

113 7th Street, N E
Washington, D C 20002-6023
July 28, 2006

RECEIVED
DC OFFICE OF ZONING
JUL 31 PM 4 28

Ms. Carol Mitten, Chairman
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 Fourth Street, N.W , Suite 200
Washington, D C 20001

**ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia**

CASE NO. 05-34
EXHIBIT NO. 71

Ref Case Number 05-34, Square 895/Lot 76, 708 Massachusetts Avenue, N E , Capitol Hill
Historic District

Dear Chairman Mitten

We are writing to express our acceptance of the Zoning Commission's proposed rulemaking action to correct the zoning on the above referenced property from R-5-D to R-5-B. We do so, however, with serious reservation as we continue to consider R-4 in the alternative as best for the site within the historic context. We as homeowners have lived half a block south of this property since 1984, and through various roles in neighborhood groups during the years have become well versed in the site history and its ramifications on the community. At the March 23 Hearing we observed overwhelming evidence for correcting the anomalous R-5-D zoning as ANC 6C and 6B, groups, and individuals testified. Summarizing the hearing evidence, the Comprehensive Plan and Generalized Land Use Map identify Square 895 as being in the "moderate density residential land use category" whereas the current R-5-D allows "medium-high density" development, census data show that the squares around Square 895 have housing unit densities less than half that permitted by R-5-D zoning, the anomalous R-5-D zoning was granted in 1973 to allow for expansion of the hospital that operated on the site at that time, the community hospital use has long since left the site (the nursing home remains) and no current business use will be impeded by the zoning correction, and R-5-B, R-5-A, and R-4 zoning will permit development in a scale compatible with the historic context.

We testified before you at the March Hearing supporting the ANC-6C petition to downzone Lot 76 to R-4, however, while we are not concerned with non-conformities, we understand the development issues the Office of Planning reports raise. Having lived here for more than two decades and having gathered hundreds of neighbors' signatures in two petition drives concerning the site since 2000, we have a very good idea of what the neighbors want. The majority support residential development of the site, with a sprinkling of those who would be satisfied with a medical facility to serve this community. The majority ideally want the site reverted to row houses and, worst case scenario, oppose buildings larger or taller than what is currently there. Recognizing that the current structures will be grandfathered in we can appreciate the R-5-B designation as a compromise that will permit denser adaptive reuse of those structures for residential use, while maintaining the moderate density called for in the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms Carol Mitten
July 28, 2006
Page 2 of 3

Furthermore, should a developer choose to demolish structures, R5B (without a PUD) will limit new construction height to 50 feet. A 50-foot height cap would respond to the position of more than 1500 neighbors as evidenced by two petition drives since 2000 that no new construction exceeds the historic 1928 Hospital building (54 feet). To those of us who live here and see the buildings every day any nonconformity introduced by correcting the zoning is not significant. Of far greater significance is the incompatibility within our neighborhood of projects that this R-5-D zoning permits.

Finally, old soldiers die hard -- we humbly ask that you reconsider R-4 for the site as it would allow for conversion to 104 apartments according to the Office of Planning (OP) reports. As Nancy's March 23 testimony illustrated, this number of units is even greater than the current 91 units currently on the adjacent Square 917 (geographically even larger than Square 895). Furthermore, as OP advocates R-5-B with a PUD in its final report (allowing at 30 FAR 85% of potential density allowed under R-5-D, and height up to 60 feet) we believe that a PUD is inevitable should you approve R-5-B now. We understand that it would be almost impossible for you to deny a PUD in the future. R-5-B with a PUD ultimately will not comply with the neighborhood's wishes. Therefore we believe to avoid this conundrum the best level would be R-4 (or even R-5-A).

We view this as a quality of life issue and marketability of the neighborhood. Like many cities, the District has a number of diverse neighborhoods, and with them lifestyles to choose from ranging from the low-density, quieter pace of upper Northwest to the center of the action in high-density downtown. Many of our neighbors and we bought into Capitol Hill because of its character that the moderate-density row house stock and its historic, human-scale context define. The moderate density implies that cars can be parked on the street, albeit with some difficulty, traffic is not too congested, and noise and trash are not a major concern. While not having these inconveniences associated with higher density neighborhoods, the moderate-density neighborhood has many amenities and is reasonably close to Metro and the downtown core. Since Square 895 is surrounded by a sea of R-4 along with C-2-A, we see R-4 as the best protection of this quality of life we love and that attracted us in the first place. Allowing denser development will ultimately change the character of the neighborhood, drive residents out and remove one choice from the range attracting new residents.

We very much appreciate your time and efforts in this regard and your serious consideration of our views. As has probably become apparent, we who live here feel passionately about our neighborhood and work as volunteers to preserve and protect its endangered quality of life.

Yours truly,

Handwritten signatures of Nancy J. Simpson and Keith Bridger in black ink.

Nancy Simpson and Keith Bridger
(202) 544-0732

Ms Carol Mitten
July 28, 2006
Page 3 of 3

cc· D.C Zoning Commission Members.
Vice-Chair Anthony Hood
Commissioner Gregory N Jeffries
Commissioner Michael G Turnbull, FAIA
Commissioner John Parsons

Sharon Schellin, Secretary, D C. Office of Zoning
Stephen Mordfin, Development Review Specialist, D.C Office of Planning
Mark Dixon, ANC6C02, Chair, ANC6C
Mike Sherman, ANC6C06
William Sisolak, ANC6C07, Chair, 6C Zoning Committee
Cody Rice, ANC6A03, Chair, 6A Zoning Committee
Reverend Richard Downing, Rector, St James Church
Monte Edwards, Co-Chair, SPNA Land Use Committee
Gary Peterson, Chair, CHRS Zoning Committee
Nancy Metzger, Chair, CHRS Historic Preservation Committee
Janet Quigley, Chair, CHCSD
Barry Pershkov, The Union Square Town home Homeowners