



St. Mary's Episcopal Church

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 06-11L
EXHIBIT NO. 45

Testimony
Windon Ringer
Before the Zoning Commission of the
District of Columbia
Z.C. Case No. 06-11L
June 23, 2014



Professional Background

- ☐ **My name is Windon Ringer, Senior Warden, of St. Mary's Episcopal Church.**
- ☐ **I am retired from Xerox Corporation where I held the position of Vice President of Global Account Operations.**
- ☐ **I am currently the Managing Director of Resources Unlimited Training & Consulting Group, a provider of strategic and management services to commercial and government clients throughout the United States and the World.**



My Role & Responsibilities

- ☐ **As the Senior Warden of the Church, my responsibility are defined by the laws of the Church that are called “canons. These responsibilities are:**
 - ✓ **Provide leadership to the Vestry, which is the governing body of the church.**
 - ✓ **Provide leadership in stewardship over the parish’s finances and buildings.**
 - ✓ **Choose individuals to fill various positions of the parish leadership.**



What You Will Hear

- ❑ Today, you will hear from members of the St. Mary's community who have been selected to convey the legitimate bases for St. Mary's concerns with the impending demolition, excavation and construction of a new structure.**
- ✓ St. Mary's agrees with the Office of Planning and ANC 2A, that having a strong Construction Management Agreement between St. Mary's and all necessary parties is a pre-condition to the Zoning Commission approval of Hillel's plan.**
- ✓ St. Mary's seeks a strong Construction Management Agreement as a condition, but not the only condition of any approval that the Zoning Commission may provide to Hillel in this proceeding because our buildings are irreplaceable and our prior experiences guide our high degree of concern.**



Who Will Speak?

- 1. Dr. Richard English - will provide testimony on the impact of the George Washington University's Wellness Center construction—a severe and hurtful impact that caused St. Mary's Congregation to be separated from its Sanctuary for over three (3) years.**
- 2. Father Darwin Price- our former Rector at the time of negotiations with GWU's construction of the Dormitory and Wellness Center and a former Rector will discuss our concerns with and actual use of the North Gate on the Rectory property.**
- 3. Father Manion - our present interim Rector will discuss the historical precedent for community outreach that continues today.**
- 4. John Matteo - our structural engineer will advise the Zoning Commission on the risks of Hillel's project, the importance of proper structural engineering information—information we do not now have, for the development of both a strong Construction Management Agreement and a strong plan to protect St. Mary's buildings from vibration, water and settling in addition to other impacts from the demolition and construction proposed by Hillel.**



What My Testimony Will Cover?

- 1. The Architectural Significance of St. Mary's buildings and the longstanding cultural and historical significance to the Foggy Bottom Community.**
- 2. Significance of the Rectory to the life of St. Mary's Congregation.**
- 3. Concerns with Hillel's increased Lot Occupancy.**
- 4. Proximity of Hillel's Proposed Entrance to the Rectory Residence.**
- 5. Concerns with Loss of the North Gate.**
- 6. Hillel's proposed projection onto the public space on 23rd and H Streets.**



Architectural Significance

St. Mary's is significant under two criteria – History and Architecture

- **Designed by the renowned architect, James Renwick who also designed the Smithsonian Castle and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.**
- **Listed on the National Register of Historic places.**
- **Renwick's design with few exceptions has not been altered since its completion in 1887.**
- **One window is a Tiffany Glass Window dedicated in memory of Edwin Stanton who contributed significantly to the church's initial religious community center.**
- **Three windows that adorn the high altar were made in Loran, France and are priceless and irreplaceable.**



Historical Significance

Historical

- **Formed by a group of African-American Episcopalians as the first African American Episcopal Church in the city of Washington in 1867.**
- **Alexander Crummell was the first Rector of the Church and helped to build St. Mary's into a center of community life.**
- **St. Mary's remains intact, as a congregation and as a physical structure unlike other churches whose congregations have changed or vanished including some in Foggy Bottom; our congregations include parishioners whose ancestors were founding members.**
- **Jessye Norman, the renowned opera singer, sang in the choir while a student at Howard University .**
- **Today, St. Mary's congregation includes a diverse group representing many ages, races and nationalities.**



Service to the Community

- **Long and continued history of involvement in the City of Washington and Foggy Bottom.**
- **Over 100 years ago, St. Mary's provided education in its industrial school and was linked with the Washington Fashion Industry for many years.**
- **St. Mary's provided affordable housing for senior citizens at St. Mary's Court.**
- **Today, we open our doors to a diverse mix community and interfaith beyond the Episcopal & Presbyterian Faiths.**
- **Our buildings serve as a meeting place for many interest groups – Alcoholic Anonymous, Debtors Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, LGBT Groups, Folk Dancers and the GWU Canterbury Club.**
- **St. Mary's continues its tradition of educating and caring for the social and spiritual needs of all the Foggy Bottom Community. – Martha's Table and Home to the largest Korean American Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC.**



Significance of the Rectory

- ☐ **The Rectory is just as important as any other part of the Church as its current use creates income for the Church.**
- ☐ **It is historically the home of the Rector and his family.**
- ☐ **Air, light and quiet are crucial considerations for our use of the rectory when anyone is living in the Rectory.**



St. Mary's Concerns

- 1. Loss of Use of the North Gate**
- 2. Use of West Gate is not a substitute**
- 3. Lot Occupancy and Rear Yard**
- 4. Proposed excessive overhangs into public space on 23rd Street**



Loss of the North Rectory Gate

Reasons :

- ☐ **St. Mary's was promised an easement by the Zoning Commission Order #16036 to allow the construction of the Rice Residence Hall located at 2350 H Street NW .**
- ☐ **The easement was provided to allow access from the back yard of the Rectory across the Residence Hall property to the 30 foot public alley.**
- ☐ **We have found no evidence that the required easement was ever recorded.**
- ☐ **In addition, the University constructed a second gate for the residents of the Rectory using Hillel's rear yard. The proposed 100% lot occupancy would eliminate that access.**



Use of the West Gate

Reasons :

- ☐ **Requires crossing GWU's property to access a hidden public alley**
- ☐ **Creates safety issues**
- ☐ **Presents access challenges for large EMT or Fire vehicles**



Lot Occupancy and Rear Yard - Objections

Reasons :

- ☐ **The continuous high solid wall between 23rd and 22nd Streets will greatly reduce air circulation and will concentrate reflected heat energy on to the church properties.**
- ☐ **Loss of light from the North.**
- ☐ **Creates a feeling of enclosure.**



St. Mary's Supports DDOT's and OP Objections

Reasons :

- ☐ **St. Mary's supports the District Department of Transportations' objections to the overhangs proposed in Hillel's June 9th submission opining that they violate current District Code.**
- ☐ **St. Mary's maintains that the proposed overhangs create an intrusive façade that diminishes the beauty of St. Mary's streetscape and may be inconsistent with the comprehensive plan and the District's projection regulations into public space.**