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CAPITOL HILL RESTORATION SOCIETY
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BZA No. 16860
Kentucky Courts
Square 1039, Lot 74 & 75
Zone: R-4
Hearing Date: 04/23/02

April 19, 2002

Board of Zoning Adjustment,
Room 210
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society SUPPORTS the above referenced application.

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society is a civic association representing 1,000 members. The subject premises are located within the Society's interest district, as defined in its bylaws.

The Zoning Committee of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society considered the application on April 18, 2002. A quorum was present. Gladys Hicks, Zoning Consultant to the developer, appeared in support; no one appeared in opposition. The Committee unanimously voted to support. Under standing rules of the Board of Directors, this committee action becomes the position of the Society.

Description of Site

The site is located in Southeast Washington and is now occupied by the Kentucky Courts family housing project, which has been closed for several years and is scheduled for demolition. IDS, a private developer, has been selected by the DC Housing Authority to redevelop the site. IDS proposes 18 townhouses with 2 units each (a "stacked" townhouse and a flat) and 2 three-story townhouses, for a total of 38 units. Units will be condominiums, 12 of which will be owned by IDS for lease to income qualified working families. The other units will be sold, with the "stacked" townhouses starting from $250,000, flats from $150,000 and the 3-story townhouses from $400,000.

The site is roughly trapezoidal, bounded by Kentucky Avenue on the west, C Street on the south, 14th Street on the east, and on the north, by rear lot lines of properties that front on South Carolina Avenue.

Zoning Relief Should be Granted

Zoning relief is sought for two portions of the site:

1. The two lots in the northeast corner of the site cannot include provision for off-street parking on the lots because of the

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presence of an alley turn around. These lots require a special exception to locate parking spaces nearby on the site; they will also require variances from the minimum lot area and width requirements.

2. The obtuse angle of intersection of Kentucky Avenue and C Street causes complications for the corner building and the buildings facing C Street. The corner building is important in order to efficiently utilize the site, but its lot has an irregular rear yard that averages less than 20 feet in depth; this will require a variance. Provision of rear access and a parking space for the corner building leads to complications in the layout of the lots facing C Street. Variances from lot area and width will be needed.

The requested variances meet the conditions for granting variances:

1. The property is unique because of its size, shape, or topography. The site is small, just over an acre, and complicated to develop because of its non-rectangular shape.

2. The owner would encounter practical difficulties or undue hardship if the zoning regulations were strictly applied. Because of the shape and size of the site, strict application of the zoning regulations would result in poor utilization of the site, less units, and greater cost per unit. This would defeat the goal of providing affordable housing.

3. The variances sought are small and can be granted without harm to the public good or the zone plan. Granting them, we believe, will benefit the public good by providing affordable housing to replace a troubled public housing project.

The special exceptions for location of parking spaces for two of the lots elsewhere on the site should be granted because the unusual dimensions of the lots in question result from an alley turn around, apparently established when the public housing project was built.

Neighborhood Views

No neighbors attended the Zoning Committee meeting, but the Committee received a press release from the Hill East organization stating, "We have heard no objections to the variances." Further, the Society has supported and worked closely with the Kentucky Courts Neighborhood Association, which was formed to work with the city agencies and developers to produce a project that would meet the needs of the community. The project presented here is virtually the same as presented to the community at public meetings by the developer.

We are pleased to submit these views for your consideration.

Lyle R. Schauer
Zoning Committee Chair