TESTIMONY OF
SALLY BLUMENTHAL, DEPUTY ASSOCIATE REGIONAL DIRECTOR
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

BZA Application No. 16892
Jamal's Ford et al. 920-942 F Street, NW

Ford's Theatre

- Oldest surviving structure in neighborhood
- National Historic Landmark
- National shrine to the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in April 1865
- President Lincoln shot by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theatre and died in Peterson House across 10th Street
- Ford's Theatre and House Where Lincoln Died managed as part of the National Park System
- One of few Federal tourist destinations downtown
- Draws more than 1.2 million visitors annually into downtown retail core
- Reopened as theatrical playhouse in 1968
- 4-6 productions annually (more than 200 productions since 1968)

National Park Service Interests

- Protection of the National Historic Landmark Ford's Theatre building and its setting
- Providing safe and rewarding experience for our 1.2 million visitors
- Providing dignified and appropriate sense of arrival for theatre patrons
- Contribution to revitalized and thriving "Living Downtown"

National Park Service Position on Request for Parking Access Variance

- Opposes granting of variance
- Variance, which would grant private curb cut, is unnecessary
- Public alley system exists to provide service entrances to buildings in urban core
- Applicant controls decisions that could make access to interior alley system workable
- Granting variance would result in lost opportunity to have arts space fronting on 10th Street

National Park Service Position on Uniqueness, Practical Difficulties and Hardship

- Property is not unique or extraordinary because it has nearly 300 feet of alley frontage
- Public alley system exists to provide service entrances to buildings in urban core
- Although alley contributes to Downtown Historic District, applicant proposes to close 942 square feet of alley space
- Applicant could fulfill 20' width requirement for 2-way alleys in DD/C-4 zone by setting back east façade of Atlantic Building new construction at 1st and 2nd floors an additional 5 feet (similar to floors 3-9) behind the 40' set back of the new construction fronting on F Street at the alley entrance. (p A-02, Exhibit I)

BZA
Case No. 16892
Exhibit No. 41

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16892
EXHIBIT NO.41

National Park Service Position on Impact on the Public Good

- Ford's Theatre and the House Where Lincoln Died are a national shrine drawing millions of visitors to this 1-block of stretch of 10th Street.
- Ford's Theatre is vibrant theatrical venue
- Perpetuating an entrance and exit to a parking lot for 220± vehicles immediately adjacent to this historic site by granting a variance will result in significant safety concerns with visitors queuing along the sidewalk at the parking lot entrance.
- Perpetuating an entrance and exit to a parking lot for 220± vehicles immediately adjacent to this theatrical venue by granting a variance is inconsistent with the dignified entrances to the National, Warner, Folger Shakespeare and proposed Wooly Mammoth Theatres, all located in the Downtown Development District.
- DDoT's proposed 10th Streetscape improvement plan recognizes importance of this block's ambience
- Although DDoT's streetscape plan makes allowance for the existing curb cut, it could easily be modified if the curb cut were eliminated
- Granting variance would have substantial detrimental impact on the public good

National Park Service Position on Impact on the Zone Plan

- Area-Wide Design Standards for DD District recognize one block of 10th Street as very special street with no driveways permitted
- F, G, H, and 7th Streets are long sweeping streets for retail and arts uses
- Disagree with Office of Planning that there is a hierarchy of streets implied in section 1701.3(b)
- However, in adopting the Zone Plan, the Zoning Commission clearly intended to protect only this very historic 1-block of 10th Street by precluding curb cuts and garage and loading dock access
- Area-Wide Design Standards also provide that not less than 50% of ground level walls on 10th Street shall be display windows and building entrances
- If the variance is denied, perhaps a museum, which is proposed by the developer elsewhere in the project, could replace the vehicular access with a facility which would enhance the historic streetscape and be compatible with Ford's Theatre