ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 2F
Government of the District of Columbia
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September 8, 2004

Geoffrey H. Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: 1515 14th Street, N.W., BZA Application #17207

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

At a publicly noticed meeting on September 1, 2004, and with a quorum present, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2F ("ANC") voted unanimously (5-0-0) to approve the recommendation of its Community Development Committee ("CDC") to support variance relief from the residential recreation space and height of roof structure requirements of the Arts Overlay/C-3-A District, and a special exception for the roof structure setback for the above referenced project.

We found that the project site is affected by an exceptional situation because of the retention and incorporation of an historically significant building. Preservation of the historic building impacts the setbacks to provide light and air to units, including the provision of a court, and the design elements of setbacks at the upper floors. These setbacks, while not meeting the zoning requirements for residential recreation space, nonetheless provide open space for residents of the building and, if added to the 10 percent residential recreation space located on the roof, would meet the 15 percent requirement. The inability to have these lower levels counted toward the residential recreation space constitutes a practical difficulty for the applicant, as there is no other space to provide residential recreation on such a small site incorporating an historic building and having a requirement to devote at least half of the ground floor to arts and retail uses. Furthermore, the residential recreation space provided at roof level is accessed in part by an elevator that exceeds the height limitation of the Arts Overlay District. It is not possible to provide Building Code-compliant elevator and ADA access to the residential recreation space on the roof and still meet the height limitations imposed by section 1902.1(a) of the Zoning Regulations. The ANC urges the Board to grant this variance to the roof structure height limitation to enable the developer to comply with the requirements for handicapped access to the roof recreation space, and believes that it would be of no substantial detriment to the Zoning Regulations or Zone Plan.

Finally, location of the elevator core is constrained by the site plan, location of the existing building and the provision of below-grade parking to the northern frontage of the building. With these conditions affecting the site, it is impracticable to set back the elevator core one-to-one from the north wall of the building. Therefore, the ANC supports the granting of this special exception relief from section 411.

The ANC and the community are very supportive of this project and look forward to further review of refinements of the design. Thank you for according great weight to our views.

Sincerely,

Helen M. Kramer
Chair, ANC 2F

BZA
Case No. 17207
Exhibit No. 23

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