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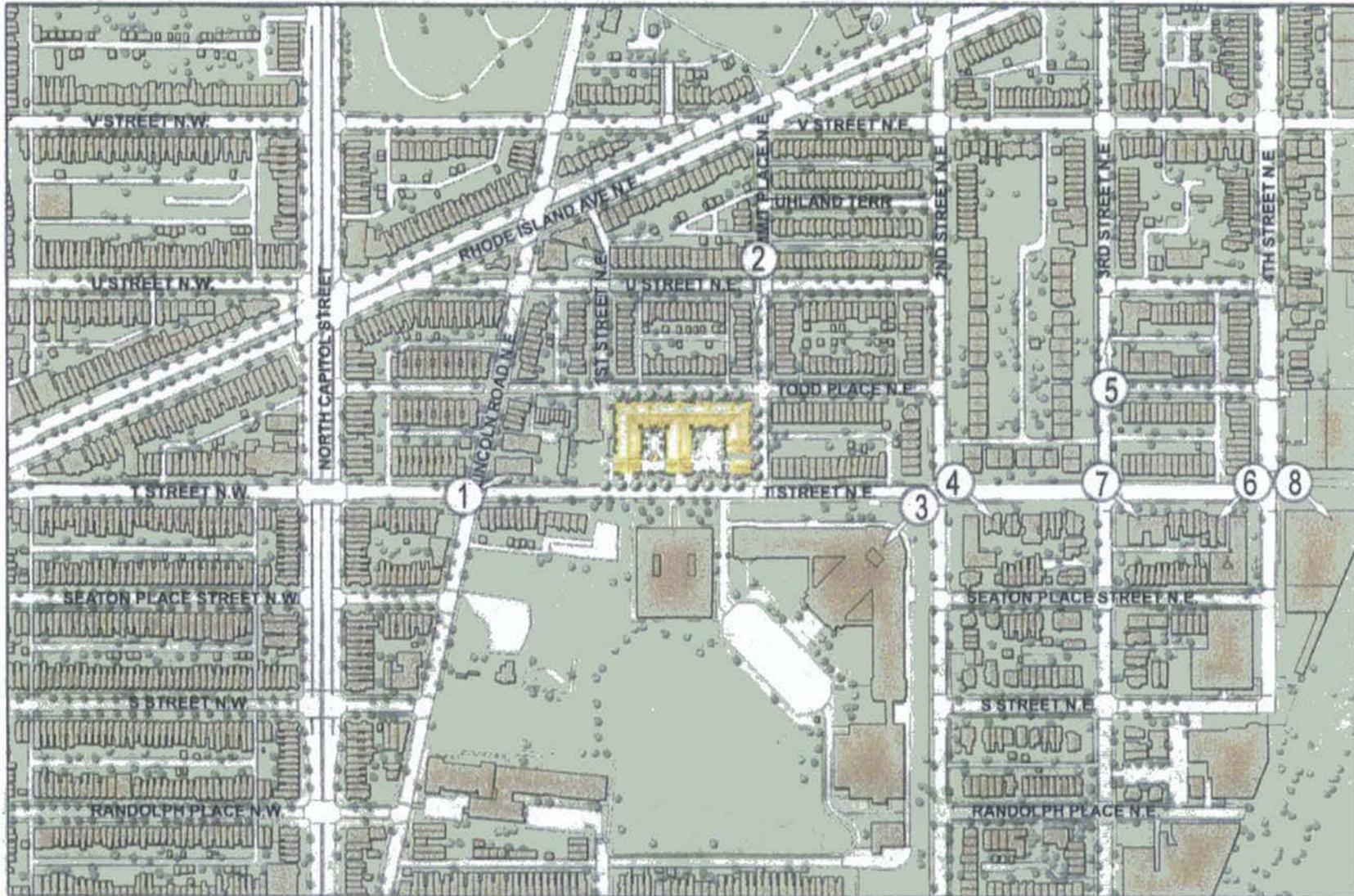
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**Zoning Commission Case No. 05-39
PUD for St Martins Apartments
116 T Street, NE (Square 3531 Lots 114 and 115)
Archdiocese of Washington and Catholic Charities, applicant
Eckington Citizens for Responsible Development,
Final Submission 26 February 2007**

Zoning Commission Case No. 05-39
PUD for St. Martin's Apartments
116 T Street, N. E. (Square 3531, Lot 114 and 115)
Archdiocese of Washington & Catholic Charities
27 January 2007



SLIDE #1: After careful study of the application, I have concluded that the proposal to construct housing on the site of St Martins Convent is more beneficial to the residents of Eckington than to allow an amorphous parking lot to remain. But I have also concluded that the proposal before you doesn't satisfy many elements of the comprehensive plan or meet the intent of the PUD regulations.

2401. The planned unit development process is designed to encourage high-quality developments that provide public benefits.

2403.3 The impact of the project on the surrounding area and the operation of city services and facilities shall not be found to be unacceptable, but shall instead be found to be either favorable, capable of being mitigated, or acceptable given the quality of public benefits in the project.

The proposed development is not of high-quality either in its design or in the benefits that it would offer the residents of Eckington. To the contrary, it neither respects the design integrity of adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhood, nor does it address the need for open space and recreational amenities for the neighborhood as a whole, nor does it promote social interchange. Furthermore, to date the applicant has offered no mitigation measures.

Comp Plan & Public Policies, Section 106: Respecting & Improving the Physical Character of the District and Section 708.2 (b): Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region



SLIDE #2: *Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 106 - Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District*

Also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 708.2 (b) Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region.

While the elevational drawing is a seductive graphic, if one looks on the architect's web site for what is likely to be the actual appearance of the project, one finds buildings that are primarily suburban, unnecessarily complex in façade design, and of inferior materials. The reality is that the proposed building, if allowed to be constructed, would not be an improvement to the neighborhood. The scale, materials, articulation, and proposed color scheme are inconsistent with the context. The project, therefore, would not improve the neighborhood.

Furthermore, any building, regardless of its program, that claims the St Martins Hill, will be highly visible and should be of the highest quality of design, it should be required to meet the test of exceptional merit.

Comprehensive Plan & Public Utilities, Section 106: Respecting & Improving the Physical Character of the District and Section 708.2(b): Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing...



SLIDE #3: Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 106: Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District

Also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 708.2 (b) Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region.

The two historic structures on the site -- both designed by a well-regarded Washington ecclesiastical architect -- as well as the houses in the surrounding neighborhood -- many also by master architects -- are far more restrained in design and in the use of materials, than that proposed for the apartment building. The project, therefore, would not improve the district.

Comprehensive Plan & Public Utilities, Sections 106 & 708.2(b) pertaining to appropriate design and improvement of the district.



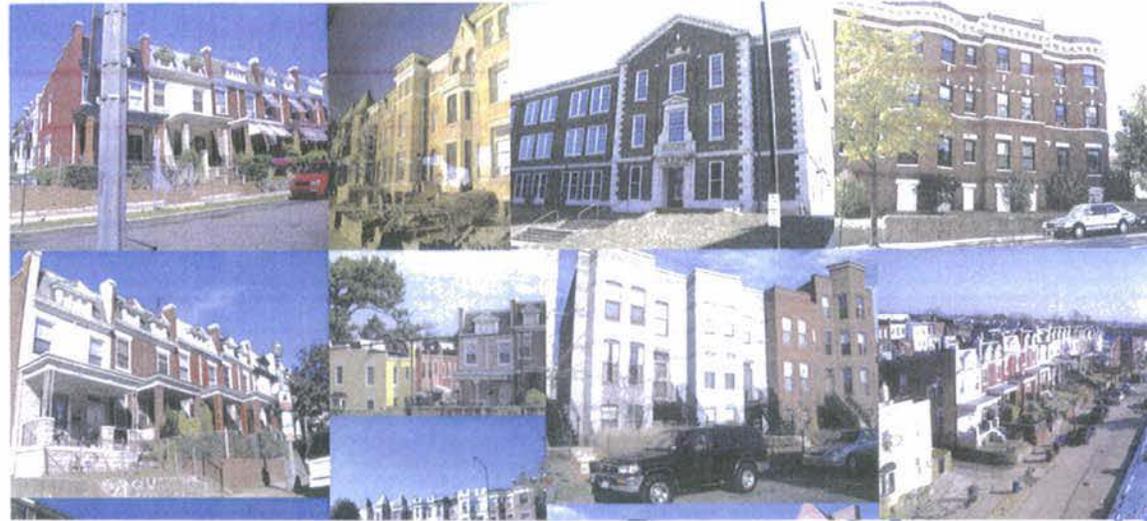
SLIDE #4: Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 106 - Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District

Also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 708.2 (b) Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region.

The proposed design is frenetic and, therefore, incompatible with the homogeneous rows of houses and small apartment buildings found in the neighborhood. Most of the streets are defined by buildings that repeat a module and continue the same materials and motifs for an entire block. Even the long facades of McKinley Tech and the Hyde School manage to be interesting and elegant without being extremely articulated as the proposed building would be. The proposed design does not respect its context, is of lesser quality than that of the surrounding buildings, and could not be considered to be an improvement to the neighborhood.

Comprehensive Plan & Public Utilities, Sections 106 & 708.2(b) pertaining to appropriate design and improvement of the district.



SLIDE #5. Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 106 - Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District

Also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 708.2 (b) Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region.

The architects have indicated that these were these images are the precedents for the proposed building. Unfortunately, what they have done is take an element or motif from almost every building in the vicinity and incorporated them into this single project. This is the variety of design and materials that one might find in a commercial district, but it's incompatible in this context.

The convent appears to the left of the elevational drawing, clearly indicating that the apartment building would tower over it and also clearly demonstrating that the frenetic design of the proposed building is inconsistent with the restraint of the convent.

Because the design of the project would be incompatible with its context, it could not possibly be considered to be an improvement to the neighborhood.

**Comprehensive Plan & Public Policies, Sections 106 & 708.2(b)
pertaining to appropriate design and improvement of the district.**



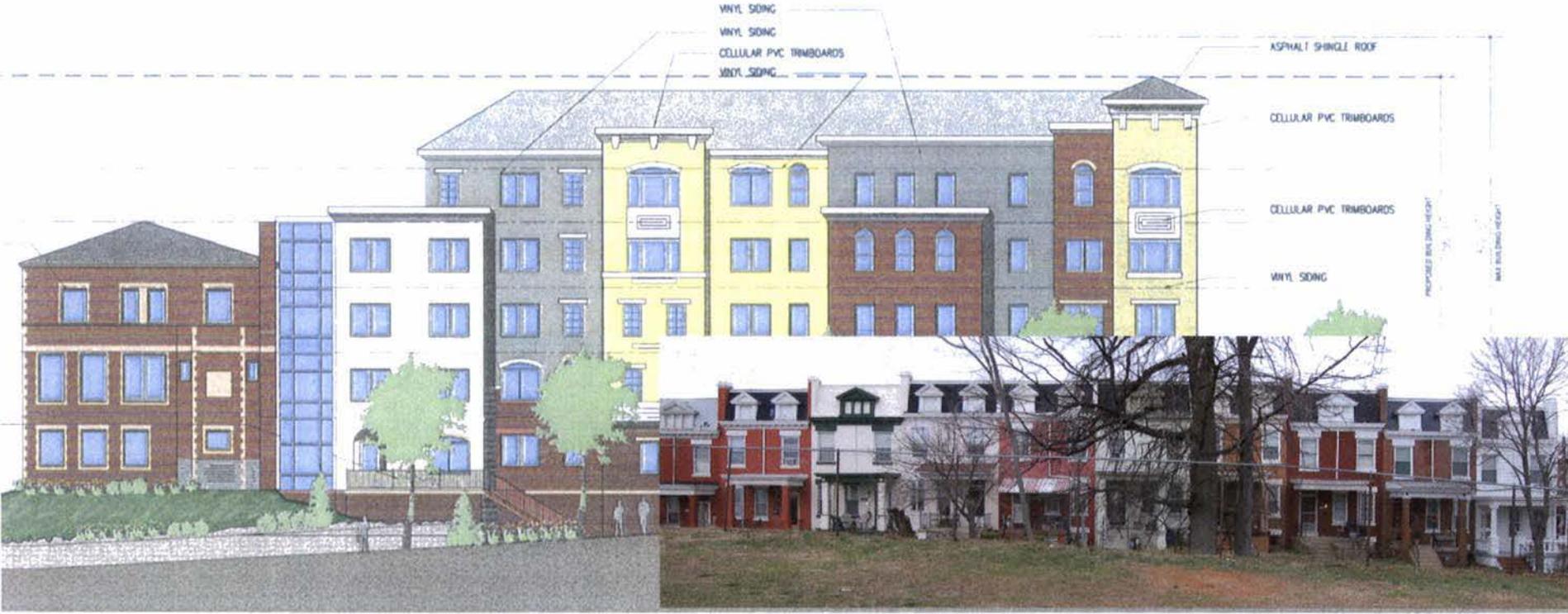
SLIDE #6: Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 106 - Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District

Also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 708.2 (b) Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region.

The proposed design is incompatible with its context in its excessive variety of motifs and materials. This side elevation is especially illustrative of the disjunction between the restrained convent and the overly exuberant proposed building. It, therefore, would not be an improvement to the neighborhood.

Comprehensive Plan & Public Policies, Section 106: Respecting & Improving the Physical Character of the District



SLIDE #7: Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 106 - Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District

also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 708.2 (b) Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region.

also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies: Section ,710.2 (e): Encourage building massing and scale of new development to be sensitive to established patterns;

The proposed building would be incompatible in scale with the proximate houses and, therefore, not an improvement to the neighborhood. Furthermore, it in no way respects the established pattern of residential development in the area.

Draft Cm Plan, Policy H-1.1.5: Housing Quality: Require...affordable housing to meet the same high-quality architectural standards required of market-rate housing.



ARCHITECTURAL ELEVATION



ARCHITECTURAL ELEVATION

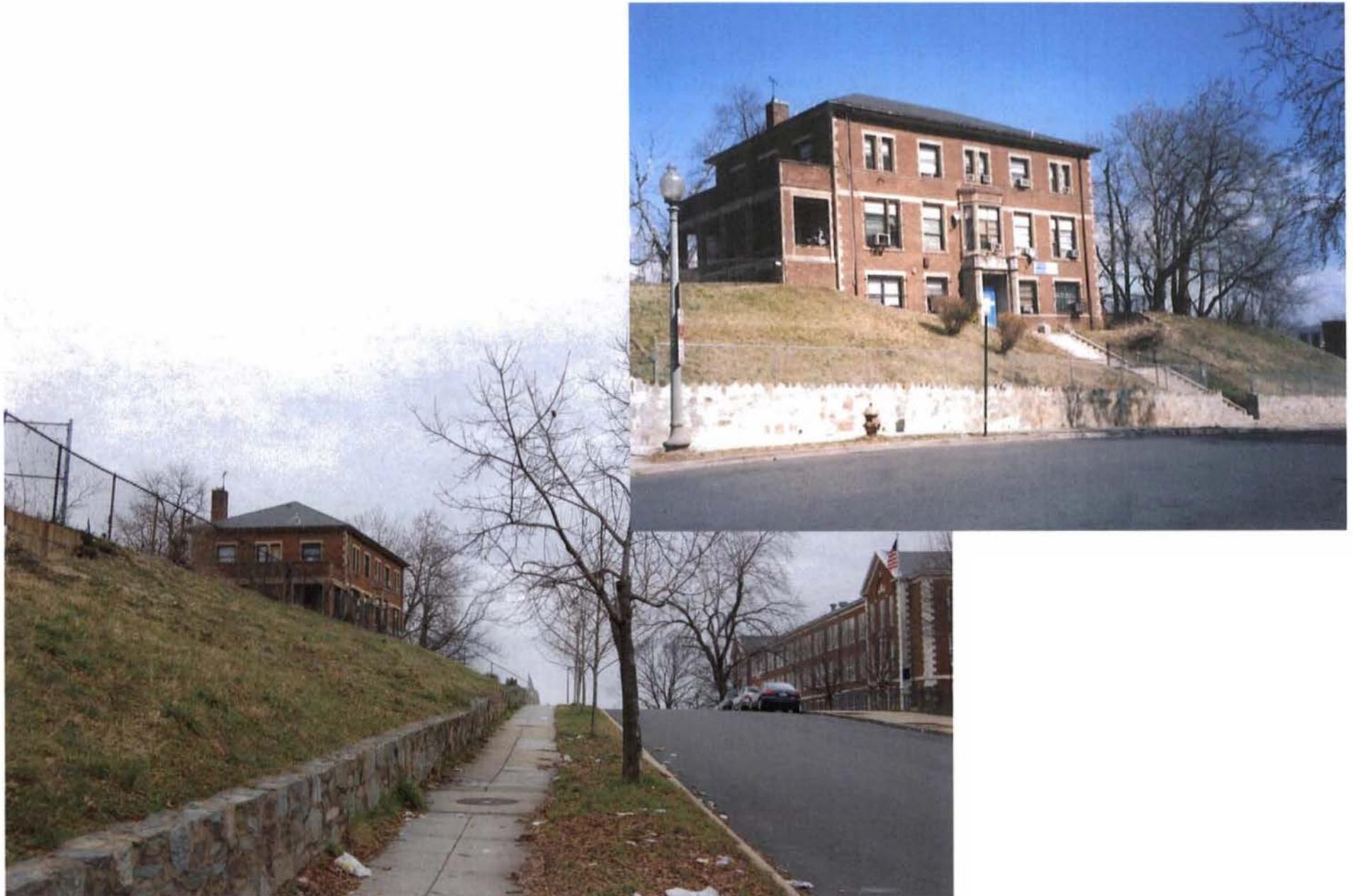
***SLIDE #8: Draft Comprehensive Plan, Policy H-1.1.5: Housing Quality:
"Require the design of affordable housing to meet the same high-quality architectural standards required of market-rate housing. Regardless of its affordability level, new or renovated housing should be indistinguishable from market rate housing in its exterior appearance..."***

also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 708.2 (b) Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region.

Addendum to presentation of 8 February 2007: At that hearing, ECRD stated that the use of vinyl siding for 60% of the facades of the proposed project would be incompatible with the high quality of material in the neighborhood. Upon further consideration, it is the opinion of ECRD that no matter how high the quality of the vinyl siding used nor how low the percentage of its use, it is incompatible with the surrounding buildings which are almost exclusively masonry. Eckington is not a neighborhood of clapboard buildings as are Cleveland Park, Takoma Park, Brookland, and portions of Chevy Chase. Therefore, vinyl has not been used on the market-rate housing in proximity to the project. Its use would definitely distinguish it from its surroundings.

Comp Plan & Public Policies, Section 105: Preserving and Promoting Cultural & Natural Amenities



SLIDE #9: Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 105: Preserving and Promoting Cultural and Natural Amenities

also

***2403.7 of PUD regulations: A PUD should provide public benefits
d. Preservation***

It has already been recognized by both the applicant and the Office of Planning that the convent has historic significance as a result of the important work that the nuns who lived there contributed to the community; its architecture, and the ensemble of the convent with the hill.

Addendum to presentation of 8 February 2007: While one might argue that moving the building to a corner of the site of the proposed apartment building could preserve its significance as the site of community work and also as an important piece of architecture (arguments that one assumes were the justification for DCPL's consent to allow the convent to be moved), one cannot argue that the relationship of the convent to the hill will be preserved if the convent is moved and the hill leveled. In fact, that significant relationship would be irrevocably lost. Additionally, the applicant has offered no guarantee that the convent won't be damaged in the move or that it would be repaired to its original condition should that occur. Therefore, the proposal could not be considered to be an acceptable preservation solution.

Comp Plan & Public Policies, Section 105: Preserving and Promoting Cultural & Natural Amenities



SLIDE #10: Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 105: Preserving and Promoting Cultural and Natural Amenities

also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 106 - Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District

also

Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section, Section 701: "... promote the protection, enhancement, and enjoyment of the natural environments and to promote a built environment that serves as a complement to the natural environment, provides visual orientation, enhances the District's aesthetic qualities, emphasizes neighborhood identities, and is functionally efficient."

Also

2403.3: A PUD should provide public benefits: d. Historic Preservation and e. Environmental Benefits

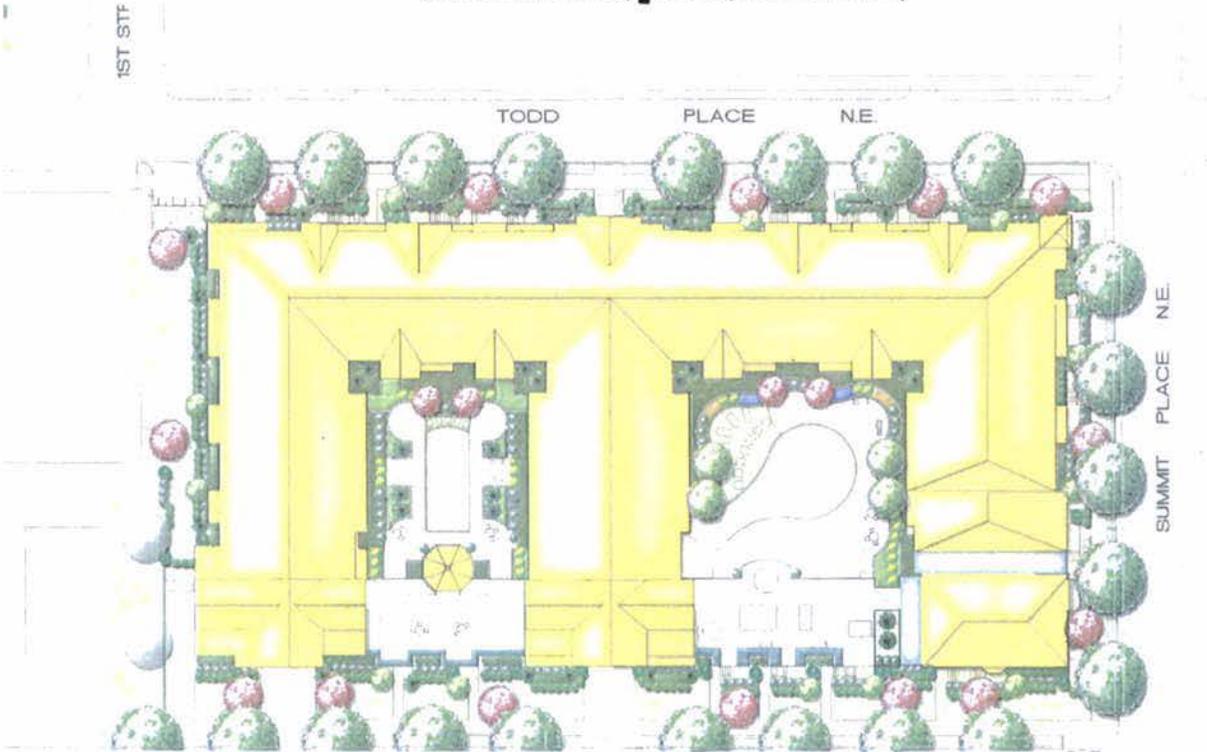
The steep slopes that characterize the site with significant changes in grade -- approximately twenty feet, between the street frontages and the highest elevation near the center of the site -- would be demolished. The hill, one of the highest in Northeast Washington, is a character-defining feature of the neighborhood as well as of the city as whole, especially as one enters the city from the northeast. Furthermore, while residents of the area are not entitled to physical access to this private property, they do have visual access to the Washington Monument, National Cathedral, and the city-scape. This would no longer be the case if the project were allowed to go forward as currently designed.

This could not be considered to be 1) an acceptable historic preservation solution, nor 2) an instance of respecting the physical character of the district, nor 3) providing visual orientation, nor 4) an environmental benefit.

Removal of the hill is an extreme measure and unnecessary in order to provide affordable housing and, further, should not be done in the absence of an environmental impact statement.

Comp Plan & Public Policies, Section 111: Providing Diversity & Overall

Social Responsibilities



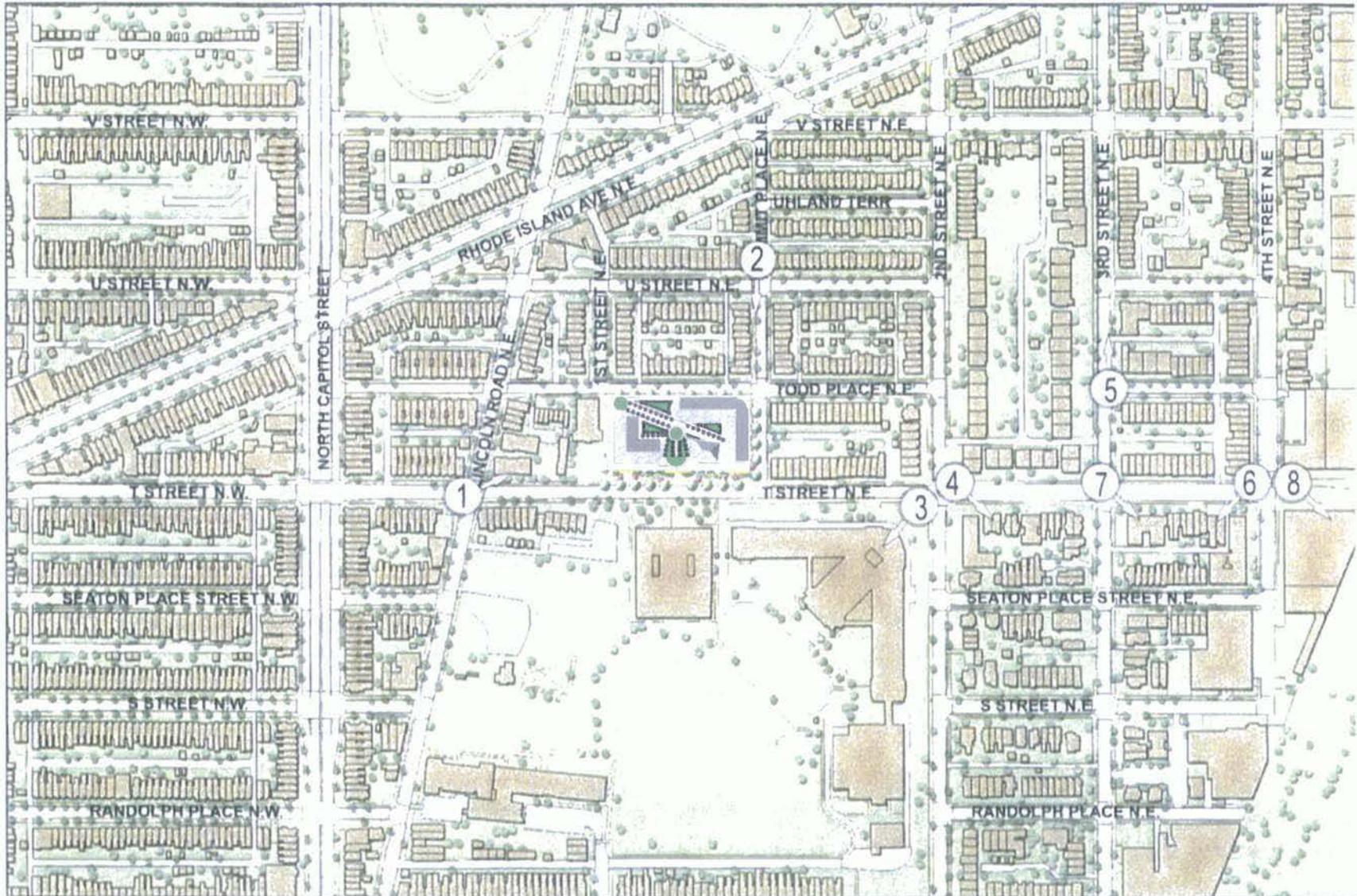
SLIDE #11: Comprehensive Plan and Public Policies, Section 111 - Providing Diversity and Overall Social Responsibilities

also

2403.3: PUD regulation: The impact of the project on the surrounding area shall be favorable.

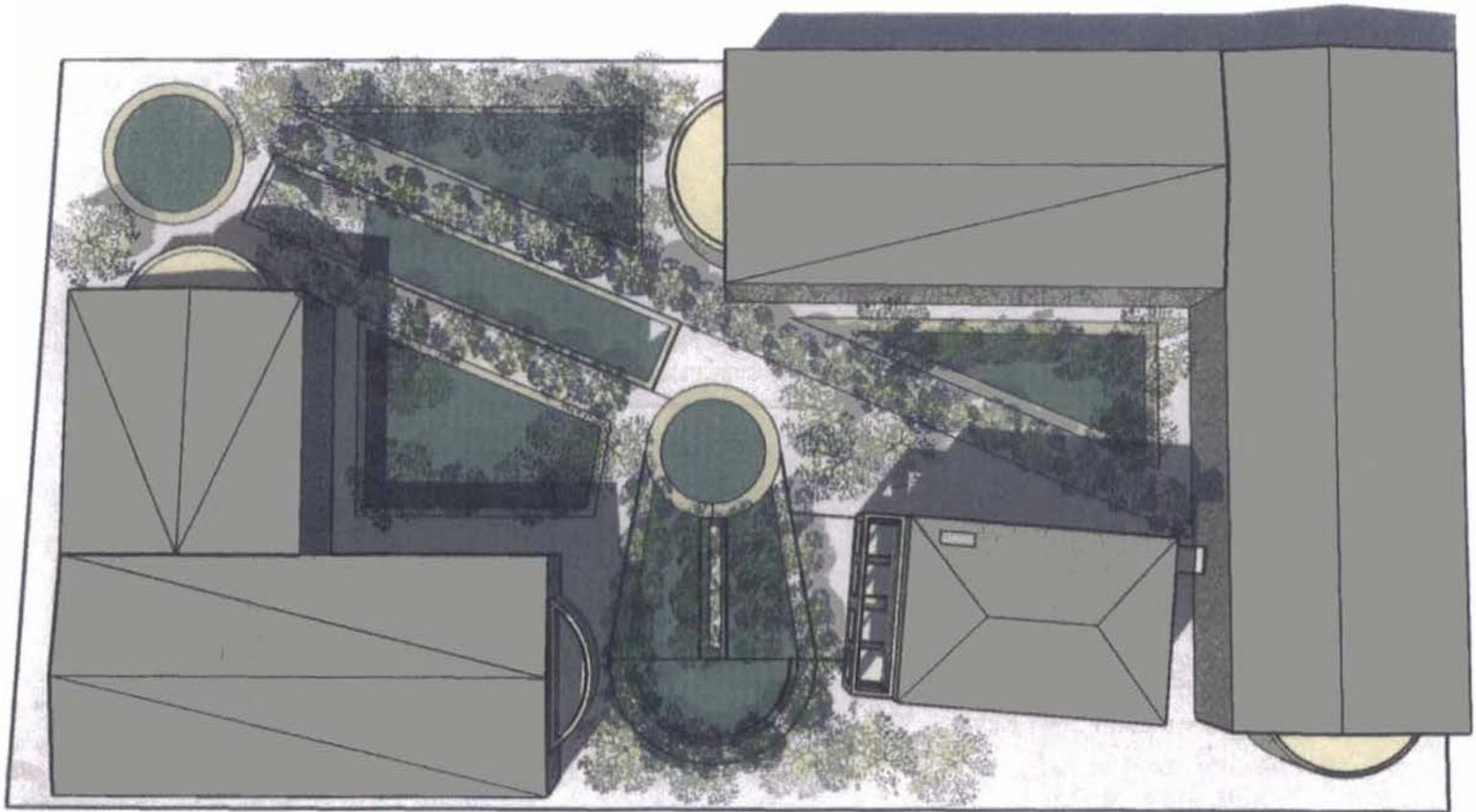
The proposed apartment building would be an impenetrable fortress that that would not permit social interaction with the neighbors; an unfortunate oversight in a neighborhood that provides, with its front-porch row houses, a superb example of architecture that effectively promotes community interchange. The project, therefore, does not respond to social responsibility for the surrounding residents nor would it produce a favorable impact.

**ECKINGTON CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT
PROPOSAL FOR ST MARTIN'S APARTMENTS**



SLIDE #12: While the Eckington Citizens for Responsible Development would prefer an R4 matter-of-right project in this location, it finds that 1) an appropriately-designed residential project is preferable to a parking lot, 2) it believes in the mission of this project, and, therefore, 3) it would be willing to compromise by accepting a project that complies with R5A zoning, i.e. a 3-story garden apartment scheme.

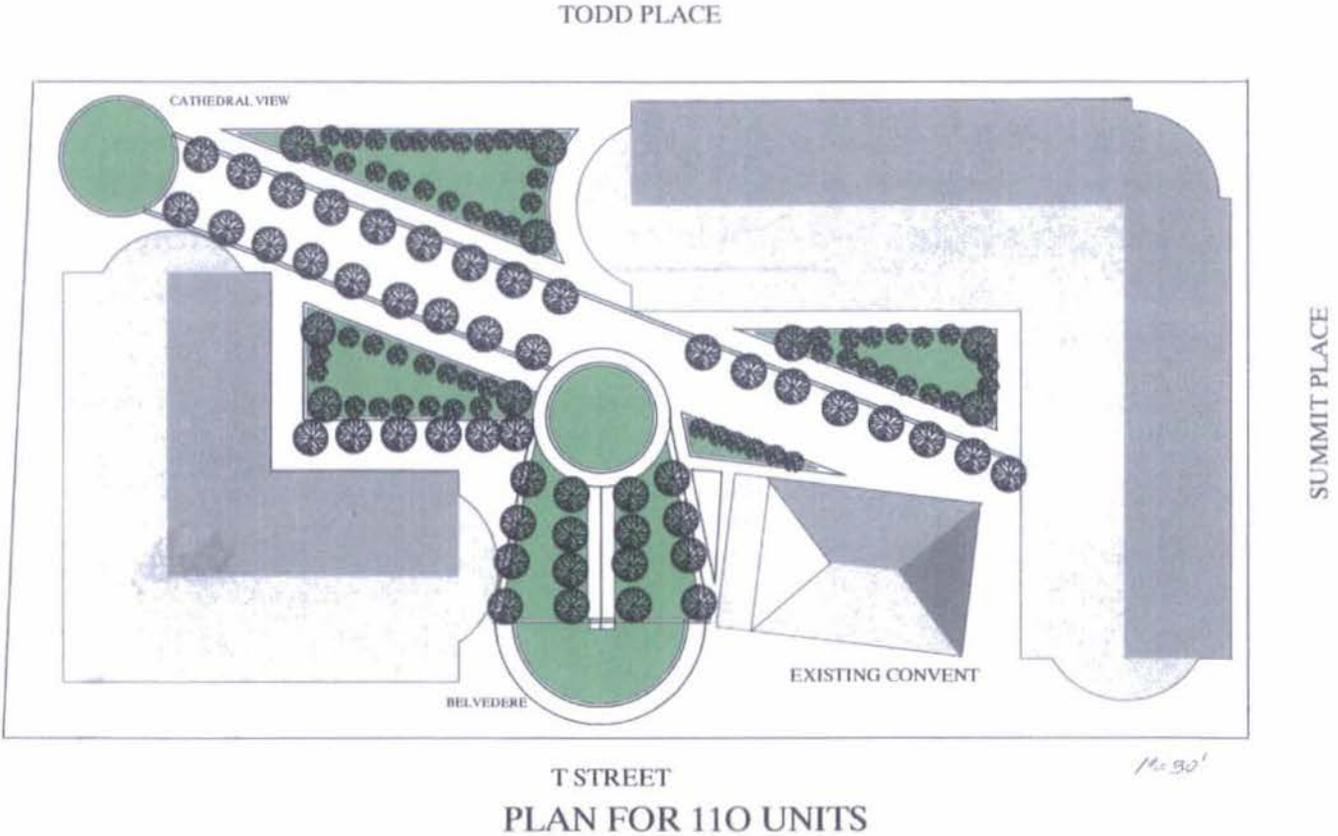
**ECKINGTON CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT
PROPOSAL FOR ST MARTIN'S APARTMENTS
AERIAL PERSPECTIVE**



Aerial Perspective

SLIDE #13: This proposal would not require removal of the hill, relocation of the convent, be an impenetrable fortress, nor block visual access to the monuments and cityscape

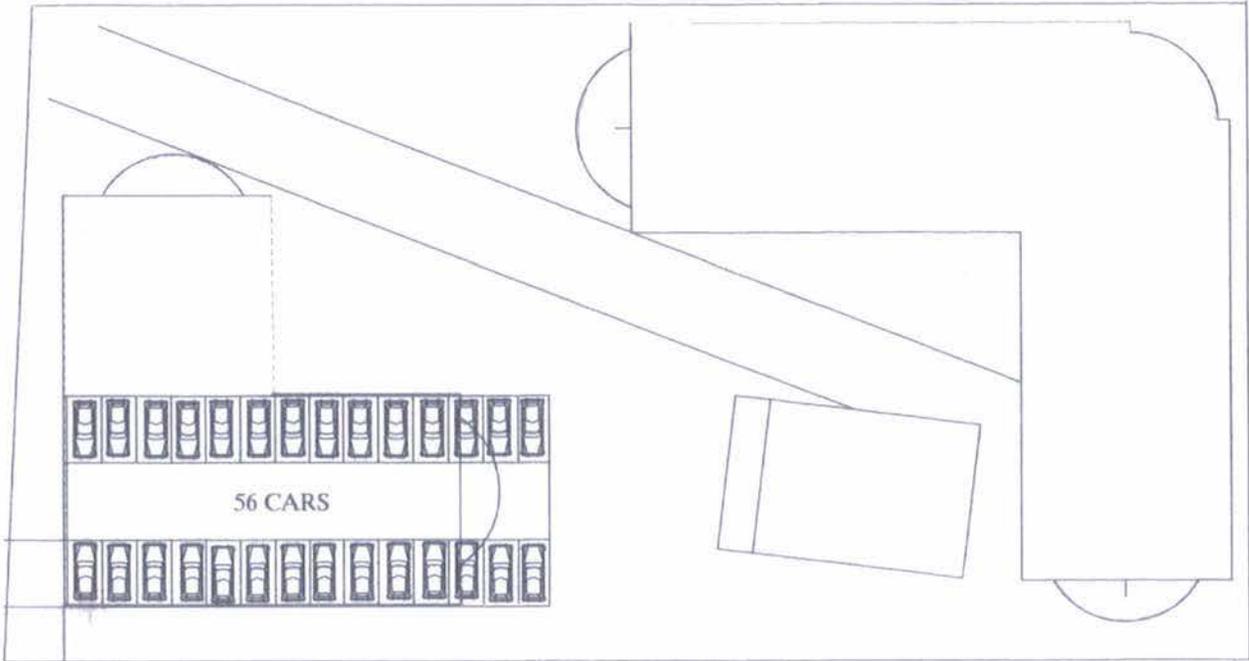
**ECKINGTON CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT
PROPOSAL FOR ST MARTIN'S APARTMENTS
PLAN FOR 110 UNITS**



T STREET
PLAN FOR 110 UNITS

SLIDE #14: This proposal would provide 110 units. It would be better integrated with the neighborhood and would even provide a belvedere accessible to neighbors for viewing the city-scape below. This would be in stark contrast to the applicant's proposal to build a gazebo within the fortress-like project that would not be an amenity to other residents of the neighborhood.

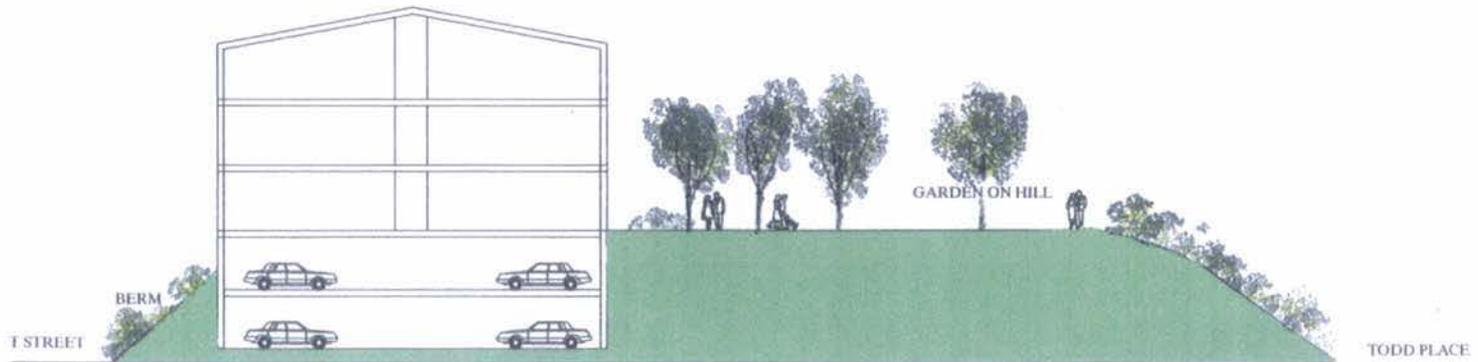
**ECKINGTON CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT
PROPOSAL FOR ST MARTINS APARTMENTS
PARKING PLAN**



PARKING PLAN

SLIDE #15: This proposal would provide 56 parking spaces, i.e. one space for every two units as required for affordable housing.

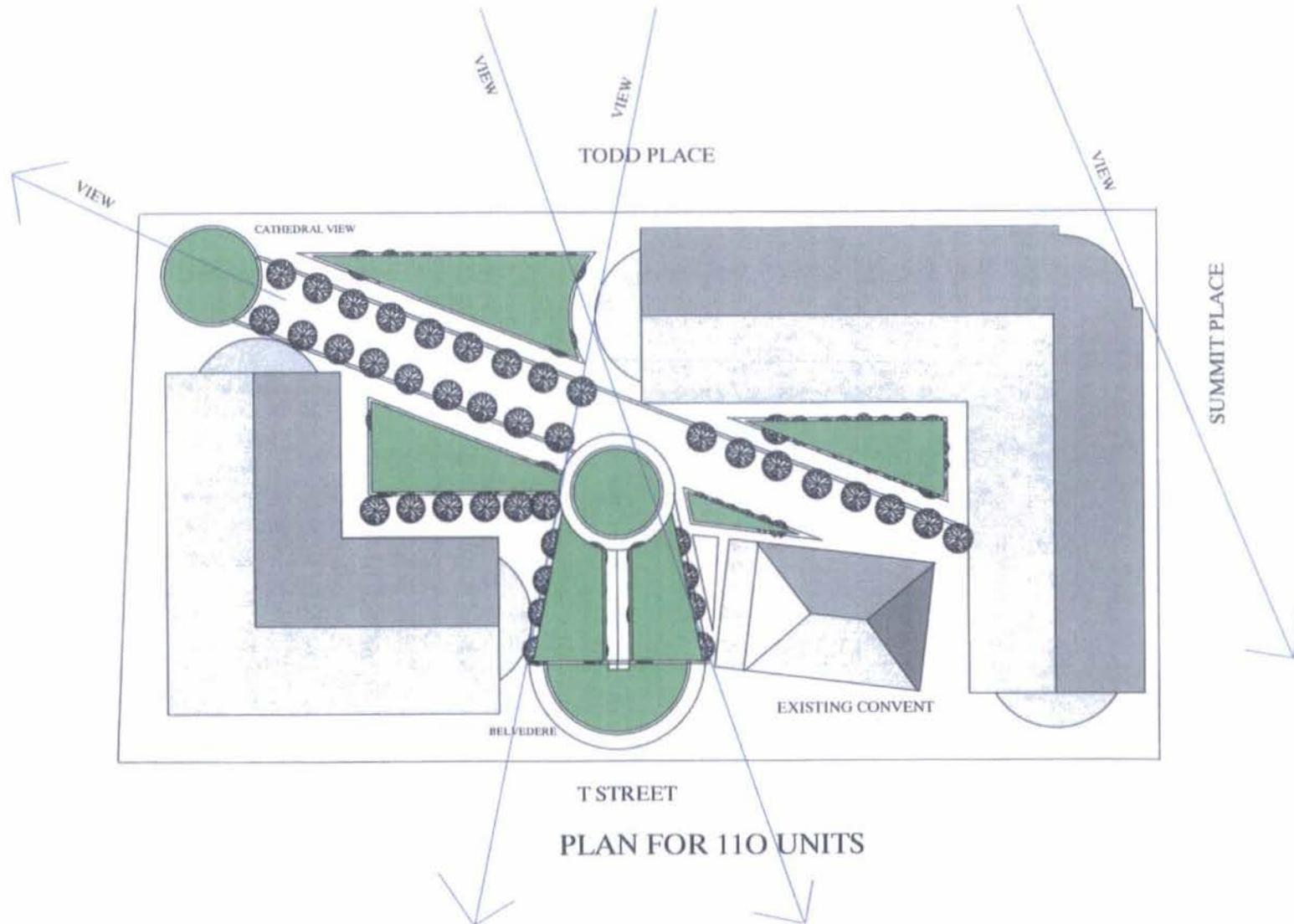
**ECKINGTON CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT
PROPOSAL FOR ST MARTIN'S APARTMENTS
SECTION THROUGH PARKING**



SECTION THROUGH PARKING

SLIDE #16: This proposal would be three stories in height so that, without removal of the hill, the apartments would be equal in height to that of the proposed building but the composite effect would be far less imposing. As the drawing indicates, the parking could be provided without removing the hill.

**ECKINGTON CITIZENS FOR RES. RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT
PROPOSAL FOR ST MARTIN'S APARTMENTS
VIEWS THROUGH THE SITE**



SLIDE #17: This drawing indicates that the ECRD proposal would provide views through the site.

The elevations have not been designed because this is not a proposal but simply a demonstration that there are other ways of responding to the program and the context. The expectation is that the elevations would be calmer than those the applicant proposes for his five-story building. They would not be a slavish imitation of the front-porch row houses of a century ago. Instead, they would be a creative and contemporary response to surrounding cues.

This is only one of countless designs that could provide affordable housing on the St Martins site meet while also satisfying the requirements of the comprehensive plan and the PUD regulations, and that would result in a project that would be an amenity to the neighborhood and embraced by its residents.