

SHAW
MAIN STREETS

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May 20, 2003

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
OFFICE OF ZONING
441 4TH ST NW STE 201S
WASHINGTON DC 20001

Dear Sirs:

Regarding BZA Case No. 17012, pursuant to 11 DCMR §3103.2 for a variance from the building height requirements (Section 770), for a variance from the floor area ratio requirements (Section 771), for a variance from the residential recreation space requirements under (Section 773), and for a variance from the rear yard requirements under (Section 774), to allow the renovation of five historic buildings for retail, office, and residential use at premises 1301-1309 9th Street, NW (Square 399, Lots 62, 63, 800, 803, and 804):

The buildings at the northeast corner of 9th and N Streets, NW, are located on one of the two principal streets in the Shaw Commercial District, which is the focus of Shaw Main Streets, Inc. activities. Formed in March 2002, Shaw Main Streets brings together all community stakeholders to work collectively on the holistic revitalization of 7th and 9th Streets, NW, from Mount Vernon Square to Florida Avenue. Our efforts on behalf of these commercial corridors were rewarded with designation of Shaw as a participant in the DC Main Streets program earlier this month.

As a result of the extensive community outreach conducted by Shaw Main Streets during the past year, support for the restoration and reused of 1301-1309 9th Street, NW for mixed use has solidified. The hierarchy of preferred uses at the site is first retail; second, office space; and lastly, residential. This is important to note, as residential, while historically a part of the land use on these commercial streets, was always a subsidiary use, rather than a primary one.

BZA
Case No. 17012
Exhibit No. 39

Board of Zoning Adjustment
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Since the community became aware of the potential redevelopment of this site, it has come to be seen by all as being one of the most important short term catalysts for renovation and reuse of commercial properties on Shaw's commercial corridors, along with the renovation of the O Street Market at 7th and O Streets, NW. Despite the $834 million investment by the District government in the new Washington Convention Center, no other developers other than Roadside Development, who are responsible for the O Street Market, have stepped forward to acquire and renovate commercial property in the neighborhood.

Shaw Main Streets included this development as evidence of the opportunity for commercial revitalization in our community in our successful application for DC Main Streets funding. The project has been cited as a keystone in efforts to bring commercial activity back to our neighborhood and draw visitors out of the convention center and onto our main streets.

One of Shaw Main Streets' missions is to promote historic preservation. You should know that in the time that is has taken to get plans for this project underway and begin obtaining the necessary approvals, a partial collapse of rear additions to the historic buildings on the site has occurred, reducing the total amount of historic fabric. The buildings have now been stabilized, but obviously, these buildings cannot continue to survive much longer unless renovations begin soon.

If the BZA were to subsequently deny the relief required, I believe that Douglas Development would abandon the project as economically unfeasible.

In that event, this outstanding opportunity to stimulate commercial revitalization on 9th Street will have been squandered, as it is unlikely that another developer would have the commitment to historic preservation that Douglas Development has, even if they were able to accept the reduced profitability of the project without the ability to add to the remaining historic fabric. Indeed, were the project to be abandoned and acquired by another developer, it is likely that the additional time it would take for another developer to close and begin construction would be so long that the integrity of these historic buildings would be further imperiled, and an important corner in the Shaw Historic District could be lost forever.

Shaw Main Streets welcomes any questions you might have about our support for this project and its importance to the revitalization of Shaw's commercial corridors. We look forward to learning of the BZA's approval of this application.

Sincerely,



Alexander M. Padro
Chair, Board of Directors
Shaw Main Streets, Inc.