H
The Hellman Company, inc.

500 New Jersey Avenue, NW

a special project on a unique site

(BZA Case No. 16744)

The work on this project began with R&D (relating the evolution of computer and communication technology to downtown office buildings) in 1980. Site acquisition began in 1985.

Relevant quotes:

You know the extent to which I admire your vision for this area. Your articulate and imaginative presentation needs no amendment by me.

J. Carter Brown, Director Emeritus, National Gallery of Art
Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts (Sep 22, 1998)

I truly wish more developers had your practical creativity and sensitivity to design and place.

Reginald Griffith, Executive Director,
National Capital Planning Commission (Oct 14, 1998)

Jay has really done his homework. He provided me the most cogent and thorough redevelopment briefing I have received in 17 years on the Council.

Charlene Drew Jarvis, Chairperson,
Comm. on Econ Dev, DC City Council (Feb 15, 1996)

Although the property that you intend to develop at 500 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., is one or two blocks outside the limits of the Master Plan and Capitol Grounds, it is nevertheless in a prominent location in the nearby vicinity and is therefore important in my view. ... A sensitively and well designed development in that location could certainly enhance the area and I would support such a proposal given that proviso.

George M. White, FAIA,
Architect of the Capitol (Jan 16, 1986)

We are especially interested in the significance of your proposals as they impact the U.S. Capitol. ... We support your proposal to redevelop this critical block.

Cong. Fred Schwengel (ret.), President
US Capitol Historical Society (Jun 22, 1988)

BZA
Case No. 16744
Exhibit No. 41

1828 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
jay.hellman@alum.mit.edu
tel. 202 879-5500
fax: 301 983-9556

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16744
EXHIBIT NO.41

Jay John Hellman's exciting, innovative, and visionary ideas concerning the redevelopment of the area around the intersection of New Jersey and Massachusetts avenues, NW ... My work with the U.S. Capitol Historical Society has brought me to a unique appreciation for how redevelopment of this area can enhance the Capitol's role in the historic and commemorative sense of place. ... [Implementing Mr. Hellman's vision] restores this neglected area to its deserved prominence. I heartily endorse the most serious consideration of Mr. Hellman's proposal.

Donald R. Kennon, Ph.D., Chief Historian
US Capitol Historical Society (May 21, 2001)

I have met several times over the last year with Jay Hellman regarding his redevelopment plan for New Jersey Avenue. I am impressed with his vision and tenacity. ... I share his belief that the District must create and execute big, bold, and well-integrated, redevelopment plans for its most valuable sites.

Charlene Drew Jarvis, Chairperson,
Comm. on Economic Development, DC City Council (Oct 31, 1996)

I first became aware of Mr. Hellman's considerable efforts to redevelop New Jersey Avenue near the Capitol and Union Station several years ago when I was the Councilmember representing Ward 6. He has been working on the development plans for a long time. I support his work and am delighted he is in a position to proceed. ... developing it in an elegant, high density office building with street-front retail would generate considerable benefits both for the private sector and the public sector. ... Mr. Hellman's building will attract government affairs offices of significant companies. This will greatly assist the hotel and restaurant business in the immediate vicinity. Mr. Hellman's proposal presents Washington with an exceptional opportunity.

Harold Brazil, Chairperson,
Comm. on Economic Development, DC City Council (May 10, 2001)

The development of the site as proposed by The Hellman Company, inc. represents a unique opportunity for not only SMD 6A01, but for the citizenry of the District of Columbia at large. ... I am most impressed by his uncanny ability to bring together seemingly unrelated and certainly underutilized resources of varying genre in harmonious synthesis. ... The architectural design of the proposed 12 story, 96,000 sf structure is consistent with the historical integrity of the region. ... I emphatically endorse the proposed development ...

Robert L. Hall, Jr., ANC Commissioner SMD 6A01,
(May 17, 2001)

I am writing in three capacities, seeking your assistance in expediting the zoning and permit process for 500 New Jersey Avenue, NW. ... I am concerned about economic development and the health of the District as the centerpiece of our region. ... Jay's proposed 12 story, 95,000 square foot elegant office building is ideal for this site. ... this building could be an important catalyst to the grand revitalization of your Noma vision. ... Under-developing an urban site is not in the public interest - particularly one so central, so prominent, surrounded by so much open space and supported by massive public infrastructure investments ...

John M. Derrick, Jr., Chairman and CEO, Pepco;,
also Chairman Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade (May 14, 2001)

Your proposals are creative and could contribute in a major way to the enhancement of the New Jersey Avenue corridor.

Daniel C. Bryant, Assoc. VP Business & Financial Affairs
Georgetown University Law Center (18 Dec 96)

I write simply to say that redevelopment of the area would be a public service. From all that I have seen, Mr. Hellman's plans seem promising and deserve your support.

Robert Pitofsky, Dean
Georgetown University Law Center (Jun 9, 1988)

I quite agree with you that improvement along the 500 block of New Jersey Avenue is needed.

Walter E. Fauntroy
Member of Congress, DC (10 Jun 88)

Enlightened land-use policies recognize that certain parcels of real property are more prominent than others. Urban planning, geographical features, and proximity to amenities such as transportation provide our streetscapes with a hierarchy of land-use functions and real estate values.

Patrick J. Lally, Architect, Capitol Hill resident,
member of Capitol Hill Preservation Society (23 Jun 97)

"Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 plan for the city, one of our most historic documents, treats New Jersey Avenue as very special. ... Special Streets and Places should be maintained and enhanced in a manner that promotes their roles as major features... They should be embellished, when possible, with monuments, fountains, sculpture, gardens, distinctive buildings ... placed strategically to serve as frequent points of orientation and visual delight. ... Architecturally prominent buildings should be located in Special Streets..." [my underline]

Reginald Griffith, Executive Director,
National Capital Planning Commission (22 Jan 86)

I am writing to encourage your support for a project that can be a centerpiece for smart growth ... Mr. Hellman's proposal for 500 New Jersey Avenue, NW will set an important example of re-invention of the city. It is the right building in a very special place. ... We are impressed with Mr. Hellman's proposed design for a 12-story, elegant office building that makes maximum use of the site. We urge you to use your office to support the steps necessary to make this project a reality.

Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director,
Coalition for Smarter Growth (April 23, 2001)

.. Residential and commercial development needs to be increased in areas adjacent to the 83 rail stations.... A recent study reported that vacant and under-used land around many Metro stations has the potential capacity to meet all the foreseeable demand for employment and residential needs between 2000 and 2020. ...

Phillip Dearborn, Executive Director,
Greater Washington Research Center (Wash Post 4 Feb 2001)

Building densely, diversely and urbanely around transit stations is the right thing to do. ... Yet, in transit-oriented developments ... shrinking the project's scope is tantamount to dumbing down smart growth.

Roger Lewis, FAIA,
Professor, U. of Maryland, columnist, Architect / Planner (Wash Post March 10, 2001)

Metro needs to be more aggressive in encouraging 'smart growth' around subway stations. ... That would dramatically limit sprawl ... Sprawl is the biggest long-term threat to the bay's health ... Metro should encourage walkable residential and commercial development ...near its transit facilities

Metro Can Limit Sprawl, Bay Group Says,
Chesapeake Bay Foundation (Wash Post 9 March 2001)

I was pleased to receive your recent letter regarding your real estate development efforts near the Union Station Metro Station. ... The Washington Metro System is of particular interest given the massive present Federal investment and future Federal assistance anticipated by the area jurisdictions. ... Your Union Station proposal is typical of the kind of development which increases the intensity of land use around Metro stations. More intensified use of station area property results in a more efficient Metro system through increased ridership

Ralph Stanley, Administrator,
UMTA Urban Mass Transportation Administration (Oct 9, 1996)

Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, USRC, offers this letter in support of Jay Hellman's planned project for the 500 block of New Jersey Avenue, N.W. ... This appears to be one of those instances that variances are needed to obtain the highest and best use of the site. ... The building is designed to create a sense of place on this uniquely shaped parcel. We look at 500 New Jersey Avenue as an integral part of the Union Station neighborhood. The proposed 12 story building fits well ...

David S. Ball, President,
Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (May 8, 2001)

CHAMPS wholeheartedly supports and requests your office's support for ... 500 New Jersey Avenue, NW by developer Jay John Hellman. We believe his concept for this parcel of land is exactly what is needed. The building he proposes is most apropos in terms of design, purpose, history, sense of place and economic development. ... Because of the prominence of this site, nothing less than the proposed twelve-story office building would be appropriate.

Rob Gabany, Executive Director,
CHAMPS Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals (May 3, 2001)

Your plans are just what this site needs and would be a terrific compliment and upgrade to the neighborhood. The occupants of this proposed building would be potential customers for the hotel and a boost to the neighborhood economy in general. This building would transform 500 New Jersey Avenue to a showplace to set the tone for further enhancements on this side of Capital Hill. I heartily support your proposed building as do the owner's of the Washington Court Hotel. I also support the requested variances for the proposed building in order to make it commercially viable.

Mac McNeill, Managing Director,
Washington Court Hotel (13 Apr 2001)

We both saw your vision and agreed that this building could be a unique jewel if executed effectively and without delay. It is consistent with my own thinking about the convergence of computer and communication technology and its relationship to the future of office buildings and the meaning of location. Because of my extensive international real estate experience in the past 33 years, I was quite confident ... [that we could] lease it to the highest quality global Corporations at premium rents.

Cesar Chekijian, Real Estate Investor,
former head of real estate Chase Manhattan Bank (23 Apr 2001)

You asked me to comment on why certain zoning variances are necessary to build the right building on this special site. ... It is a unique site. Its configuration is small and narrow. All sides front on streets. It sits in an open setting, visually linked to the most architecturally dramatic building in Washington -- the US Capitol. ... Because the site is small you have diseconomies of scale. A 95,000 square foot building is still small, but on the edge of viable. Anything less would not allow 3 elevators -- the minimum for an architecturally significant building that must command top market rents to be economically viable . ... The building you are proposing at 500 New Jersey Avenue is exactly correct.

Robert Gladstone, Chairman
Quadrangle Development Corporation (May 16, 2001)

As you know, we have spent considerable time studying your proposed new building at 500 New Jersey Avenue, NW. You have asked me to explain briefly why the construction costs are significantly more expensive (per square foot of floor area) than a typical Class A office building. There are several reasons. They all relate to the site itself. This is a unique site. The private buildable area is small, but the total sitework square footage is quite large due to the exceptionally wide sidewalk and the almost 60 foot setback at the north. The building is narrow. Streets surround it on all sides so there are no inexpensive party walls or alley facing walls which can be aesthetically downgraded. ... At 12 floors above grade your building is still quite small. If you were forced to further reduce the building size by eliminating floors this would significantly burden your diseconomies of small scale.

Thomas J. Barnes, Chief Estimator / Specialist
J. A. Jones / Tompkins Builders (Apr 9, 2001)