

November 13, 1987

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ZONING SECRETARIAT,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

District of Columbia Zoning
Commission
1350 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Sir:

Recently, the Cleveland Park Historical Society and ANC-3C appeared before you to request a hearing on the rezoning of the commercial district on Connecticut Avenue between Macomb and Porter Streets. The District's Planning Office supported the proposal in most respects. In particular, ANC-3C and the Historical Society asked you to consider an overlay zone for the commercial strip, which is now zoned C-2-A.

There are three row houses -- three and a half, actually -- at 2815, 2817, and 2819 (and 2819A) Ordway Street, for which both the present C-2-A zoning and the overlay zone are inappropriate, and where some other rezoning is needed.

The three Ordway Street buildings are two stories plus English basements, except for 2819A, which is a single story, one-room structure. They were built for residential use and, unlike the somewhat larger but similar buildings on Connecticut, have not been modified with plate-glass windows or the like for retail use. The houses face two single family homes (one including a doctor's office), 2810 and 2812 Ordway. The houses are separated from the small back yards of the Connecticut Avenue Wardman buildings by an alley and a sideyard, and from a single-family house and the adjacent row houses by a second alley that goes through to Porter Street. Although the three buildings are visually and in other ways part of the low-scale residential development that continues up Ordway to Wisconsin Avenue, for zoning purposes they have apparently been grouped with the buildings that face Connecticut Avenue.

For the same reasons that the current C-2-A zoning is inappropriate, parts of the overlay treatment are inappropriate. Applying the overlay to these buildings would

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push retail operations up Ordway without doing anything in other respects to protect Ordway Street from the encroachment of inappropriate uses and development into the residential area.

One of the witnesses for real estate developers at the Historic Preservation Review Board hearings on Cleveland Park testified that there were inadequate buffer zones between the Connecticut Avenue commercial buildings and the residential areas on the side streets, like Ordway. This observation may be correct, but neither in that context nor in the different context of zoning classifications does that fact lead us to the conclusion that greater development or the more active commercial uses should be pushed into the low scale residential areas on the side streets. To the contrary, it seems to us that particular care must be taken with the grouping of lots and with transitional properties where there is no clear buffer. In particular, the same zoning and height, FAR, and use restrictions that may be appropriate directly on Connecticut Avenue are not appropriate for lots on the side streets that are more closely linked to the residential sections than to the Connecticut Avenue commercial buildings.

We therefore request that the Commission amend its notice of hearings for Connecticut avenue in Cleveland Park to consider either different overlay treatment or R-3 or R-4 zoning for 2815, 2817, 2819, and 2819A Ordway (and any similar areas on other side streets, if any).

Respectfully,

Susan and John O'Sullivan

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