

Testimony by Dr. Charles G. Field, President of the Woodley
Park Historical Society

Before the D.C. Zoning Commission
July 7, 1988

~~MR.~~^{PERSON} CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE ZONING COMMISSION. I AM
CHARLES G. FIELD, PRESIDENT OF THE WOODLEY PARK HISTORICAL
SOCIETY. I APPEARED BEFORE YOU BACK IN JANUARY AND AM PLEASED
TO REAPPEAR ON BEHALF OF THE WOODLEY PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY. I
SPEAK IN FAVOR OF LIMITING THE USE OF PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE WOODLEY PARK OVERLAY ZONE.

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THREE POINTS.

1. THERE SHOULD BE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE COMPREHENSIVE
PLANS, THE ZONING BOARDS EARLIER ACTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE
COMMERCIAL AREA IN THE WOODLEY PARK AREA, AND THE LAST REMAINING
ISSUE - THE USE OF PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS.

I AGREE WITH THE EARLIER ASSESSMENT THAT THE PUD
GUIDELINES ARE ONLY GUIDELINES. THEY SHOULD BE USED
CONSISTENT WITH THE LEGAL DESIGNATION OF THE BLOCKS IN
QUESTION UNDER THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. THE WOODLEY PARK
COMMERCIAL AREA IS DESIGNED LOW DENSITY, LOCAL
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER. PUD GUIDELINES THAT ALLOW
CONSTRUCTION OF UP TO 90 FEET IS UNWISE AND INCONSISTENT
WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN. SECTION 2400.5 OF THE DCMR
STATES THAT:

...THE PUD PROCESS SHALL NOT BE USED TO CIRCUMVENT
THE INTENT AND PURPOSES OF THIS TITLE, NOR TO
RESULT IN ACTION THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

SECTION 2400.3 OF THE DCMR FURTHER PROVIDES:

COMPATIBILITY WITH CITY-WIDE AND NEIGHBORHOOD
GOALS, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS, AND SENSITIVITY TO
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, ENERGY CONSERVATION, AND
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES OF THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA, SHALL BE GOALS OF THE PUD PROCESS.

THE ZONING COMMISSION EARLIER THIS YEAR VOTED A SPECIAL
OVERLAY ZONE FOR THE WOODLEY PARK COMMERCIAL AREA. BY YOUR OWN
ACTIONS YOU RECOGNIZED THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THIS NEIGHBORHOOD
SETTING. NOW IS TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE THE FINAL ACTIONS TO BRING
THE ZONING REQUIREMENTS IN LINE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND
YOUR OVERLAY REQUIREMENTS.

2. THE WOODLEY PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION THROUGH ITS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLANS TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC

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DISTRICT STATUS WITH THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD THIS COMING FALL. WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CITY, THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND COMMUNITY GROUPS AND RESIDENTS WE HAVE SURVEYED THE ARCHITECTURAL AND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. WHILE DR CYNTHIA FIELD WILL ADDRESS SOME OF THE ARCHITECTURAL FACTORS, I WILL LIMIT MY REMARKS TO BUILDING HEIGHTS.

A. THE HISTORIC PATTERN HAS BEEN FOR A NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE WITH 1-2-3 STORY STRUCTURES ON CONNECTICUT IN THE BLOCKS IN QUESTION WITH 2-3 STORY TOWNHOUSE STRUCTURES IN THE ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS. THUS THE HISTORIC HEIGHT HAS BEEN MORE ON THE ORDER OF 40 FEET THAN THE 50 FEET PROVIDED UNDER THE OVERLAY ZONE.

B. OF THE 36 ORIGINAL BUILDINGS ALONG CONNECTICUT AVE IN THE OVERLAY ZONE AREA, 22 WERE BUILT BEFORE 1910; 7 MORE WERE BUILT BETWEEN 1911 AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR; 3 WERE BUILT IN THE 1920'S AND 4 AFTER 1930. WE HAVE LOST 14 OF THE 22 PRE-1910 BUILDINGS AND 2 OF THE 7 PRE WWI BUILDINGS. SOME OF THE MOST RECENT LOSSES OCCURRED WITH THE DEMOLITION IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEW BUILDING GOING INTO BLOCK 2204.

C. IN THE OVERLAY ZONE, OF THESE DEMOLITION OF ORIGINAL BUILDINGS, MOST WERE 3 OR 2 STORY STRUCTURES. THEY WERE REPLACED BY ONE STORY BUILDINGS. THUS THE PATTERN OF REPLACEMENT WAS TOWARDS LOWER DENSITY USE. CLEARLY THE COMMERCIAL USES WERE DESIGNED TO SERVICE NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS.

D. OF THE 45 STRUCTURES ALONG WOODLEY PLACE, IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE OVERLAY AREA, 43 ARE THREE STORIES OR LESS. MOST ARE ORIGINAL BUILDINGS.

3. THE ZONING COMMISSION, BY LIMITING PUD ACTIVITY TO AN ENVELOPE OF MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF 40 FEET IN THE C-2-B ZONE AND 40 FEET IN THE C-2-A ZONE, WOULD PRESERVE THE HISTORICAL SCALE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. BECAUSE THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PLANS TO FILE FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT STATUS, THE COMMISSION, BY LIMITING PUD GUIDELINES, WOULD PRESERVE THE FABRIC OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNTIL THE CITY CAN ACT ON THE HISTORIC DISTRICT APPLICATION.