

10/24/02

Carol Mitten
Zoning Commission
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: #ZC 02-17

Dear Ms. Mitten:

On behalf of my wife and myself, we wish to express, in the strongest possible terms, our opposition to the building of an apartment house on the site of the Washington Clinic and a portion of the Lisner Home property. We are not against the construction of new housing in the area, i.e., townhouses or freestanding houses, but in accordance with the present zoning level. We are against up-zoning to permit the construction of a 97-foot high apartment building. The present zoning accurately reflects the nature of the community. There are no good reasons, and there are many bad reasons, to change the zoning to allow for the building of a 10-story, high-density apartment house in that area.

Below are a number of reasons for our opposition to up-zoning:

1. A large apartment house is completely out of context with the neighborhood, which consists of relatively small freestanding houses and townhouses. Such a building would drastically change and spoil the community's essential nature.
2. A high-density apartment house would heavily impact on traffic, which is considerable during non-rush hours, and already extremely heavy during rush hours. Military Road is now backed up in both directions during rush hours and Western Avenue is always a heavily used main thoroughfare. It is currently difficult, and indeed dangerous, to cross Military Road between Western and Reno Road, as no stop signs or traffic lights currently exist. Furthermore, the side streets are very narrow, have parking on both sides, and two-way traffic in a width that only accommodates one lane of traffic. The heavy two-way traffic on 43rd Street, which has a day care center at the Jennifer street end, and is already dangerous and the object of a community effort to make it one way.
3. Parking on neighborhood streets would become even more problematic than it now is. Even if there were parking in the proposed building, visitors and people patronizing the retail shops planned for the building would compete for the already few parking spaces that exist in the area. Parking on the side streets, legally (cars having zone 3-stickers) and illegally, is now at a maximum (because of the proximity to the Friendship Heights subway stop), and would get even more competitive with the increase in cars generated by the stores and an apartment house.

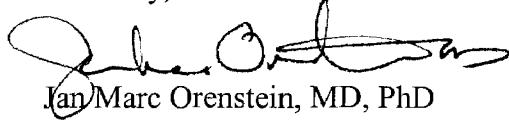
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

Case 02-17
Exhibit 88

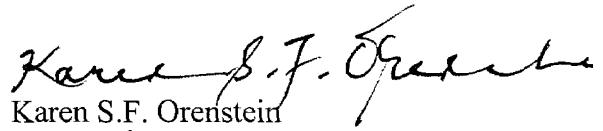
4. Auto traffic in and out of such a high-density apartment house, from either Military Road or Western Avenue, would be hazardous at best.
5. Finally, there are only financial incentives for the developers to propose up-zoning and to construct the apartment building, and no consideration for its severe negative impact on the community. The planned building on the Hecht/Geico property will provide ample new housing in this area.

In summary, we believe, there is no valid reason for changing the zoning to accommodate building of a high-density apartment house, and many excellent reasons not to do so. We strongly urge you not to permit up-zoning in our neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Jan Marc Orenstein, MD, PhD



Karen S.F. Orenstein
5352 43rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20015-2008