

**Testimony of Sara Maddux
Zoning Commission Case 08-19
December 18, 2008**

I am Sara Maddux. I reside as an owner at 522 21st Street, N.W. I have been a resident in this area since 1965. Thus, I have been an eyewitness to the history of the residential, commercial, and institutional changes in this neighborhood.

Although Square 101 is split-zoned, this is the result of a historical incident in the construction of the office building owned by George Washington University (GWU), which is now known as Red Lion Row. This incident, along with that involving a historic church in the District, was the impetus of the greater historic preservation movement in the District of Columbia. To say that changing the R-5-D district in this Square to C-3-C is a natural evolution is a very large error. This will be precedent-setting and will unleash a wave of redistricting in the Foggy Bottom/West End area which, in the end, will be a concrete village devoid of human-scale building, green grass and trees, and the last pieces of this historic neighborhood as a residential neighborhood which housed and continues to house working, tax-paying citizens.

A review of past actions begins with the obliteration of a historic church in Square 120 and the surrounding green open area with the mammoth, fortress International Monetary Fund (IMF) Headquarters Building #1. Based on that, the IMF was successful in building a second, similar fortress building in Square 119 on Pennsylvania Avenue between 19th and 20th Streets. Continuing down the areas between 19th and 20th Streets NW toward the Mall, there has been the loss of townhouses on F Street to accommodate the World Bank. Two of these Lendall historic houses were moved to the 600 block of 21st Street and are now offices for GWU. Other low-scale buildings along E Street, which housed a long-time neighborhood restaurant and a liquor store among other small businesses, fell prey to this development. Now, there are more concrete fortress buildings owned by GWU.

Along F Street between 21st and 22nd Streets, there were 4-story apartment buildings and brick townhouses. The apartment buildings are gone, replaced by high buildings which have no green areas or setbacks. GWU has constructed a dormitory over what had been tennis courts, taking away more open space. Between 22nd and 23rd Streets in the 600 block of 22nd Street, GWU took away the brick townhouses and built the Smith Athletic Center. From 23rd Street to 24th Street in the 600 block, and along Virginia Avenue, GWU removed by midnight demolition all of the brick townhouses in that Square, except for one privately-owned residence, and replaced them with a maximum lot occupancy residence hall – again, no green area or open space to reduce the impact of the size.

At the corner of 24th and H Streets, GWU bought and destroyed the brick townhouses to build a maximum lot occupancy residence hall, again no open space or green areas. At the corner of 23rd and G Streets, GWU repeated the destruction of the residential townhouses and built another athletic center, practically overwhelming historic St. Mary's Episcopal Church, the oldest Black Episcopal church in the Washington Diocese.

If you look around at the other buildings currently shown on the just-replaced campus plan along with the proposed buildings in the 20-year campus plan, it is obvious that the paving over with giant concrete structures by GWU will continue.

Directly across from 2013 H Street is the GWU University Yard bordered on the east by the GWU Law School. This is the last open, green area on the campus. This area, without a doubt, will be the first victim of any zoning change granted in the case before you tonight.

Granting the Applicant's Zoning Map Amendment change will create additional problems because of the need for a variance concerning parking spaces. This will not be an asset for the owner of the property but a complication created by the Applicant in needing to be bailed out of a bad business decision in the planning for the use of its property.

Secondly, this house is within the proposed Foggy Bottom Campus Historic District. If this Zoning Map Amendment change is approved, it will change the nature of the asset which is to be included in the proposed historic district, thus beginning the unraveling of the historic district before it is even begun. Although the proposed structure was presented before the Historic Preservation Review Board, because it was not nominated for designation, there were no standards applied to the decision process and there was no formal decision from the Board – just an approval of the staff report which represented an opinion. This was hardly within the standards of an appropriate District of Columbia government process.

Under the Comprehensive Plan land use policy guidance for “Infill Development” this project does represent an infill because it is not vacant land. Instead, it is a proper house built in accordance with the requirements at the time of its construction. It is not vacant land near a Metro station requiring development as other parcels in other areas of the District have been approved by the other zoning plans. It certainly will not promote commercial development or expand employment. The owner is a non-profit organization looking to collect rent from other non-profits to support itself. These efforts do not contribute to the expansion of continued economic growth in the District as tax-exempt entities with no requirement to employ District of Columbia residents.

Thank you for your consideration of these facts. I ask that you deny this request in order to protect the remaining historic and residential elements of the Foggy Bottom/West End neighborhood and, secondly, not have the bad precedent of this change which will be used before you in coming cases.