

Case No. 86-26
July 7, 1988

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE REZONING OF THREE
TOWNHOUSES TO RESIDENTIAL (R-2), 2815, 2817, 2819 ORDWAY
STREET, NW, LOTS 72, 73, 74 IN SQUARE 2068

Madam Chair~~man~~^{person}, members of the Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this evening to speak in support of zoning 2815, 2817, and 2819 Ordway Street R-2. My name is John O'Sullivan, and my family and I live at 2821 Ordway Street, right across the alley from the westernmost of the three buildings.

As I said to you in my letter initiating consideration of these three lots, a witness for the developers in the hearings before the Historic Preservation Review Board opposing inclusion of the Connecticut Avenue commercial buildings in the historic district noted that there were inadequate buffer zones between the Connecticut Avenue commercial strips and the adjoining residential areas. That is true. As Kathleen Wood will show you, however, on most blocks, a reasonably satisfactory arrangement has evolved. In a number of places, the portion of the commercially-zoned lot that faces the side street is used as the entrance to an apartment building that has ground-floor retail establishments facing Connecticut. In the case of the library, there is a mini-greenbelt dividing commercial and institutional structures from the adjoining single-family residential structures.

PRESENTATION WITH SLIDES BY KATHLEEN WOOD

As Kathy has shown you, in the case of the north side of Ordway west of Connecticut, neither the structures nor the lots are configured so as to permit a gradual transition. The question comes down to whether the first or second alley up Ordway should mark the end of the commercial zone and the beginning of the residential. We think the answer is obvious. The three lots in question face onto Ordway, and have no Connecticut frontage. They face residences. They are considerably uphill from Connecticut Avenue -- the ground floor of 2815, the lowest of the three structures on these lots, is roughly as high as the middle of the second floor of the buildings facing Connecticut. In short, they are appropriately part of the residential zone. And the inappropriate present zoning has a major impact not only on my family and those who live directly across the street, but also on people who live well up Ordway and on 30th Street.

ZONING COMMISSION
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And it is striking that ~~we~~ are the only example on Connecticut Avenue in Cleveland Park.

In short, having commercial activity move onto the side streets is, if we are any example, enormously disruptive. There is more trash, more noise, more traffic, which means more danger to our children, and more pressure ^{less available parking,} for deterioration of the immediately adjoining and opposing residential areas. There is, I believe, a built-in creeping aspect to this kind of ~~activity~~ activity: each incursion sets the stage for a further extension up the side streets or, at the least, a deterioration of the quality of residential life in the neighborhood.

In the end, we decided that the only kind of commercial establishment that would not disrupt the neighborhood this way was one that was quietly failing. We don't think this is fair to us or the business people. We urge you to adopt the recommendation of the Planning Office and zone these lots R-2. Thank you.