

November 23, 2015

DC Zoning Commission
Chairman Anthony Hood
Case No-15-05

Introduction

We are co-owners at Town Square Towers (700 7th St. SW). Town Square Towers (TST) is the closest owner-occupied building to the proposed Riverside Baptist Church development. We are opposed to PN Hoffman's request to increase the rezoning of the parcel by two levels. Although we do not have party status, we believe we meet the required criteria. The TST dwelling is within 200 ft. of the proposed project and TST will be adversely affected by the project as currently configured. Therefore, we request that you give our objections serious consideration.

Proposed Structure

The PN Hoffman plan calls for a 9-story tower tapering to 7-stories to the east. However, also included is a 20 ft. mechanical penthouse along the length of the tower in effect making the building 110 ft.-tall. The developers are justifying the project height by using the height of Waterside Towers, a rental building, next door to the project. It is our view that another building of this height on the south side of I Street will create a tunnel effect and decrease the already limited afternoon sunlight. There will be a "wall" of buildings from 6th Street to Maine Avenue. At a past ANC meeting, the architects said the building would be seen all the way down 7th Street. Currently, travelers coming down 7th Street from the north see a beautiful church with a lot of open space. With this proposed plan, they will see a massive building blocking the current view corridor. No longer will there be a feeling of light and openness for visitors traveling to the waterfront. Our section of SW has been comprised of town homes, mid-rise buildings, and churches with a diversity of heights and a lot of open spaces. The developers said they valued diversity of heights and knew how important that was to the community. A 9-story tower with an additional 20-ft mechanical panthouse alongside Waterside Towers does not reflect diversity and will overshadow TST.

The proposed building material for the project is also inconsistent with that of the neighborhood. The steel and glass material is more appropriate to the buildings on the waterfront, not with those on the east side of Maine Avenue. The ultra-modern look and construction materials are out of keeping with TST's brick-with-cement balconies façade and the earthen tones of the neighboring town homes.

Congestion

We are extremely concerned about the added congestion to our neighborhood. The developers are planning to reconfigure the intersection of 7th and I Streets. We will experience increased traffic due to the waterfront development and I street will become even a more major thoroughfare than it is now, especially with drivers who want to avoid Maine Avenue. The developers plan to eliminate a right-hand turn lane onto I Street will only add to the confusion. The entrance to TST's south three garage levels are on I Street just east of 7th Street. Along with that, the loading zone for Waterside Towers on I Street near the intersection and the future garage entrance for the Riverside project also on I Street will create even more congestion. This raises a safety issue for the vehicles entering and exiting all these garages. Moreover, the unknown plan for retail (possibly a day care center) will also add to the increased traffic. With two existing schools at the intersection, along with possible childcare drop-off, we question the safety of the children in the midst of all the increased traffic. The developers have not adequately addressed this significant traffic/congestion problem.

Conclusion

The PN Hoffman development at the Riverside Baptist Church site as currently configured will adversely change the feel and character of our neighborhood east of Maine Avenue and will contribute to the loss of a feeling of more openness. This project will have a direct adverse impact,

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both economically and esthetically, on TST co-owners. We question the value to those of us at TST of having another rental building next door to an already large rental building, Waterside Towers. We would much prefer an owner-occupied building, not another rental. However, the developers claim this is not economically viable. It is noteworthy that PN Hoffman is constructing a high-end 108-unit condominium on the St. Augustine's Episcopal Church site at 6th Street and Maine Avenue with only a height of 5 stories.

We are not opposed to development on the site and would have no objection to an increase of one zoning level. We ask that the proposed development be less massive with a lower height and use construction material more in character with the existing neighboring buildings.

We co-owners at TST ask you to deny PN Hoffman's request for a two-level zoning change.

Judith Urban #733

Patricia Neverson #526

Janessa Robinson #828

M. Grace Fuller #732

Beverly Gray #704

Tiffany Cain #729

William E. Turner #610

Yvonne Thelwell #402

Other co-owners at TST have asked to add their names to this letter opposing PN Hoffman's request for a zoning increase of two levels.

Paul William Smart #827

Judith Jones Putnam #409

Diane Smart #827

Olga Mongelos #144

Philip Perry #735

Mark Magana #144

Melissa Levenger #734

Meredith Braden #823

Emma Edwards #735

Ron Montague #141

Carrie Riser #705

Kam Queresha #143

Daniel Riser #705

Faeza Queresha #143

David Luck #619

Elaine Bush #605

Joseph H. Turner #610

George Wishon #825

Prasanjit Dash #410

Thomas Schmatloch #820

Laura Winn #807

Carmen Jones #726

Nicole Walton #101

Amy Herring #731

Mabel Meares #218

Conchita Baylor #140

Bruce Lehman #427

Fran Harris #611

Ann Marie Thro #248-S

Denny Cruz #818

Michael Dutton #534

Barbara Keary #403