GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2003 MAR 21 PM 1:12

TO: D. C. Zoning Commission

FROM: Andrew Altman
Director

DATE: March 21, 2003

SUBJECT: Supplemental Report on Zoning Commission Case Number 02-44, a Proposed Zoning Text Amendment Related to Retail Arcades

---

The District of Columbia Building Industry Association submitted a request to add a new Section 2515.3 to the Zoning Regulations. The Zoning Commission initiated a petition on behalf of DCBIA to add the referenced provision allowing the closure of existing open arcades in commercial zoning districts within the Central Employment Area of the District.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In the previous report, staff outlined the process undertaken to identify construction that took advantage of the floor area ratio credit (FAR) for providing open arcades. The focus was on zoning computation sheets for construction approved since 1958 indicating whether individual projects were granted the credit, and how much floor area was granted.

After reviewing Zoning Administrator records, only 10[1] projects could be documented as having taken advantage of the credit. Of those 10 projects, 4 appear to have already been built out (that is, the former arcade is now interior retail space). Staff estimated the approximate area of open arcade in the other properties based on field visits. In the majority of cases, the arcade area exceeds the documented FAR credit (refer to Exhibit 1).

This raises the concern that owners wishing to convert arcade properties may still have to request approval of a floor area ratio variance from the Board of Zoning Adjustment, even if the Zoning Commission approved the recommended text amendment. Staff would rather conversion of eligible properties not be a two-step process. It was also noted during the site visits that the referenced [illegible] appear to only represent a fraction of the building ground floor in each case.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-44
Exhibit 19

[1] The total was actually 11 projects including the US Chamber of Commerce Headquarters at 801 17th Street, N.W.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-44
EXHIBIT NO.19

Based on these observations, staff has modified its earlier recommendation to limit total additional floor area under this amendment to either the floor area ratio (FAR) credit originally granted under Section 2515.3, or 25% of the gross floor area adjacent to the open arcade, whichever is *greater*. It is anticipated that this change will allow enclosure of ground floor open area to the front property lines even if the total area exceeds the original credit.

REVISED RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends amending the Zoning Regulations by:

- Adding the following new subsection to Section 2515:

  "Notwithstanding the limitations of Section 771.2, an existing open arcade in a building in a commercial district within the Central Employment Area, for which a floor area limitation credit has been granted pursuant to this section, may be enclosed, and devoted solely to retail, arts and service uses permitted in the zoning district as a matter-of-right, except in the case of buildings designated as historic landmarks or contributing to a historic district where the Historic Preservation Review Board has determined that the arcade constitutes a feature contributing to the building's historic or architectural significance."

- Limiting the total additional floor area under this amendment to either the floor area ratio (FAR) credit originally granted under Section 2515.3, or 25% of the gross floor area adjacent to the open arcade, whichever is **greater**; and
- Adding a sentence to the renumbered subsection 2515.3 clarifying that construction plans submitted on or after the date the Zoning Commission Order is adopted are *not* eligible for the referenced FAR credit.

Attachments: Exhibit 1 Comparison of Floor Area Credits with Open Arcade Areas

Exhibit 1

Comparison of Floor Area Credits with Open Arcade Areas

No.	Address		Construction Date	Arcade FAR Credit	Estimated Open Area	Difference
1	1250	Connecticut Avenue, N.W.	1963	6,457	Built out	N/A
2	1200	19th Street, N.W.	1963	3,770	Built out	N/A
3	2000	L Street, N.W.	1966	11,289	8,206	+ 3,083
4	1156	15th Street, N.W.	1966	3,922	3,512	+ 410
5	2001	L Street, N.W.	1966	710	2,500	- 1,790
6	2021	K Street, N.W.	1970	1,702	1,760	- 58
7	1101	15th Street, N.W.	1972	1,905	2,195	- 290
8	1919	M Street, N.W.	1966	4,422	9,269	- 4847
9	2020	K Street, N.W.	1973	3,928	Built out	N/A
10	1275	K Street, N.W.	1981	3,435	Built out	N/A