



2008 FEB -1 PM 2: 07

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director *JS*
DATE: February 1, 2008
SUBJECT: **Setdown Report for ZC # 07-34**
East Dupont Zoning Consistency Remapping

I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning Commission set down for a public hearing case #07-34, East Dupont Zoning Consistency Remapping. The application is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan or the neighborhood character.

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location: Squares and portions of squares 176, 177, 178, 190, 191, 206 and 207, generally bounded by S, T, U, 15th and 16th Streets and New Hampshire Avenue. Please refer to the vicinity map in Attachment 1.

Applicants: Anne Sellin and Richard Busch

Current Zoning: R-5-D, R-5-B

Proposed Zoning: Rezone R-5-D areas to DC/R-5-B; Rezone R-5-B areas to DC/R-4

Future Land Use Map: Predominantly moderate density residential

III. PROPOSAL

The applicants, with co-sponsors including ANC 2B, the Dupont Circle Citizens Association and other neighborhood groups, have submitted a map consistency case to propose new zone categories corresponding to the 2006 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use designation and existing neighborhood character. The applicants also propose expanding the boundaries of the existing Dupont Circle (DC) Overlay to cover the defined area. The new zoning would reduce permitted height and density.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 07-34
EXHIBIT NO. 21
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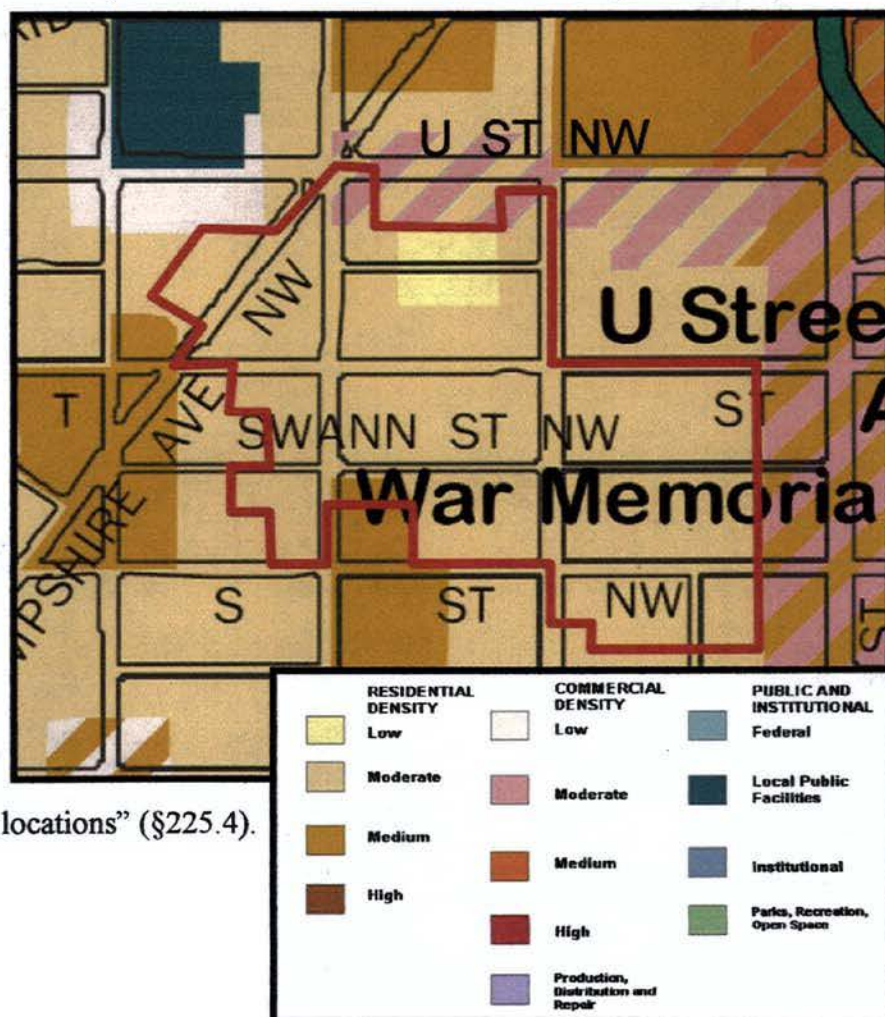
IV. AREA DESCRIPTION

The applicants have defined the boundaries of the area proposed for rezoning and have listed every lot and square in the attachments to their submission. The principal streets through the area include S, T, 15th and 16th Streets and New Hampshire Avenue. Please refer to the vicinity map in Attachment 1. The subject area consists of a mix of rowhouses and small to mid-size apartment buildings. The apartment buildings are mostly clustered at the western side of the neighborhood, while the eastern portion of the area is mostly rowhouses. Four historic districts cover the area including the Strivers' Section, 16th Street, 14th Street and U Street historic districts. Neighboring areas include the commercial districts of 14th and U Streets; larger apartment buildings on the north side of the 1400 block of T Street; larger apartment buildings fronting New Hampshire between S and T Streets; and larger apartment buildings and the Scottish Rite Temple on 16th Street.

V. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE MAPS

The Future Land Use Map recommends most of the subject area for moderate density residential uses. Please refer to the excerpt of the map below. Small sections of low density residential, medium density residential and moderate density commercial are also shown within the area. The Plan states that moderate density residential is appropriate for:

"the District's row house neighborhoods, as well as its low-rise garden apartment complexes. The designation also applies to areas characterized by a mix of single family homes, 2-4 unit buildings, row houses, and low-rise apartment buildings. In some of the older inner city neighborhoods with this designation, there may also be existing multi-story apartments... The R-3, R-4, R-5-A Zone districts are generally consistent with the Moderate Density Residential category; the R-5-B district and other zones may also apply in some locations" (§225.4).



The Generalized Policy Map designates most of the site as a Neighborhood Conservation Area. These areas are primarily residential in nature and have very little vacant land for new development. The Plan anticipates very little change over the next 20 years in conservation areas. The northernmost reach of the subject area is designated as part of a Main Street Mixed Use Corridor, a designation that encourages a pedestrian-oriented environment with traditional storefronts (§223.14) and residential units on upper floors.

The proposed rezoning is not inconsistent with the designations of the Future Land Use Map or the Generalized Policy Map.

VI. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposal would further the following Guiding Principles of the Comprehensive Plan, as outlined and detailed in Chapter 2, the Framework Element:

- (8) The residential character of neighborhoods must be protected, maintained and improved. Many District neighborhoods possess social, economic, historic, and physical qualities that make them unique and desirable places in which to live. These qualities can lead to development and redevelopment pressures that threaten the very qualities that make the neighborhoods attractive. These pressures must be controlled through zoning and other means to ensure that neighborhood character is preserved and enhanced. 218.1
- (11) The District of Columbia contains many buildings and sites that contribute to its identity. Protecting historic resources through preservation laws and other programs is essential to retain the heritage that defines and distinguishes the city. Special efforts should be made to conserve row houses as the defining element of many District neighborhoods, and to restore neighborhood “main streets” through sensitive renovation and updating. 218.4
- (15) Public input in decisions about land use and development is an essential part of creating successful neighborhoods, from development of the Comprehensive Plan to every facet of its implementation. 218.8

Policies of the Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use, Housing, Urban Design, Historic Preservation and Near Northwest Elements are also relevant to this application:

Policy LU-2.1.1: Variety of Neighborhood Types

Maintain a variety of residential neighborhood types in the District, ranging from low-density, single family neighborhoods to high-density, multi-family mixed use neighborhoods. The positive elements that create the identity and character of each neighborhood should be preserved and enhanced in the future. 309.5

Policy LU-2.1.7: Conservation of Row House Neighborhoods

Protect the character of row house neighborhoods by requiring the height and scale of structures to be consistent with the existing pattern, considering additional row house neighborhoods for

“historic district” designation, and regulating the subdivision of row houses into multiple dwellings. Upward and outward extension of row houses which compromise their design and scale should be discouraged. 309.12

Policy LU-2.1.8: Zoning of Low and Moderate Density Neighborhoods

Discourage the zoning of areas currently developed with single family homes, duplexes, and rowhouses (e.g., R-1 through R-4) for multifamily apartments (e.g., R-5) where such action would likely result in the demolition of housing in good condition and its replacement with structures that are potentially out of character with the existing neighborhood. 309.13

Policy LU-2.1.9: Addition of Floors and Roof Structures to Row Houses and Apartments

Generally discourage increases in residential density resulting from new floors and roof structures (with additional dwelling units) being added to the tops of existing row houses and apartment buildings, particularly where such additions would be out of character with the other structures on the block. Roof structures should only be permitted if they would not harm the architectural character of the building on which they would be added or other buildings nearby. 309.14

Action LU-2.1.C: Residential Rezoning

Provide a better match between zoning and existing land uses in the city’s residential areas, with a particular focus on:

- a. Blocks of well-established single family and semi-detached homes that are zoned R-3 or higher;
- b. Blocks that consist primarily of row houses that are zoned R-5-B or higher; and
- c. Historic districts where the zoning does not match the predominant contributing properties on the block face.

In all three of these instances, pursue rezoning to appropriate densities to protect the predominant architectural character and scale of the neighborhood, 309.21

Policy H-1.3.1: Housing for Families

Provide a larger number of housing units for families with children by encouraging new and retaining existing single family homes, duplexes, row houses, and three- and four-bedroom apartments. 505.6

Policy UD-2.2.1: Neighborhood Character and Identity

Strengthen the defining visual qualities of Washington’s neighborhoods. This should be achieved in part by relating the scale of infill development, alterations, renovations, and additions to existing neighborhood context. 910.6

Policy HP-2.4.3: Compatible Development

Preserve the important historic features of the District while permitting compatible new infill development. Within historic districts, preserve the established form of development as evidenced by lot coverage limitations, yard requirements open space, and other standards that contribute to the character and attractiveness of those areas. Ensure that new construction, repair, maintenance, and improvements are in scale with and respect historic context through sensitive siting and design and the appropriate use of materials and architectural detail. 1011.8

Policy NNW-1.1.1: Residential Neighborhoods

Maintain and enhance the historic, architecturally distinctive mixed density character of Near Northwest residential neighborhoods, including...Dupont Circle... Ensure that infill development within these areas is architecturally compatible with its surroundings and positively contributes to the identity and quality of each neighborhood. 2108.2

Policy NNW-2.2.2: Dupont Circle Area Policies

Use the following standards in evaluating new buildings and alterations in the Dupont Circle area:

- a. Require a scale of development consistent with the nature and character of the Dupont Circle area in height and bulk;
- b. Ensure a general compatibility in the scale of new buildings with older low-scale buildings by restricting the maximum permitted height and floor area ratio of the new buildings to that of the underlying zone;
- c. Preclude demolitions or partial demolitions that would lead to an increase in height and floor area ratio inappropriate to the area;
- d. Enhance the residential character of the area by maintaining existing residential uses and controlling the scale, location, and density of commercial and residential development; and
- e. Ensure compatibility of development with the Comprehensive Plan. 2112.4

VII. ZONING

The existing zoning in the neighborhood is R-5-D and R-5-B. As shown in Attachment 1, the boundary between the two is a north-south line just east of 16th Street, with higher density zoning to the west of that line. There is also a small pocket of R-5-B west of 16th Street south of Swann Street.

The applicants propose to rezone R-5-D properties to R-5-B and R-5-B properties to R-4. The primary purpose of the R-4 district is to stabilize rowhouse neighborhoods where some properties have been converted to flats or apartments (§§330.1 and 330.2). The R-5-B district is a general residence district where moderate height and density are permitted (§§350.1 and 350.2).

The applicants also request that the Dupont Circle overlay be applied to the entire neighborhood. One of the purposes of the Dupont Circle Overlay (DC Overlay) is to ensure compatibility between the scale and character of new development and the scale and character of existing development. One way this is achieved is to limit height and density to matter-of-right levels, even with a PUD. The chart below compares the matter-of-right parameters of the relevant zoning districts.

Item	Section	R-4	R-5-B	R-5-D
Maximum Height (ft)	400	40	50	90
Maximum Height (stories)	400	3	No limit	No limit
Minimum Lot Area (sf)	401	1,800 (row dwelling) 3,000 (semi-detached)	None prescribed	None prescribed
Minimum Lot Width (ft)	401	18 (row dwelling) 30 (semi-detached)	None prescribed	None prescribed
FAR (max)	402	None prescribed	1.8	3.5
Lot Occupancy	403	60% (row dwelling) 40% (semi-detached)	60%	75%

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Several letters of support have been submitted to the record. ANC 2B has indicated its support, as well as the Dupont Circle Citizens Association, the Dupont Circle Conservancy and other neighborhood groups.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

The proposed rezoning is not inconsistent with the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan calls for moderate density residential over a majority of the subject area. The proposed zone districts DC/R-5-B and DC/R-4 are consistent with a moderate density designation. The policies of the Plan also strongly encourage preservation of rowhouse neighborhoods as well as areas of strong architectural character. The Office of Planning, therefore, recommends that the Zoning Commission set down for a public hearing case #07-34, East Dupont Zoning Consistency Remapping.

IX. ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map

JS/mrj

Attachment 1 Vicinity Map

