

CASE NO. 02-38A

EXHIBIT NO. 43 (copy)

**TESTIMONY OF TIBER ISLAND COOPERATIVE HOMES, INC.  
AND PAUL GREENBERG, INDIVIDUALLY, IN THE APPLICATION OF  
WATERFRONT ASSOCIATES, LLC AND RLA REVITALIZATION CORPORATION  
FOR A MODIFICATION OF A FIRST-STAGE P.U.D, A SECOND-STAGE P.U.D.  
AND A ZONING MAP AMENDMENT, Z.C. NO. 02-38A**

I am Paul Greenberg and I am President of Tiber Island Cooperative Homes, Inc., and a resident at 430 M Street, S.W. Apartment 705, at Tiber Island. I appear individually and on behalf of Tiber Island and its residents and shareholders. I am authorized by the Board of Directors to give this testimony on behalf of Tiber Island.

Tiber Island is a 389 unit housing cooperative on the south side of M Street, S.W. between 4th and 6th Streets. The Tiber Island complex (which includes both the Cooperative and the Tiber Island Condominium, a group of townhouses on the perimeter of the block) was built between 1964 and 1966. The buildings were designed by Keyes Lethbridge & Condon, and received an award for Design Excellence from the American Institute of Architects. Tiber Island faces the Waterside Mall complex, which is immediately across M Street, S.W., and less than 200' away.

Tiber Island supports the redevelopment of the Waterside Mall site, and we do not oppose a very high density mixed-use project. However, it is critical that the new development be compatible with the rest of the Southwest neighborhood, which increasingly is being recognized as historically and architecturally significant. In repeated meetings with Waterfront Associates and the D.C. Office of Planning, as well as this Commission, Tiber Island and our neighboring property owners at Tiber Island Condominium, Carrollsburg A Condominium and Carrollsburg Square Condominium have voiced our concerns about the proposed massing of the buildings at the Waterside Mall site and the adjacent I.M. Pei-designed properties immediately to the east and west, particularly the proposal to build a solid wall of 10- and 11-story office and apartment buildings stretching from 3rd to 6th Streets, S.W. Collectively, our four properties represent approximately 1,500 D.C. residents. As best we can determine, not a single change has been made to the proposed Waterside Mall P.U.D or the adjacent Marina View Towers P.U.D. in response to our concerns. A copy of our November 6, 2006, joint letter to Waterfront Associates is attached and included as part of this testimony (Attachment 2).

Tiber Island was constructed as part of the Southwest Urban Renewal project, which is recognized as the nation's premier example of mid-20th century Modernist planning and a likely candidate for historic district status. The "Southwest Plan" reflected a conscious effort to break with the development pattern of the rest of the city, which typically consists of streets lined with buildings. The neighborhood includes projects designed by many of the premier local, national and international architects of the era, including I.M. Pei, Chloethiel Woodard Smith, Harry Weese, Morris Lapidus, Charles Goodman, Marcel Breuer and Edward Durrell Stone.

As Modernism comes into renewed focus as an important architectural movement, a complete and coherent Modernist neighborhood in Southwest can become a significant destination, holding significant value for the District of Columbia. In many respects, the Southwest neighborhood's reputation as a showcase for Modernist architecture is analogous to Miami Beach's status as the exemplar of Art Deco architecture. Architectural tours of the Southwest neighborhood already are common, and increasing numbers of young people have

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moved into the neighborhood primarily because of the renewed interest in Modernism and Modernist architecture. The State Historic Preservation Office has commented to community leaders that it anticipates the neighborhood will be designated a Historic District at some point in the not-too-distant future. Even without formal Historic District designation, the historic significance of the neighborhood – its history, its urban planning concepts, its building architecture and its landscape design – already has been documented comprehensively by the National Park Service through the 2004 publication of Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Report DC-856, “Southwest Washington, D.C., Urban Renewal Area,” which we are submitting as an attachment to our testimony (Attachment 4).

Southwest is a neighborhood designed to provide a very different urban experience from older portions of the city. Like the other Modernist complexes within the Southwest Urban Renewal area, Tiber Island includes a mixture of high rise and low rise structures. The large high-rise buildings at Tiber Island and many other Southwest complexes are oriented perpendicular to the neighborhood’s main thoroughfares, creating vistas into the center of the block and beyond. The result is a densely populated neighborhood that is unparalleled for its vistas and its abundance of open space, trees and light.

Yet the very features that make the neighborhood so beautiful also pose the greatest threat to its preservation. For the most part, the design requirements for the community under the Southwest Urban Renewal plan limited buildings to occupying only 30% of the total land area of each site. The major residential projects in the community therefore technically are “underdeveloped” under current zoning standards, and the large tracts of open space and low-rise buildings on each property serve as a tempting invitation for rampant in-fill development throughout the community. As the Commission is aware, a major in-fill project was built within the past two years at Capitol Park (*aka* Potomac Place); the design, shape, size and materials of the building are inconsistent with the surrounding structures, resulting in a truly unfortunate degradation of the integrity of the neighborhood’s design. Sadly, the in-fill structure obliterated a park where President Eisenhower hosted a tour for Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, showcasing the Southwest Urban Renewal project as a demonstration of the progress the United States was making in eliminating slums. Just last week, the D.C. Preservation League added the Southwest Urban Renewal Area to its list of Washington’s Most Endangered Places. A copy of DCPL’s announcement is attached to our testimony (Attachment 1).

Although there is much that can be done to improve the Southwest community, we remain very concerned that the leadership of the District of Columbia and its agencies are sanctioning the steady destruction of an important piece of American history and urban design. If this proposed development was in Georgetown or other upper-Northwest communities such as Friendship Heights, we believe many more questions would be asked about the project and its design. While we do not minimize the history and charm of Georgetown, there are many “Georgetown” in older cities throughout the United States. However, there really is nothing comparable in size and integrity to the Southwest Urban Renewal area and its Modernist architecture and plan, a bold and audacious public/private partnership that sought to harness contemporary urban planning and design to create a new living environment for working class Americans. The time really is overdue for city leaders to recognize the treasure the neighborhood represents, and the danger it is facing from redevelopment. It would be sad indeed

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for the current leadership of the Office of Planning and this Zoning Commission to be remembered as the officials who presided over the destruction of this unique and irreplaceable moment in urban planning and architectural history.

With specific regard to the Waterside Mall proposal, Tiber Island Cooperative Homes does not oppose new high-density development at the site. We welcome the reopening of 4th Street, and the restoration of the "EPA towers" at either end of the property to their originally-intended residential use. In addition, we do not oppose efforts to construct retail space lining the full frontage along M Street at ground level.

We strongly object, however, to plans to construct a solid, impenetrable wall of buildings lining the north side of M Street, both at the Waterside Mall site and at the adjacent Marina View Towers and Town Center East sites. At Waterside Mall, these buildings would be set back only 18' from the curb, and would rise to 114' in height. In our conversations with the developer, it appears this configuration has been proposed with the encouragement of the District's Office of Planning. If implemented in this manner, this "cookie cutter" approach to D.C. urban planning will produce a landscape completely at odds with the underlying scheme of the existing neighborhood, needlessly restricting views and producing a streetscape that will resemble the mind-numbingly mediocre structures already rising nearby at the Navy Yard. Residents of 2-story townhouses on the south side of M Street will be staring at a wall of 11 story office buildings on the north. Tiber Island Cooperative will be directly affected by the proposed development. Just as we objected to the Marina View Towers proposal (see Attachment 3), we believe the planning assumptions underlying the proposed Waterside Mall project reflect poor design choices, and should be altered as part of this PUD process.

Generally, if the District and the Applicant feel it is necessary is to construct large high-rise office buildings immediately abutting the north side of M Street, S.W., in the center of a residential neighborhood, it would be preferable to shrink the footprint of the buildings above the ground floor level in favor of making the buildings taller. This would be more consistent with the "tower" pattern of the existing neighborhood, and would improve the sight-lines around and through the property. At the proposed height of 114', no one in the neighborhood will be able to see past these buildings anyway. If the buildings are built taller and more compact in their footprint, at least people will be able to see around them better. If the Commission is going to approve a project of the scale proposed at the Waterside Mall site, it actually would be preferable for the buildings to rise to the maximum 130' height allowed if such increased height would make it possible to reduce significantly the horizontal mass of the buildings along M Street. We believe the same design approach should be applied to the proposed buildings facing the parks and churches on the north side of the property. A complex of taller towers at this site, if designed well and compatible with the Modernist style of the surrounding neighborhood, holds the potential for creating a neighborhood center that looks and functions differently from the rest of the city, and would be more consistent with the design of the surrounding community.

In summary, we believe the following changes need to be made to the proposed PUD:

1. The entire construction along M Street should be set back a minimum of 22' from the curb, both for this property and the adjacent Marina View Towers project.

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2. At ground level, we do not object to lining M Street with retail and lobby space from "corner to corner," as proposed by the developer. This would apply to the first 20' - 30' of height along M Street itself, roughly comparable to the height of the townhouses that line M Street on the south side.

However, if the Commission is going to consider approving construction of high-rise buildings as part of this PUD, the horizontal dimension of the new buildings above 30' should be shortened in favor of adding additional height to the structures. In the "height" vs. "width" debate, Tiber Island believes taller towers with a more-compact floor plan are preferable to a sprawling 114' high wall of buildings along the street. Taller buildings with a more-compact footprint would improve everyone's ability to see beyond the structures and into the center of the property. This configuration would be more compatible in design with the existing Southwest neighborhood.

In addition to improving sight lines through the neighborhood, taller and more-compact buildings would offer significant advantages to the developer and the District. Apartments and offices on higher floors produce substantially higher rents, thus increasing the value of the property and increasing the city's property tax revenue.

3. When reopening 4th Street for vehicular traffic, the full visual right-of-way should be restored as well. The facade of the proposed office building along the east side of Fourth Street should not protrude into the historic 4th Street right of way. The so-called "bay" should be removed.

4. The proposed office buildings along M Street are being added to an existing residential neighborhood. The approval of the proposed PUD should be conditioned on the developer adopting a lighting scheme for the office space that is compatible with the lighting patterns for residential areas.

5. Approval of the proposed PUD should include a requirement that the design of any new buildings on the site be in a Modernist style compatible with the surrounding community, and subject to review and approval by an independent panel of architects designated by the Commission.

Attachments:

1. D.C. Preservation League's "Most Endangered Places" list for 2007, May 31, 2007.
2. Joint letter of Tiber Island Cooperative Homes, Inc., Carrollsburg A Condominium, Carrollsburg Square Condominium, and Tiber Island Condominium to Waterfront Associates (November 6, 2006).
3. Tiber Island testimony in Marina View Towers P.U.D. application, Z.C. Case No. 05-38.
4. Southwest Washington, D.C., Urban Renewal Area  
Historic American Building Survey HABS DC-856  
National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

# Paul Greenberg

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## FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

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RE: Testimony for tonight's hearing

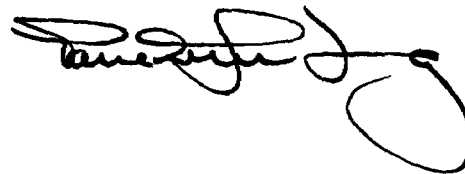
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Ms. Sheillen: Attached is Tiber Island Cooperative's written testimony for tonight's hearing (minus attachments). We would like a copy included in the packets for the Board members.

We will be bringing 15 copies of the testimony and attachments to the hearing tonight. If you have any questions, please give me a call. Thank you.



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