twentieth century apartment buildings, this 9-story multifamily building features floor-to-ceiling glass and aluminum framing uniquely angled with exterior balconies. Steel "hoops" form a sculptural façade treatment that compliments the glazing pattern, completes the glass-bay geometry, and crowns the building.

Successful Commercial Components of Residential Buildings/Neighborhoods

What is happening in and around the intersection of 14th and P Streets, NW, commercially – in the context of developing neighborhood-serving retail to accommodate the new residential densities in the area – should serve as a useful guide for the future development of the H Street corridor. This is particularly true in the lower part of the thoroughfare closest to the H Street Bridge where infrastructure, zoning considerations, and development support higher density and height.

1. Lofts 14/Cooper Lewis

Corner of 14th and P Streets, NW

RTKL – Architect

EHT Traceries – Architect

Metropolis Development Company – Developer



I keep coming back to this particular project (See item #2. above) because its design is so cleverly handled for the intersection of two busy streets. I really enjoy the way the commercial/retail frontage is executed as well. It is crisp, modern, inviting, and pedestrian-friendly without replicating the historic storefronts incorporated into the overall project. And, although it is distinct and different from the historic fabric, it compliments the existing early twentieth-century show windows and allows the period architectural features to express themselves without fighting with them. The full-story glazing and extra-wide fenestration allows the retail component to become fully integrated with the street itself and the second-story cantilever provides it with a firm architectural delineation that is not applied or contrived.

2. Whole Foods

1440 P Street, NW

Mushinsky Associates/MR+A -- Architect:



The Whole Foods building received a 2001 AIA Potomac Valley Chapter Design Award and its appeal is summed up in the jury's comments "...loved this project's response to its context, and found its strong exterior detailing quite evocative of traditional open markets from a bygone era, yet clearly expressive of our time as well. The resulting imagery is executed in a way that contributes to its streetscape as if this place has been there for decades, yet without resorting to 'retro' devices. The architect's execution here transforms the day-to-day public function of food shopping from ordinary necessity into a rich spatial experience." Just like H Street, the chosen site was located on a long-neglected block with many commercial and industrial buildings that were either demolished or in a state of deterioration.

Whole Foods Market was the first business to move into the area. In doing so, it set out to be the anchor of the neighborhood and it became a catalyst for future development. While there was no existing contextual reference -- just like some portions of H Street -- the neighborhood did have a history of masonry buildings. The architects wanted to continue that pattern of development but provide a fresh interpretation. The design's repetition of horizontals and verticals, solids and voids creates a street façade that defines the retail mass with substantial columns and tall windows that not only mark the entrance but also invite pedestrian views deep into the interior.