EXHIBIT "A"

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF VARIANCE APPLICATION FOR 5TH STREET AND OAKDALE PLACE, N.W.

The subject property is part of the LeDroit Park Initiative - which is a public-private partnership, consisting of Howard University and Fannie Mae, seeking to redevelop and improve dilapidated property near the University. The housing portion of the initiative, which includes the subject property, entails the rehabilitation of 28 vacant homes and the construction of new homes on 17 vacant lots located adjacent to the University in the historic LeDroit Park neighborhood. (See the two attached Washington Post articles for more information on the initiative.)

The subject property is a vacant lot which was previously improved with 6 small row houses which fronted on 5th Street, N.W. The applicant is proposing to develop the property with two structures: (1) a flat which contains two dwelling units; and (2) a single-family townhouse unit.

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OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The units were originally designed to include one off-street parking space for each unit, as required by Section 2101 of the Zoning Regulations.

Because the subject property is located in the LeDroit Park historic district, the plans for the proposed housing units were reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board ("Review Board") for compatibility with the historic district. The Review Board approved the design of the buildings but would not approve the curb cuts which were necessary to access the off-street parking spaces. Instead, the Review Board advised the applicant to seek variance relief from the parking requirements. (See attached Staff Report and Recommendation of the Historic Preservation Review Board which was approved and adopted by the Review Board on November 19, 1998).

BZA
CASE No. 16438
EXHIBIT No. 8

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16438
EXHIBIT NO.8

This application requests variance relief based upon the historic character of the property, the exceptional nature of the redevelopment initiative and the practical difficulties which would result if the property could not be developed due to the conflicting mandates of the city's zoning and historic laws with respect to the subject property.

Howard Seeks Ideas For LeDroit Park

HOWARD. *From Page 1*

hood.

In the first phase of the "LeDroit Park Initiative," begun two years ago, Howard undertook the physical rehabilitation of a section of Georgia Avenue, including a $6 million renovation of Howard University Hospital's emergency and trauma center and the conversion of a liquor store into a police substation. The school also opened a community association in what used to be a convenience store.

Last August, it began renovating 28 unoccupied, boarded-up properties and 17 vacant lots on five neighborhood blocks that it had long owned and neglected.

The school earlier this year offered the first opportunities to purchase the newly renovated homes to its own employees with an offer of financial assistance—a grant of 3 percent of the cost, with a cap of $5,000. Howard intends to extend the offer to D.C. police officers, teachers, firefighters and members of LeDroit Park associations, said Howard Vice President Hassan Minor.

Howard's major partner in the LeDroit Park renovation project is Fannie Mae, the largest provider of home mortgages in the nation, which is using the initiative as a model for use across the country.

"The thing that is unique about this is that you have got a new kind of partnership between a university, which is committed to a community, and a strong business and a source of funds. That's us," said Jamie S. Gorelick, vice chairman of Fannie Mae. The agency awarded $5 million in grants last week to 14 universities across the country as part of its University-Community Partnership Initiative, which it first tested with Howard.

Howard already has invested $40 million into the park area and the Georgia Avenue corridor. Fannie Mae and the Fannie Mae Foundation have invested or committed an additional $10 million. Riggs Bank and other Fannie Mae lending partners have committed $20 million, and Howard wants the District government to invest $5 million to upgrade streets, landscaping and other public infrastructure, and other government entities to invest another $20 million.

"What's also unique here is that we are now going to be able to show other potential investors what it could look like if we could all invest together," Gorelick said. "That's the beauty of it. This is not charity. This is not sort of a pie-in-the-sky vision. This is a business decision that we've made and that we think we can signal to others that there are business opportunities for them, too."

The area affected is bounded by North Capitol Street to the east, Michigan Avenue and Columbia Road to the north, Sherman Avenue and Ninth Street to the west, and Florida and Rhode Island avenues to the south. It includes all of LeDroit Park, most of Bloomingdale and parts of other neighborhoods as well,

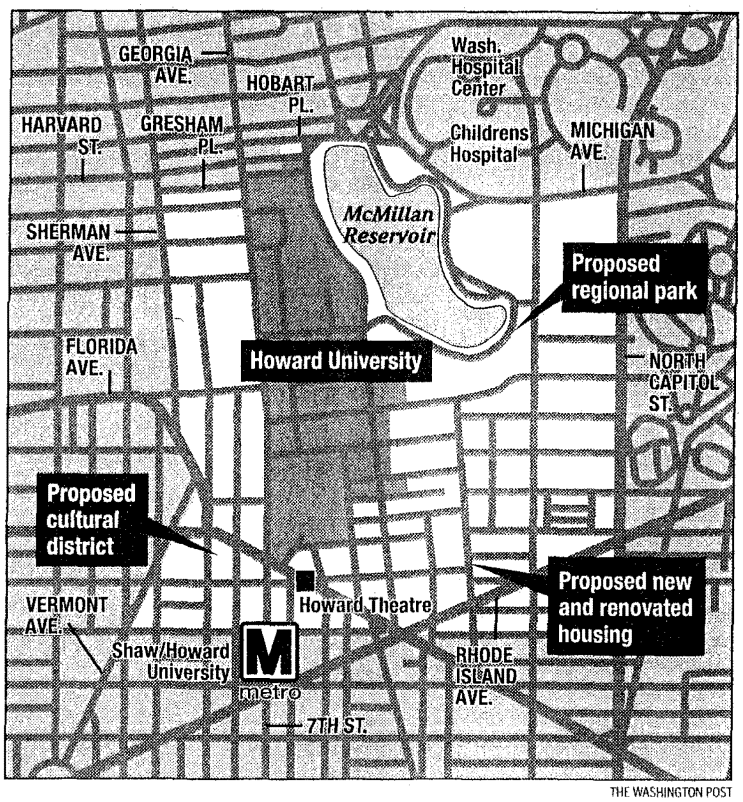
The newest stage of the project has several components. It envisions turning the McMillan Reservoir, now fenced off from public use, into a public park with trails and landscaping, including a more attractive fence. The Army Corps of Engineers reservoir, which is part of the city's water supply, was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead Jr., who also designed Central Park in New York City.

Howard also seeks to create a cultural district around the Shaw Metro station at Seventh and S streets NW. It hopes to attract a federal arts agency; the National African American Museum, which originally was intended for the Mall; and a new jazz museum. It also would include a renovated Howard Theatre, which once hosted nearly every major African American entertainer of this century, from Duke Ellington in the 1930s to the Supremes in the 1960s.

"We think this is a marvelous, marvelous opportunity in the District of Columbia, and one of those rare circumstances where there is really no apparent loser," Swygert said. "We're talking about the development of space and land owned and controlled by the government that will result in no disruption of any business or any private home or residence."

LeDroit Park Initiative Impact Area

Howard University has announced a plan to revitalize the historic LeDroit Park neighborhood surrounding its campus. The plan includes building and renovating housing, as well as fixing sidewalks, planting trees, installing lighting and adding signs. University officials also are lobbying for a federal office building, for making nearby McMillan Reservoir into a regional park and for creating a cultural district that would include a refurbished Howard Theatre, a jazz museum and the National African American Museum.



THE WASHINGTON POST

Still, Swygert said he expects some community criticism.

"Will some folk object?" he said. "I suppose there will be serious questions the community will have regarding traffic. Clearly some folk will want, and I think should, be invited to the table so there is a full and robust discussion. This is not a one-institution initiative, but the objections to it are not apparent to me."

Some community activists predict there will be serious discussion over some of the plans, especially the notion of turning the entire area around the reservoir into parkland. Some neighborhood activists have long discussed using part of it for economic development.

"That's going to be a pitched battle," activist Dorothy Brizill said.

Still, Brizill and other activists said they are pleased that Howard University finally is trying to repair its relationship with the community—despite some bumps in the road.

"I think they are trying for a change," said Jim Hill, an activist with the LeDroit Park Civic Association. "Historically they have not made an effort. This time they are trying to make an effort and we are pleased."

Hill said the association and other community organizations have had some deep disagreements with Howard over implementation of the LeDroit renovation project. One point of contention came over how to renovate some houses. In one area, Howard proposed making the houses look modern, while community activists wanted architecture that reflected the area's historic past.

Hill and Brizill agreed that overall, the situation is improving.

"There has been a terrible relationship between the university and the community over the years," Brizill said. "The relationship has gone a long way to getting better."

In LeDroit Park, Howard Is Teaching by Example

By Rudolph A. Pyatt Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the book "Washington at Home," LeDroit Park is depicted as a neighborhood that conveys a strong impression of an earlier era in the District's development.

But with the decline of many of LeDroit Park's older residences accelerating after World War II, the neighborhood fell victim to population turnover, crime and other social ills by the 1970s, according to the illustrated history of neighborhoods in the nation's capital.

In an effort to improve the situation, the LeDroit Park Civic Association tried unsuccessfully several years ago to get Howard University actively involved in the neighborhood.

Now Howard is responding to its neighbors, taking the lead in implementing an ambitious but sorely needed community revitalization plan.

Howard's *LeDroit Park Initiative* represents a major shift from the university's previous land-banking policy. It is, at the same time, a tangible example of a dramatic move to more active involvement with the community under H. Patrick Swygert, who was appointed president of the university three years ago.

The plan for this new initiative is, without question, the most significant redevelopment proposal to be unveiled in the District since the master plan for the revitalization of Pennsylvania Avenue was approved 23 years ago. City officials should endorse the Howard initiative as a prototype for revitalization of other neighborhoods.

After buying and holding blighted property near the campus for decades, Howard is converting its holdings to more productive uses. With Fannie Mae as a strategic partner, the university is rehabilitating 28 unoccupied houses and developing housing on 17 vacant lots for sale to home buyers.

That, however, is only the initial phase of a comprehensive plan to revitalize the historic LeDroit Park neighborhood and others around the university.

"The *LeDroit Park Initiative* presents an opportunity to demonstrate in our nation's capital that sustainable, comprehensive revitalization can be achieved in an urban area with private and public investment capital," Howard University Vice President Hassan Minor Jr. explained in a summary of the plan.

With support from the Fannie Mae Foundation, the university has developed a detailed streetscape plan for improvements in public infrastructure and several new land-use initiatives designed to help LeDroit Park and surrounding neighborhoods.

Howard intends to have the fence removed from around the McMillan Reservoir near the campus and convert the area into a park. The plan further calls for development of a town center containing shops, restaurants and other amenities.

Howard also wants to build a major office building south of the campus over a Metro station and develop what university officials envision as an extension of an arts district the city plans to develop in the Seventh and Eighth streets corridor downtown. Thus, Howard plans to build a jazz museum, renovate the Howard Theater and encourage the Smithsonian Institution to build its National African American Museum in the revitalized district around the campus.

Earlier, Howard signaled its intention to spur revitalization on Georgia Avenue, once a thriving commercial thoroughfare, just west of the main campus. In an attempt to create what Minor described as a "viable and stable community around the campus," the university bought the former Wonder Bread Bakery and moved its data center into the building, which also houses retail shops.

Later, the university purchased a liquor store near the campus and converted it into a security office, staffed jointly by the Howard and Metropolitan Police departments. At the same time, the university renovated its hospital on Georgia Avenue, adding a new emergency room and trauma center.

The idea for this forward-looking strategic plan is Swygert's. But Minor, project director for the initiative, credits James Johnson, Fannie Mae's outgoing chairman, for articulating the broad philosophy underlying it.

Fannie Mae, a congressionally chartered stockholder company, is the nation's largest provider of home mortgages. But Johnson "was talking about a role [for Fannie Mae] beyond providing mortgages," Minor said, recalling an address Johnson made several months ago to business leaders and public officials. "He talked about rebuilding America's communities."

Not only did Howard's revitalization plan "resonate" with Johnson, but "he gave it his highest support," Minor said last week.

Fannie Mae is providing low-fixed-rate mortgages for home buyers, but the initiative is also being supported by other lenders, including NationsBank, GMAC, Riggs, Crestar and Industrial banks.

Bell Atlantic-Washington, D.C. Inc. has agreed, meanwhile, to wire LeDroit Park, providing state-of-the-art telecommunications access to the university and the Internet.

The LeDroit Park Initiative is the essence of economic development. Although spearheaded by Howard University, it is a public-private partnership model that can and should be replicated in other D.C. communities.

City officials should endorse the Howard initiative as a prototype for revitalization of other neighborhoods.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1998

Howard U. Broadens Area Plan

Residents' Input Urged

By VALERIE STRAUSS
Washington Post Staff Writer

Howard University is broadening a multimillion-dollar project to develop the neighborhood around its Northwest Washington campus, hoping to turn a fenced-off reservoir into a park, as well as attract new business to the area and create an arts hub.

University officials are starting this week to invite the community to review the plans and offer comments before the nation's most prestigious historically black school proceeds with the third stage of the initiative. Officials hope it will help end ill will that has existed for decades between Howard and its neighbors.

"The most amazing thing is that we haven't done this earlier," Howard President H. Patrick Swygert said. "I think it's time some attention and investment was devoted to this part of the world."

The latest plans are part of a multiphase project to remake the LeDroit Park area, which first appeared on a District map in 1873 when a Howard University trustee hired architect James McGill to design homes.

When racial barriers fell in the 1890s, elegant homes that had been built there became the residences of Washington's black intelligentsia, including poet Paul Laurence Dunbar and civil rights activist Mary Church Terrell. But over the decades, as the District lost population, the area evolved into a marginal urban neighbor-