



September 11, 2008

The Hon. Anthony Hood, Chair
Zoning Commission
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Re: Zoning Case 08-02
The Hay Adams Hotel

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City and the DC Preservation League express serious concern about the proposal to rezone this hotel site. The existing SP-2 District governs uses along one of the most significant portions of the Nation's Capital, across from historic St. John's Church, abutting Lafayette Square Park, looking directly at the White House. These structures and areas are National Historic Landmarks, deserving the highest level of protection because of their importance to the nation.

The proposal before the Commission is to change the permitted height from a maximum of 90 feet to a maximum of 130 feet, and the allowed FAR would change from 6.0 to 10.0 as a matter of right, because of street width. This is the zoning envelope for downtown development; it is inappropriate for these historic properties. It is an extraordinary departure from the existing limits controlling this district.

While the current proposal for an addition at the Hay-Adams doesn't call for this height or bulk, the Zoning Commission would be giving approval to this height and density as a matter of right – in the midst of highly significant historic properties and settings. It would also be setting a precedent for permitting such height and bulk elsewhere at NHL sites or areas.

The Office of Planning has cited a legal opinion that this proposal would not constitute spot zoning, but it is not persuasive. We urge the Commission to reject this application, justified largely by Comprehensive Plan policies encouraging expansion of the hospitality industry.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 08-02

EXHIBIT NO. 2
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 08-02
EXHIBIT NO. 21

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A broad policy statement supporting an expanded hospitality industry is an insufficient basis for the adverse impact to this particular site, and the general harm to zoning integrity posed by spot zoning. Furthermore, the height and bulk that is proposed contradict Comprehensive Plan policies protecting existing historic sites and landmarks, and the maintenance of the monumental core and its immediate environs from degradation through unduly intense commercial uses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rebecca Miller". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Rebecca Miller
Executive Director
DC Preservation League

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Laura Richards". The script is elegant and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Laura M. Richards, Chairman
The Committee of 100 on the Federal
City