Law Offices
STEPHEN N. GELL
A Professional Corporation

1101 30th St. N.W.
Fifth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20007
Telephone: (202) 625-8311
Facsimile: (703) 522-5503

January 29, 2002

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2002 JAN 29 PM 1:22

Mr. Geoffrey H. Griffis
Chairman, Board of Zoning Adjustment
Room 210
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Griffis:

Re: 306 Carroll Street, N.W., Square 3354, Lot 26
BZA Case No. 16833

Pursuant to an application for a variance and special exception in the subject case, enclosed is a Prehearing Statement for the proposed development at 306 Carroll Street, N.W. Square 3354, Lot 26.

We expect to call some or all of the following witnesses:

Mr. Russell Katz, President of the Applicant and a registered architect
Mr. Lawrence Caudle, AIA of Hickock Warner Fox, Architects
(presented as an expert witness – resume attached)
Mr. Jack Mevorah, Hickock Warner Fox
Dr. Frances Phipps, neighbor and professional planner

Please advise if there are any questions.

Yours very truly,

Stephen N. Gell

Enclosure
cc: Russell Katz

BZA
Case No. 16833
Exhibit No. 23

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16833
EXHIBIT NO.23

PREHEARING SUBMISSION

REVISED STATEMENT OF EXPLANATIONS AND REASONS

SUPPORTING AN APPLICATION

TO THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FOR A VARIANCE PURSUANT TO §§773 and 3103, and FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION PURSUANT TO §§411.11 and 3104

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ZONING REGULATIONS

306 Carroll Street, N.W.

(SQUARE 3354, LOT 26)

BZA CASE NO. 16833

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICANT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

THE SUBJECT PROPERTY

A. Location and Description of the Property
B. Area Surrounding the Property
C. Zoning History and Use History

REASONS IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION FOR VARIANCE

A. Compliance with D.C. Zoning Regulations

Uniqueness of the property
Extraordinary or exceptional practical difficulties

B. No Adverse Affects

REASONS IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION

A. Compliance with D.C. Zoning Regulations
B. No Adverse Affects

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

BENEFITS OF PROPOSED USE

COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. Appropriate Residential and Retail Use
B. Historic Preservation

CONCLUSION

EXHIBITS

A. Letter from Zoning Administrator
B. Plans and Photographs
C. Resume of Laurence F. Caudle, AIA
D. Supporting Letters from Community Organizations and Individuals

Prehearing Statement

INTRODUCTION

This is a revised Statement of Explanation and Reasons supporting the application of TP2, LLC for a variance and special exception to permit construction of a mixed use commercial project at 306 Carroll Street, N.W. (Square 3354, Lot 26) pursuant to Sections 223, 411.11, 3103, and 3104 of the Regulations of the Zoning Commission, (11 DCMR §§223 and 3103) (hereinafter, "Regulations"). The application seeks a variance to reduce the requirement for 20 per cent recreation space to 15 per cent. In addition a special exception is needed (1) to permit three roof structures rather than one and (2) permit a setback of 5'2" rather than the 7' or 18'6" permitted as of right. Although the original application was filed without a letter from the Zoning Administrator, a letter has since been obtained. Unfortunately, it omits mention of the need for a special exception for the roof structures. Those were included in an attorney's certification submitted with the application.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICANT

The applicant/owner of the property in Takoma Park is TP2, LLC, a District of Columbia Corporation whose offices are located at 1911 Tech Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904-1961. Mr. Russell Katz, is President of TP2, LLC.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Project will be a 58-unit apartment building, accessed primarily from Vine Street, with 3,580 square feet of retail on the street level of Carroll Street. The apartments will be built around an open courtyard.

THE SUBJECT PROPERTY

A. Location and Description of the Property

The property which is the subject of this application is at 306 Carroll Street, N.W., Square 3354, Lot 26. It is cleared land in a C-2-A Zone District, which permits medium density community business center and general residence. The property has been vacant for many years since no one could devise an appropriate development strategy given the odd shape and steep slope of the lot, the proximity to the railroad tracks and the Historic District constraints. The property slopes from the railroad bridge up Carroll Street and also slopes sharply from Carroll Street up to Vine Street.

B. Area Surrounding the Property

Surrounding the property are primarily commercial and public facility uses as follows: West of and bordering the site are Amtrak/CSX and Metro train tracks. East of the site are business and commercial uses. North of the site, directly across the street, is the Metro Station and parking lot. Residential and mixed use buildings have been planned for the area of and surrounding the Metro site. Vine Street borders the site on the South side. It is a dead-end street where several industrial, commercial, and warehouse facilities are located.

C. Zoning History and Use History

The area is zoned C-2-A. The site was cleared over 18 years ago. In the nineteen fifties there had been retail shops and a gas station on Carroll Street with a woodworking shop and warehouses on Vine Street. In the nineteen twenties there had been retail shops on Carroll and a woodworking shop and ice company on Vine Street.

REASONS IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION FOR VARIANCE

A. Compliance with D.C. Zoning Regulations

The project needs a variance to reduce the recreation space requirement from 20 per cent to 15 per cent.

Uniqueness of the property

This vacant property has sat undeveloped for over 18 years. Its odd pie-shape, extreme level change, and proximity to the railroad create special construction and use difficulties not found anywhere else in the area.

Extraordinary or exceptional practical difficulties

In order to justify the additional construction expense of constructing on a difficult terrain and buffering the sounds of train traffic on the adjacent train tracks, it is necessary to maximize the numbers of residential units on the site. We have planned 58 units. However, this creates a deficiency in required recreation space.

In the C-2-A zone, 20% of the Gross Residential Area must be devoted to residential uses. Gross Residential Area includes all units, private balconies, lobbies, hallways, etc. Because of the difficult nature of the site, we are unable to provide more than 15%, while still maintaining a feasible design. In addition, the majority of our 15% is outdoors and of a very high quality. It will be designed by a landscape architect with appealing plantings and appointments.

It may be noted that seven of the nine "C" Zone Districts require only 5%-15%. In the C-2-B Zone, for instance, only 15% recreation space is required. Finally, it should be noted that most units have private balconies which are counted in the Gross Residential Area but not in recreation space.

B. No Adverse Affects

The neighbors, ANC and citizens of Takoma Park have all praised the project. They recognize the serious practical difficulties inherent in the site and regard the loss of a small amount of recreation space as a reasonable trade-off. Please see letters from community organizations and individuals attached as Exhibit D.

REASONS IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION

A. Compliance with D.C. Zoning Regulations

Section 411.3 of the Zoning Regulations requires that all rooftop structures (including stairs, elevator mechanical rooms, mechanical equipment, etc) be grouped in one enclosure. We plan to have three enclosures.

In addition, section 770.6 (b) requires that the enclosure must be set back from the exterior wall a distance equal to the height of the enclosure up to 18'6". We propose one roof structure at 18'6" and one at 7' with a setback of 5'2"; (the third at 8' will be set back 8'2" from the exterior wall.)

Section 411.11 grants the Board the power to vary the number and location of roof structures by special exception.

The reasons for the deviation are as follows:

1. The cooling tower is too large to fit into the stair & mechanical enclosure, so they must be separated.
2. Both the stair & mechanical enclosure and the cooling tower have been placed on the Vine St. side so that they will not be visible from Carroll St.
3. The elevator enclosure must be located on the Carroll Street side of the building since the Carroll St. lobby attaches vertically to lobbies on all floors, while the Vine St. lobby does not.
4. While the Vine St. rooftop enclosures will be located on the "Low Roof" and integrated with the "High Roof", the building is too narrow on the Vine St. side to meet the required setbacks.

B. No Adverse Affects

Setting the roof structures closer to the exterior wall will not have an appreciable effect on the appearance of the property because they will be incorporated into the form of the building. Moreover, where they extend above the existing roof plane they will be visible only from Vine Street. The neighbors, ANC and citizens of Takoma Park have all praised the project. They have been pleased that the developer consulted them early in the process and made many significant changes to accommodate neighborhood and community concerns. Please see letters from community organizations and individuals attached as Exhibit D.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The building will be on a main thoroughfare which accommodates a great deal of traffic and this project is not likely to add appreciably to the traffic in the area. Moreover, the site is adjacent to a Metro Station. It is anticipated that many of the residents and more of the retail customers will use Metro to access the building. There will be adequate parking on site with 14 spaces on Carroll Street, 2 of which will be dedicated to the retail uses. An additional 26 spaces, loading and service spaces will be accessible from Vine Street. In addition, there is public parking across the street at the Metro Station. We are confident that neither the retail nor residential uses should create a parking problem for the community.

BENEFITS OF PROPOSED USE

Construction will eliminate an unusable eyesore that has existed for over 18 years. The design of the apartment/retail complex is in keeping with the historical character of the neighborhood and maintains a human scale. Moreover, it is one of the first significant projects in the vicinity of the Takoma Park Metro Station and its completion will be a beacon of encouragement to other developers who might be looking to develop in the area. Finally, the project will provide much needed retail facilities in this urban setting.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. Appropriate Residential and Retail Use

This proposal is in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan's designation of the site for low density residential and low density shopping.

B. Historic Preservation

The subject property is in the Takoma Park Historic District. The plans for this project have received conceptual approval by the Historic Preservation Review Board.

CONCLUSION

The Applicant should be granted a variance and special exception to allow a 15 per cent residential recreation space and to alter the number and position of roof structures. Permitting the variance will have no adverse effect and will be in harmony with the purpose of the Zoning Regulations.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen N. Gell, Esq.

Exhibit A

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Building and Land Regulation Administration
Office of the Zoning Administrator

December 31, 2001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Toye Bello, Acting
Zoning Administrator

SUBJECT: Proposed Mixed-Use Building located at premises 306 Carroll Street, N.W., Lot(s) 26, in Square 3354, Zoned C-2-A

Review of plans for the proposed mixed-use building at the above subject premises indicates that the Board of Zoning Adjustment approval is required as follows:

1. Variance from the residential recreation requirements of Section 773.3 to allow construction of a mixed-use building in the C-2-A commercial district zone. (Section 3103.2)

TB/XM/ee

941 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 2000 Washington, DC 20002 Phone: (202) 442-4760 Fax: (202) 442-4871

01/10/02 12:09 FAX 2024424871

NOTES AND COMPUTATIONS

ADDRESS: 306 Carroll Street, N.W. LOT(S): 26 SQUARE: 3354

(Mixed-Use Building) ZONED: C-2-A

	REQUIRED	ALLOWED	PROVIDED	VARIANCE
LOT AREA	N/R		34,531 Sq. Ft.	
LOT WIDTH	N/R		150' Average	
LOT OCCUPANCY (60%)		20,718.84 Sq. Ft.	15,749 Sq. Ft. (46%)	
FLOOR AREA RATIO (2.5)		86,328 Sq. Ft.	66,828 Sq. Ft. (1.9)	
PARKING SPACES	34		39	
LOADING BERTHS	12'X30' 1 berth 100 Sq. Ft. 1 Platform		1 berth – 12'X30' 1 platform – 100 Sq. Ft.	
FRONT YARD	N/R		N/R	
REAR YARD	15' min.		120' Average	
SIDE YARD	0'x0'		0'x0'	
COURT, OPEN	N/A		N/A	
Res. Recreation Space (20%)		11,565 Sq. Ft. (20%)	8,877 Sq. Ft. (15.4%)	2,688 Sq. Ft. - 4.6%

003

Exhibit C

LAURENCE F. CAUDLE, AIA

Mr. Caudle received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture and a Master of Architecture from the University of Maryland in College Park. Mr. Caudle was recognized for his work, receiving the Dean's Thesis Prize and the Faculty Award for Excellence in Design from the University of Maryland. Prior to joining Hickok Warner Fox Architects, Mr. Caudle worked for several award-winning firms, including Weinstein Associates, Architects and Hugh Newell Jacobsen, FAIA of Washington, DC, and has many years of experience with buildings of this scale. At Weinstein Associates, he was a project architect for the Ellen Wilson Neighborhood Development. Mr. Caudle is an Associate with Hickok Warner Fox Architects.

Mr. Caudle is a Registered Architect in the District of Columbia and a member of the American Institute of Architects. He is a frequent guest juror for undergraduate and thesis juries at the University of Maryland School of Architecture and Catholic University. Projects he has been involved with have been published in MIMAR Magazine, Architectural Record, Architectural Digest, and the Washington Post. Mr. Caudle specializes in regional architecture. His research includes Cuzco, Peru, and Tunisia, where he spent time studying.

Recent Projects:

140 M Street, SE, Washington D.C. This new 300,000 GSF ten story office building with a three level underground parking garage is currently under construction. A new Class A office building is designed to have ground floor retail. The building, designed of precast and curtain wall, will be a signature new building in the revitalized Southeast/ Navy Yard area of Southeast Washington. The project was designed with many of the future area improvements, including parks, residential development, and improved streetscape elements in mind. The client for the project is Spaulding & Slye Colliers International,

New Dominion Technology Park II, Herndon, VA. Located in the Dulles corridor, this second building for Boston Properties will have 260,000 GSF and is being designed and developed for a single USG tenant. The structure's exterior requires the unusual use of exposed concrete along with brick and precast. This project involved the coordination of high-level security requirements in the structure's design of all major building systems and siting of the building, while creating an architectural character acceptable to the town of Herndon Architectural Review Board.

Additional Project List:

- Project Manager- 333 John Carlyle Street, Alexandria, Virginia
  160,000 GSF with 3 levels of underground Parking
- Associate/ Project Manager- 1900 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia
  110,000 GSF, with 3 levels of underground Parking
- Associate/ Project Manager- New Dominion Technology Park, Herndon, Virgnia
  245,000 GSF4 level USG office building with high level of security design requirements
- Associate/ Project Manager- 601 New Jersey Avenue, Washington, D.C. NW
  270,000 GSF nine story office building with 3 levels of underground parking
- Associate/ Project Manager- 140 M Street, Washington, D.C. SE (currently under construction)
  300,000 GSF ten story office building with 3 levels of underground parking
- *Ellen Wilson Redevelopment Project*
  Multi-unit mixed income housing development project
  Staff architect at Weinstein Associates

Exhibit D

PLAN TAKOMA · the dc-takoma neighborhood association

p.o. box 60159. washington. dc 20039

December 18, 2001

Tersh Boasberg, Chair
District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board
801 North Capitol Street, N.E. Suite 3000
Washington, D.C. 20002

Also sent by fax to: 202-535-2497

Dear Mr. Boasberg:

We understand that a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) is scheduled for December 20 to discuss and review the concept for new construction of a building containing retail and apartment units at 306 Carroll Street, N.W.

Plan Takoma is an association of neighbors in the D.C. Takoma neighborhood. Developer Russell Katz of Montgomery Oaks Management, Inc. (MOMI), presented his proposal for the site at the October meeting of our members. Members were prepared to raise several questions about the initial proposal Mr. Katz had shared with HPRB, specifically regarding the narrowness of the planned sidewalk and a blank wall on the northwest corner of the building. However, by the time of his October presentation, Mr. Katz had amended the proposal to provide a wider sidewalk and had also reconfigured the front of the building to eliminate the blank wall. We understand that a significant amount of work went into making these revisions to the plans. During the meeting, members also expressed an interest in the design having elements that refer to architectural themes in the area, including the clock design referring to the clock design in the downtown Takoma, Maryland, shopping district, and expressed concern regarding the number of parking spaces provided, discussions that will undoubtedly continue.

Plan Takoma members voted to communicate to you that we sincerely appreciate Mr. Katz's openness to feedback and are pleased that he has taken so much time to work with the community. Mr. Katz has discussed the design on a neighborhood email list, has delivered copies of materials to the local library branch so that they could be available for community review, and has met with community residents several times. Plan Takoma supports MOMI's changes to the proposal and also wants to draw attention to the environmental sensitivity demonstrated in the design. We will continue to work with Mr. Katz and to facilitate dialogue with MOMI regarding the interests and concerns of residents of the neighborhood as the project proceeds.

Sincerely,

Dodie Butler

Dodie Butler
Interim President
(202) 291-5338

Russell Katz

From: "Louis Lieb" <louis.lieb@ferc.fed.us>
To: <momidc@bellatlantic.net>
Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2001 9:58 AM
Attach: katz letter2.wpd
Subject: letter to historic pres. board

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B
6856 Eastern Avenue, NW #314
Washington, DC 20011
(202) 723-7268

Historic Preservation Review Board
941 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20001

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We the undersigned are pleased to comment on the application by Russell Katz to build on the lot at 306 Carroll Street, NW, across from the Takoma metro entrance. Unfortunately, ANC 4B was not able to achieve a quorum in its November 20, 2001 meeting. Therefore, we cannot comment as an official body. However, we are including our comments as individuals. We also note that a quorum for ANC 4B consists of five members, and we were one short. Since the four members present agreed to send this letter, we therefore could have carried a vote in favor of sending it, had one more member been present. We also note that three of the four officers of 4B are signatories of this letter.

We are generally supportive of Mr. Katz' effort to build on a challenging site, for his efforts to communicate with the community and to respond to their concerns. It is our understanding that he has altered the building design to accommodate concerns about the width of the sidewalk on Carroll Street, the location of the driveways on Carroll Street, and the appearance of the facades on both the east and west sides of the building. We believe that the building plans will continue to evolve, and look forward to working with Mr. Katz in the future.

We believe that the project will be an asset to the Takoma community, and encourage your support.

Sincerely,

Barrington Scott, Chairman, 6518 North Capitol St., NW, 20012
Ronald Austin, Vice Chairman, 6120 North Dakota Avenue, NW 20011
Sara Green, Secretary, 7106 Piney Branch Rd, NW 20012,
Louis Lieb, Commissioner, 4B03, 424 Whittier St. NW 20012



Historic Takoma, Inc.

"Preserving the Heritage of Takoma Park-MD and Takoma-DC"

Testimony of Historic Takoma, Inc.
For the DC Historic Preservation Review Board
Presented by Loretta Neumann, Vice President
December 20, 2001

Re: Proposed building for Lot 26, Square 3354
306 Carroll Street, NW, Washington, DC 20012

I am Loretta Neumann, Vice President of Historic Takoma, Inc. and co-chair of its Takoma DC Historic Preservation Committee. I reside at 7124 Piney Branch Rd., NW. Historic Takoma. is a membership-based non-profit organization founded in 1979 to promote historic preservation, citizen involvement, and community development in the Takoma community in Washington, D.C. and Takoma Park, Maryland.

Historic Takoma thanks the developer, Mr. Russell Katz, for meeting with us and sharing his conceptual approach and preliminary plans. In general, we support the mixed-use concept of combining retail space fronting Carroll Street with apartments in the back. The retail space will benefit the community, and the project will bring residential vitality close to the Metro station. The environmental concepts incorporated into the building are positive. We acknowledge the challenges of building on this site.

We would like to acknowledge improvements that Mr. Katz has made since our testimony was presented on October 25th. Windows were added to initially blank walls along the eastern elevation. Substantial changes were made to the northwestern corner of the building (which involved the relocation of a staircase) that allowed the continuation of the retail storefront with more window placement around corner of the west elevation. The top elevation of the building was stepped back to reduce some of the massing problems. The building was set back 4 to 6 feet to allow the addition of 10 to 12 foot sidewalks.

We still, however, have many concerns regarding the overall design, or facade of the building. This building lies in the gateway to our community. It will be very prominent, the first thing seen when exiting the Metro Station. Because of this prominence, we would like the facade to reflect the historic quality of our neighborhoods. We are concerned that this will set the tone for the remainder of the revitalization in along Carroll in this area.

For this reason, we are appealing to the Historic Preservation Review Board and staff to pay close attention to this aspect of the project, and to provide assistance and guidance in this regard. We ask that the Board direct staff to work in close cooperation with Mr. Katz on design elements, especially in the facade, including the brick design choice and color and the clock design to reflect the existing historic elements in the Takoma neighborhood.

A Member of the
United Way of the
National Capital Area

Agency Code 8361

6903 Laurel Avenue ❖ Takoma Park, MD ❖ 20912 ❖ 301.270.2831
P.O. Box 5781 ❖ Takoma Park, MD ❖ 20913 ❖
Historic Takoma is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in
Maryland and the District of Columbia

The Proposed Building
The importance of this property as a linchpin for development in Takoma DC cannot be over stated. In general we are pleased with the objective of the proposal, which is, according to the applicant, "to create a building which is sensitive to its environment. This means relating respectfully to the scale, texture, composition and material of the historic context; while incorporating a variety of sustainable building practices."

We support the mixed-use concept of combining retail space fronting Carroll Street, with apartments behind, which parallels the use of buildings to the east. Similarly, the choice of double-hung window and brick for the commercially oriented Carroll Street elevation is in character with the historic district. We also acknowledge the challenges of building on this difficult site, and understand that the developers must obtain sufficient density to make the project profitable. However, we have serious concern that, as presently designed, the siting, scale and massing of the building is problematic, and out of character with the streetscape of the historic district. Following are our specific concerns:

(1) Proximity of the proposed building to the street. As designed, much of the Carroll Street elevation leaves less than a seven-foot wide path for pedestrians, measured from the points of angled storefronts to the face of the curb (it steps to about 10 feet at the widest point. This space normally must accommodate signage, street lighting, and tree boxes, not to mention the inevitable impedimenta of newspaper vending boxes, trashcans, etc.

This relationship is not in keeping with the historic district. In general, the larger or more prominent the building, the greater the setback, with more street-level amenities provided. The Takoma Metro Center complex, which sits oblique to Eastern Avenue, is approximately 10 feet from the curb at the closest point. However, it recedes in either direction, and is mitigated by raised planting areas and on-grade landscaping. Along Willow Street, its four-story elevation averages more than 20 feet from the curb (with a one-story projection approaching in about 13 feet), with ample and varied landscaping. The Washington Theological Union, also four stories, has only a six-foot sidewalk on Laurel Street, but steps back as much as 33 feet from the street, and is over 22 feet back at the bell tower.

The mixed-use buildings to the east of the site are seven feet from the curb; however, the width of the sidewalk is apparently an expedient result of the widening of Carroll Street to accommodate buses turning into the Metro site. These buildings are smaller scale and their massing at the street is much less imposing than the proposed building. Thus, we feel the width of sidewalk width is problematic both visually and practically.

Indeed, current plans for revitalizing the Takoma Central District address the issue, and specifically call for widening sidewalks at other locations. Clearly a development that creates a condition that elsewhere needs to be ameliorated cannot be in accord with the plan.

(2) Scale and massing. Related to the issue of setback is the scale and massing of the proposed building. The form and rhythm of the existing buildings along Carroll Street are well established, with simple rectilinear one or two story additions at the sidewalk, and articulated residential forms beginning at least fifty feet behind the curb, and rising to an effective height of 4-5 stories above the curb. They are relieved by driveways or spaces between the buildings that permit daylight to reach the street at frequent intervals.

The current proposal is a distinct contrast, which, although articulated at the street level, presents an almost monolithic front more than 270 feet long, rising more than twice as high as the adjacent building fronts, and stepping up higher a short distance back. The net effect would be to cast a perpetual unbroken shadow onto the street and across to the Metro station entrance. The effect is multiplied for the pedestrian who approaches from the west, walking under the railroad overpass in darkness only to confront the blank wall of the west elevation, which suddenly constricts the walkway from 20 feet wide down to less than 7 feet. The narrow and darkened sidewalk space at this corner is also where a driveway is planned for tenants and delivery access to retailers, which could exacerbate pedestrian access and safety problems.

(3) Relationship to Historic District. While recognizing that this is a new, modern building and that the preliminary documents are essentially conceptual, Historic Takoma wants to urge the Review Board to require that the final design details be carefully articulated to respect the building's historic context. As noted earlier, we appreciate his use of brick on much of the front façade and double hung windows, which reflect the neighboring properties.

In addition to requesting a further set back from the street, we have urged the developer to use some design features to make the east and west sides of the building more inviting to pedestrians. Both would have high visibility for people walking to Metro-- from Cedar in Maryland, walking from Maple Avenue or from the west side of the tracks under the under-pass. As proposed, both sides would now appear as bulky, stark walls. In both cases, windows could help soften the effect.

(4) Need for Cross Walk. While this may not be within your Board's purview, we want to stress the need for improved pedestrian access across Cedar Street from the Metro. It is currently a very dangerous for people to walk there, as traffic from cars and buses, in both directions is extremely heavy. A new cross walk, along with the possible elimination of the

median strip in the middle of the street, is needed. In this regard, Mr. Katz's proposed development only reemphasizes the need for a careful transportation plan as part of the Central District Plan for Takoma DC, not only for reasons related to safety and access, but to retain and encourage pedestrian use, which is part of the historical character of the community.

Conclusion

We appreciate very much the developer bringing the proposed design to Historic Takoma for our information and his intentions to add retail space to the streetscape for the community's benefit while also providing residential vitality close to the Metro station. We commend the objective of sustainable design and construction, and urge the Historic Preservation Review Board to give latitude for innovative use of forms and materials accordingly.

At the same time, we appreciate the special problems associated with developing this lot: its odd shape, difficult access, challenging slope, and proximity to the railroad. We respect the developer's right to achieve a density that will make the project profitable. We do suggest, however, that the architect find a way to make the building fit in better with its neighbors in massing and setbacks that will let more light on to the streetscape and, with a wider sidewalk, better facilitate the flow of pedestrian traffic.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments.

Russell Katz

From: "Hal/Frances Phipps" <hphipps@erols.com>
To: "Russell Katz" <rkatz@dataprompt.com>
Sent: Monday, November 19, 2001 11:42 AM
Subject: Katz'devel'hpc.doc

November 16, 2001
7064 Eastern Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20012

T. Luke Young
Historic Preservation Commission
Washington, D.C., 20035

Dear Mr. Young:

I am delighted to write in support of the mixed-use development project proposed by Russell Katz for the vacant lot on Carroll Street across from the Takoma Metro.

I am writing not only as a 31-year resident of Takoma Park, Maryland; and the recent purchaser and restorer of the Cady-Lee Mansion, a Class II monument on the National Register of Historic Places; but also as the President of The Phipps Group, an awarding-winning land-use and economic development firm which has studied this area for over twenty years.

The site Mr. Katz has chosen to develop is significant for two reasons. The first is its location. It was the historic 100% corner in commercial terms of Nineteenth Century Takoma. In the late 1800s, this location, directly adjacent to the railroad tracks and across the tracks from the Victorian railroad station, was considered the prime retail corner, and a general store operated there. Mr. Katz's proposal for development of retail and residential on this site – which has been a blighting influence for the past twenty years - will restore the historic connection between Carroll Street - Takoma's commercial street – and the railroad which was the prime cause of the development of this community. Additionally, the location of retail on the ground floor will assist in uniting the two remote ends of the Carroll Street commercial corridor and begin to encourage pedestrian traffic on the south side of Carroll.

The second reason this site is significant is the numerous challenges it poses in terms of development. The development difficulty posed by the odd shaped configuration of its footprint is matched and magnified by the substantial change in grade on the site. Combined, these two factors guarantee enormous site preparation costs as well as design challenges. This physical reality, in tandem with broad-brush market analyses that find only selective and slight market support for new development in our community, has discouraged prospective investors for the past two decades. Furthermore, the closeness of the railroad to this site, once considered an economic benefit, is now regarded by many as a locational deficit. It is clear that it takes a developer of vision, commitment and daring to undertake this project.

In the studies my firm has carried out of commercial revitalization areas, we have found that the best, and sometimes the only, investors in these areas are those who are already familiar and comfortable with and committed to the community. They are the ones who are willing to invest the time, energy and significant resources necessary to make a pioneering development project work to accomplish the goals of the community. Unlike speculators who frequently ask for financial write-downs and cash-out of projects as soon as they are completed, this type of local investor exhibits a long-term commitment to the community.

2

Mr. Katz fits this profile of the local, committed investor. He is proposing a rental retail/residential project that will require active management and maintenance over time. This will not be a new challenge for Mr. Katz as he is the owner and manager of a 36-unit apartment building on Eastern Avenue a block away from the proposed new development site, and as such is a neighbor to the Cady-Lee Mansion. He and his building are fine neighbors and contribute to the stability of this street which faces its own challenges as both a border to the State of Maryland and principal transportation artery to the Metro site.

Finally, I have been impressed by Mr. Katz's willingness to meet with all members of the community who have expressed an opinion on his project. In these meetings, he has taken all substantial concerns seriously, and I believe, has responded in a manner which not only addresses the majority of these concerns but maintains the integrity of his vision. I am particularly pleased with his proposed solutions to the issues of sidewalk width and open store-front windows. And, I would like to emphasis how important I believe his commitment to providing street-front retail at this site is in the face of recent planning studies which are cautious and cautionary regarding this land use.

I would like to end on an historical note and place this proposal in context. Over twenty years ago, my firm had just completed a planning study of this area when a developer offered a contingent contract on this property. The community was excited. Metro was to arrive soon, and we had visions of an active, vigorous main street. However, once the developer assessed the difficulties of the site, and was faced with the remarkable interest of the citizens, he withdrew his offer. The site has remained vacant ever since. With Mr. Katz's proposal, I am hopeful that this early promise of decades past may begin to come to fruition.

With these reasons in mind, I strongly urge your favorable consideration of the plans for the Carroll Street development submitted by Russell Katz.

Sincerely,

Dr. Frances E. Phipps
President, The Phipps Group