

BEFORE THE ZONING COMMISSION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Case number 05-37

Testimony of Gary M. Peterson
Chair, Capitol Hill Restoration Society Zoning Committee
October 1, 2007

My name is Gary M. Peterson. I reside at 810 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. I am Chair of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS) Zoning Committee and I am here to testify on behalf of CHRS. I am a member of the community mediation team and support the settlement that is described in the letter submitted by the Mediator, Lee Quill.

First, I would like to thank the Director of the Office of Planning, Harriet Tregoning, for encouraging mediation. The negotiations between the parties had reached deadlock and we were heading for an acrimonious hearing. I was skeptical at first about any resolution coming from mediation but I am now pleased by the outcome. Perhaps we've set an example that can be used successfully in other cases.

Second, a big thanks goes to the architects, Cook+Fox, (and by extension to the applicant) for their openness in dealing with the mediation. Their work on making the building compatible with the neighborhood has been exemplary. This is the second project where the applicant has allowed the neighborhood to work with the architect. I think that it is no coincidence that, in both cases, there has been community support for the project. I hope this is a model for future developments.

Third, words cannot express our gratitude to the mediator, Lee Quill. He did a very good job mediating this case. He helped us find common ground on most issues and helped us work through our disagreements. He helped us achieve a much better result than we could have achieved on our own. He was absolutely remarkable in keeping our five-person mediation team focused. For these reasons I believe that he should be used as a mediator in other cases.

As to the proposed project, CHRS joins in the statement of the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association and will not restate its arguments here. CHRS supports the new design and believes that the mediation process has given the community a much better building than initially proposed by the applicant. The 3rd and H corner is still a design concern for CHRS and we ask the architects to take another look at this prominent corner because we believe the glass at this location is not consistent with historic H Street. Our concern is that others may copy this design as development proceeds down H Street and we want new projects along H to go back to original H Street for their reference and not become "inspired" by the glass corner at 3rd Street. We'd like to take away with this risk of "inspiration" by having this important corner be more compatible with H Street.

Finally, Dreyfus is tearing down a number of buildings that would be contributing structures if they were in a historic district. We support their mitigation of this

ZONING COMMISSION
CASE No. 05-37
ZONING COMMISSION
EXHIBIT No. 103
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 05-37
EXHIBIT NO. 103

demolition by agreeing to first surveying the subject square and the surrounding three blocks. As part of this mitigation, Dreyfus has also agreed to fund a historical survey of all of the buildings South of the H Street Overlay, and North of the Capitol Hill Historic District. CHRS has started a Beyond the Boundaries project on Capitol Hill and these surveys will be an essential part in the project's goal to create new historic districts or to add to existing ones.

In summary, I believe the mediation has arrived at a better PUD application for all involved parties and you should approve it taking into consideration our comments.