



Government of the District of Columbia

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C

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September 20, 2006

Chairman Geoffrey Griffis
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
Board of Zoning Adjustments
441 Fourth Street N.W. Suite 200 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Case # 17521, 601-645 H Street N.E. request for a variance for parking requirements, Sec. 772, a special exception from the ground floor level ceiling height provisions, 11 DCMR Sec. 3104.1 to allow construction of a mixed use, residential and commercial building on a lot that has 6,000 square feet or more of land under subsections 1320.4 and 1325 in the H Street N.E. Neighborhood Commercial Overlay District in the HS/C-2-A and HS/C-2-C Districts

Dear Mr. Griffis:

At the September 13, 2006 meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C, its regularly monthly scheduled, duly noticed meeting, the matter of 601-645 H Street N.E. came before us.

With a quorum of 7 of 9 commissioners voting and present, and members of the community present, the commissioners voted unanimously to oppose this project, 7:0, because of the inability of the building design to integrate with the neighborhood concerns. The motion to oppose had two parts: Inadequacy of building design to address neighborhood concerns, and need for a request to delay the BZA hearing to allow the developer to continue its dialog with the immediately affected neighbors on G Street to the south of the project.

At both this meeting and a previous community meeting held in SMD 6C05 on August 30, numerous community concerns were raised with the project design including design and design materials out of sync with older, more historic homes in the adjacent residential community; height, massing and density; potential for parking by building tenants on nearby neighborhood streets; location of parking entrances and loading, as well as construction vehicles using rear alleyways that are inadequate to take heavy truck traffic; and lack of light, air, and privacy for residents of G Street who would have a five-story structure with tenants peering into their back yards. Construction concerns included effect of vibrations on historical homes, rodent infestation resulting from underground digging, inadequate attention to construction staging

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BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

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EXHIBIT NO. 25

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areas, blocked streets and sidewalks, and small, 1-2 bedroom residential units more attractive to professional singles rather than families in a family-oriented neighborhood.

For these many reasons, ANC 6C strongly urges the Board of Zoning Adjustment to delay its October 10 hearing so that the dialog that has already begun can continue between the developer and the affected community, represented by a newly formed neighborhood organization made up of citizens of the 600 block of G and other similarly affected individuals.

It should also be noted for the BZA's consideration that the ANC asked the developer to voluntarily request a postponement of the BZA hearing on this matter so that the dialog with the community can result in resolving many of the concerns. The developer explicitly rejected this request stating that any delay was unacceptable. The proposed building will be an integral part of the H Street community fabric for generations of Washingtonians to come. Surely this developer can wait a few months to ensure that a project acceptable to the community is passed down as the legacy of this generation.

It is imperative that this developer return to the ANC to present the result of the dialog with the community, and that any modifications to the plans submitted to ANC 6C on September 13, 2006 be resubmitted to ANC 6C for full discussion with the community present at some future date. The ANC meets on the second Wednesday of every month.

ANC 6C notes that, in addition to this ANC, virtually every civic group in this neighborhood has opposed the developer's plans as submitted and supports a delay to continue the dialog: Stanton Park Neighborhood Association, Capitol Hill Restoration Society, Near Northeast Citizens against Crime and Drugs, and the newly formed 600 G Street citizen group.

Thank you for giving great weight to the requests of this ANC. It is our view that this project sets the stage for other future development along the H Street corridor in accordance with a careful review of the H Street overlay and relevant zoning regulations. We want to be certain that it is in conformance with the concerns and needs of the residential community nearby.

Sincerely,


Mark Dixon, Chairman
ANC 6C

8/30/06

FACT SHEET: Community Concerns about Development at
601-645 H Street N.E., Notes from a public meeting

The following concerns were expressed by the community at the public meeting held 8/30/06. ANC 6C wants to be sure these community concerns are addressed and that this developer is a good neighbor:

1. Parking – If the tenants are charged extra for parking, they have every incentive to park on the street to avoid this charge. This creates enormous problems for the neighborhood, which is already overloaded in competition for parking spaces in the immediate vicinity.
2. Construction process/staging area – There shall be no sidewalks or public streets blocked during construction. The developer is to submit a plan for staging equipment and worker vehicles that will not have a negative impact on the community.
4. Vibrations – Old residential structures in the vicinity of the proposed construction site need protection before and during construction. The developer agreed to survey, document, and photograph existing residential structures, record existing damages, and reimburse for any losses that occur during construction.
5. Alley concerns – The alley on the south side of the proposed construction is too narrow to accommodate construction traffic. There shall be no staging of equipment or vehicles in the area on the south side of the site, where residential structures would be negatively affected.
6. Rodent infestation – Digging below the site for 500 parking spaces is likely to cause rodent nests below ground to be disrupted. The developer agrees that a rodent mitigation program is essential.
7. Blocked sidewalks – The community requests that if sidewalks are blocked, a walkway tunnel is provided during construction.
8. Design – The design and design materials are out of sync with the older, more historic nature of the surrounding residential area.
9. No family units – The rental units are designed to attract single professionals, not families. This neighborhood has a deficit of housing for families. Without families, this community cannot grow and thrive.
10. Greenery – The neighborhood requests trees and shrubs to be planted on the south side of the proposed project abutting residential property. The architectural drawings showed no plantings. Jude trees were mentioned as acceptable plantings.
11. Green roof – A green roof is requested on the south side of the building to mitigate adverse environmental affects of the building and contribute to the healthy atmosphere of the neighborhood.
12. Citizen input – The neighborhood requests a citizen advisory board to advise and monitor construction throughout the life of the development of the site. This board shall meet monthly with construction management and the developer to address citizen concerns so that the voice of the community shall be heard concerning such concerns as truck traffic control, etc.