GOVERN NT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUM
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** D. C. Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Andrew Altman
Director

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-36
Exhibit 5

**DATE:** October 18, 2002

**SUBJECT:** Preliminary Report on Zoning Commission Case Number 02-36, a Proposed Zoning Map Amendment involving the portion of Square 25

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## BACKGROUND

Square 25 is subdivided into three lots. Lot 806 at 2425 L Street, N.W., the subject property, encompasses the southern half of the square. It is approximately 2.30 acres in size and developed with a five-story masonry building constructed in 1916 and formerly occupied by the Columbia Hospital for Women. This building has been expanded to a gross floor area of nearly 103,800 square feet. A semi-circular driveway provides access to a 24-space parking lot in front of the building, and the access to the loading dock is along 25th Street, N.W. This property is zoned R-5-D.

The northern half of the square is subdivided into lots 807 and 808 (2440 and 2400 M Street, N.W., respectively). Lot 807 is developed with a six-story masonry office building constructed in 1986 with approximately 277,400 square feet of gross floor. The building on lot 808 was demolished in 2001. Both lots are planned for new mixed-use residential office and retail construction, and are zoned C-2-C.

Surrounding development consists of: a high-rise office building and the Monarch Hotel, both with first-floor retail uses to the north across M Street; medium- and high-rise office and residential buildings with first floor retail uses to the south across L Street; low-, mid-, and high-rise residential, and public (District library and public safety) uses, and the Westin Grand Hotel to the east across 23rd Street; and four-five story residential buildings to the west across 25th Street, N.W.

## ZONING COMMISSION DIRECTION

On July 29, 2002, the Zoning Commission held a public hearing to consider Zoning Commission (Z.C.) Case No. 01-33, a proposed amendment to the Zoning Regulations that would establish a new High-Density Residential Retail (HDRR) Zoning Overlay District. This legislation would require new residential developments and major renovations in R-5-D and R-5-E districts to

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provide a minimum amount of neighborhood-serving retail and service uses on the ground-floor level. At the conclusion of agency and public testimony, the Commission continued the hearing to September 9, 2002.

At the subsequent meeting, the Commission directed that the Office of Planning (OP) prepare a supplemental document examining the issues presented during the hearing, and submitted in writing. Comments generally centered on text changes made since the amendment was introduced, and additional suggestions for text changes. In general, the Commission thought text changes to date are significant enough that the entire proposal should be re-advertised. A supplemental "white paper" was requested to help the Commission determine the final text to publish prior to a second public hearing on the proposed regulations. Note that the proposed HDRR Overlay is an important component of OP staff recommendation for pending Z.C. Case No. 00-27. This application involves a request to rezone the southern half of Square 37 from R-5-B to a zoning classification that would allow development consistent with current Comprehensive Plan property designation for a mixture of Medium-Density Commercial and High-Density Residential Uses. The zoning options that have been advertised for Square 37 are R-5-D or R-5-E with the proposed HDRR Overlay (the current staff recommendation), C-2-C, and CR.

During the meeting when Z.C. 00-27 and Z.C. 01-33 were both "set down" for a public hearing, the Commission instructed that the public hearing on the proposed overlay text amendment precede the rezoning public hearing. Consistent with this earlier direction, the Commission canceled a public hearing scheduled for October 3, 2002 for Z.C. 00-27 to allow work to be completed on the referenced overlay. However, one point raised about the proposed overlay in written comments concerns the amount of retail square footage that would result. Specifically, would establishing the overlay generate sufficient retail and service square footage (i.e., a "critical mass") to make the area attractive to potential retail and service tenants.

Looking ahead to the Z.C. 00-27, the Commission was concerned that if it instituted the proposed HDRR Overlay only on the southern half of Square 37, the potential amount of retail and service square footage might not be sufficient. In light of this consideration, it directed that staff prepare a "set down" report for a companion application to allow consideration of applying the HDRR Overlay to the adjacent Square 25 Lot 806 (zoned R-5-D) to increase the potential retail and service floor area.

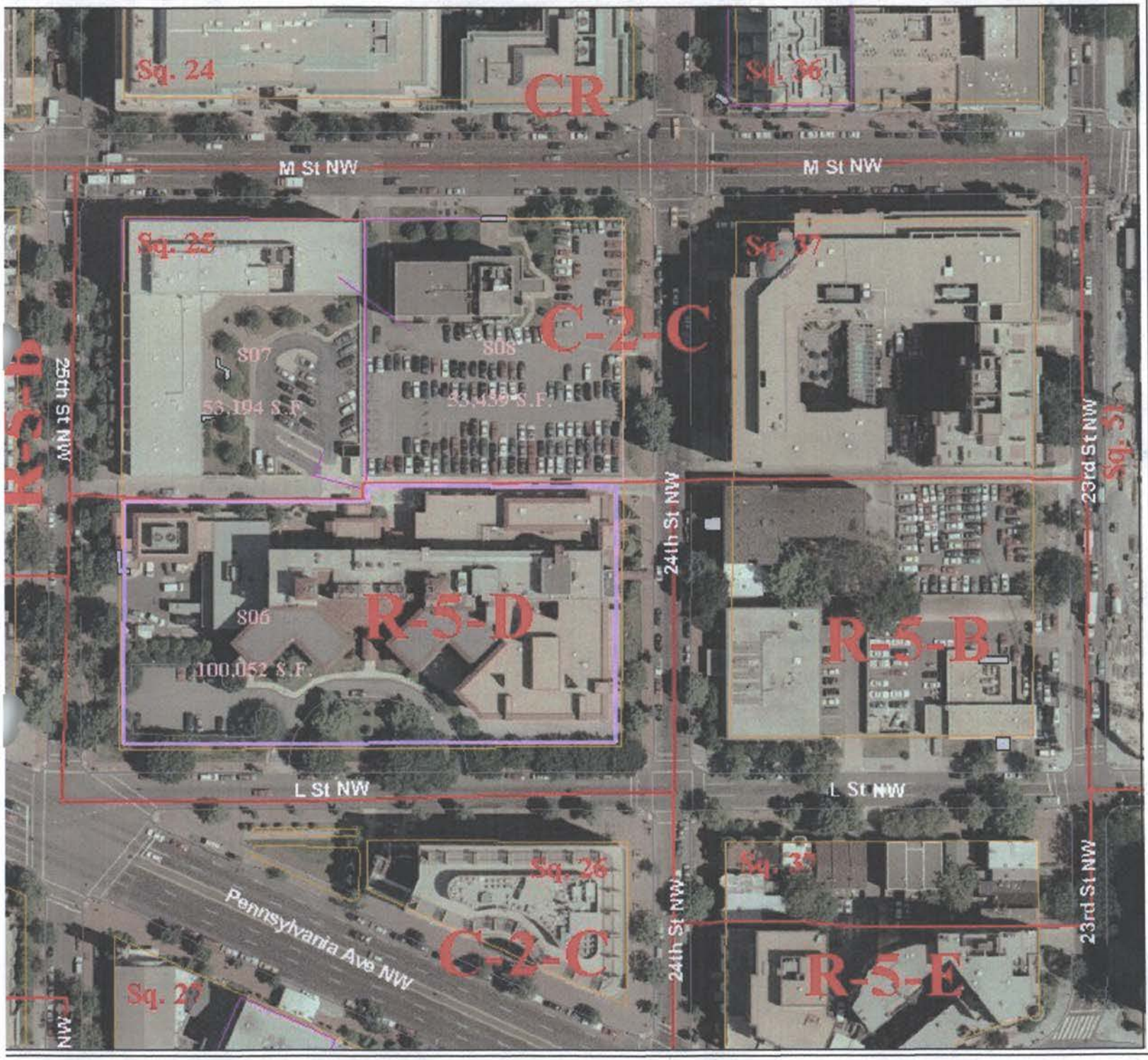
Note that Square 25 is currently designated in the Generalized Land Use Element of the District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan for Institutional uses, while surrounding squares to the north and east are designated for a mix High-Density Residential and Medium-Density Commercial uses, and squares to the south along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor are designated High-Density Residential and Low-Density Commercial uses. This appears to reflect anticipation that the hospital use, in existence for years before the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1984, and though more recent amendments, would continue indefinitely. However, now the property is experiencing a change from the former hospital use. It is appropriate to consider whether this zoned R-5-D property is suitable for mixed-use development similar to the surrounding squares.

**RECOMMENDATION**
The Office of Planning (OP) recommends that:

- The Commission "set down" this request for a public hearing to consider establishing the High Density Residential Retail Overlay on the Square 25 Lot 806, a property zoned R-5-D.
- The public hearing on this request be held concurrently with the public hearing for Zoning Commission Case No. 00-27.

AA/afj

Attachment: Exhibit 1 Aerial Map with Zoning




# Zoning and Existing Development on Squares 25 & 37

DC Office of Planning
September 17, 2002

Scale 1:1414

50 0 50 Feet

Exhibit 1