

219 3rd N.E.
Washington D.C. 20002
September 13, 1995

Director, Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, N.W. Suite 210,
Washington D.C. 20001
re: Case # 95-4

SEP 13 1995
OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Dear Sir:

I am speaking today as a proponent of the Office of Planning's proposed zoning changes in the Union Station area.

I live in the neighborhood as well as own a rental house on 2nd Street.

Specifically I urge the board to follow the Planning Board's original recommendation to make the 600 block of 2nd Street N.E. C2A zoning.

*

C2A was the Planning Board's original recommendation for all of 2nd Street.

At the preliminary hearing in July two gentlemen argued that 2nd Street should be C-1, instead of C2A.

Based on their objection, the Office of Planning changed their recommendation from "C2A" to "Either C2A or C-1."

Here, in a nutshell, are the four reasons the two gentlemen gave as objections to C2A uniformity for 2nd Street N.E. None of them deal with the issue of uniformity.

OBJECTION 1. "C2A is 'neither fish nor fowl,' as an enforceable zoning classification."

Whatever the merits of C2A Classification, we, the people who actually own the six houses on the 600 block in question, should not be penalized because of it. If the two gentlemen have problems with the classification from historic or preservationist viewpoints, they should petition the City Council about it. Not try an end run around the "not inconsistent" rule of the Comprehensive Plan. (The zoning on either side of the 600 block is already C2A.)

ZONING COMMISSION

CASE No. 95-4

EXHIBIT No. 38

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 95-4
EXHIBIT NO. 38
9/19/95

As far as history goes, we already have an example of how C2A has helped revitalize the neighborhood: American Cafe in the 200 block of Massachusetts Ave. N.E.

In the 1970's that area of Mass Ave had the same kind of crime and blight problems that the 600 block of 2nd Street now has. American Cafe came in and took a chance on the neighborhood. They anchored the change that has transformed that area into the most livable part of Capitol Hill, with wonderful restaurants and small stores acting as a buffer for residential houses on either side of Mass Ave. That never would have happened without C2A zoning.

OBJECTION 2. "If the six houses on the 600 block get C2A status that will someday encourage a developer to come in and somehow get control of the adjacent D.C. land that now houses a city School and Police SWAT Team Headquarters."

That can never happen. The city was given that land by the Federal Government in 1953. They cannot sell or trade it away without the land reverting to the Federal Government.

OBJECTION 3. "Giving the six houses C2A status, rather than C-1, will add to the traffic problems of the neighborhood."

This is laughable. Those six houses already look out on the new Judiciary Building, Union Station, and the Station Place parking lot that on September 11 had over eighty cars in it.

What possible C2A light business could any of the six houses attract that could possibly compete with already existing Union Station for traffic? And when Station Place is built across the street? Six little townhouses are going to possibly make a traffic difference?

(A note: One of the gentlemen in question lives near 3rd and H and is understandably concerned about Union Station traffic. A much more logical solution to the problems of lower 3rd Street traffic is making it one way into H Street to compliment 4th street going the other way. But again, this is for another hearing for another department.)

OBJECTION 4. "Giving the six houses C2A status will exacerbate parking in the neighborhood."

Unlike most other C2A townhouses, these six properties already have over 26-30 parking spaces between them as well as the massive parking area across the street at Station Place. Parking for any C2A business will not be a factor for these houses.

3.

All the owners of the houses on the 600 block of 2nd Street are unanimous in wanting C2A status. Due to the present crime problems our houses are extremely difficult to rent. Some of us stand to lose them. As a group we urge you to grant the 600 block of 2nd street C2A status for the following reasons the Department of Planning plainly recognized:

1. C2A is not only "not inconsistent" with present zoning conditions on 2nd Street, it is obviously consistent. In the 400, 500, 700, and 800 blocks you have C2A zoning already there. Only the 600 block and four houses of the 500 block are still non-C2A.

2. 2nd Street is a natural buffer zone between Union Station and the houses behind it.

3. The presence of small offices will help stabilize the area and act as a counter to the existing presence of incessant street crime. (Owners of businesses take a more active role in upkeep of the street than people who are just renting an apartment for a month or two.)

*

Even the two men who objected at the July meeting grant that 2nd Street is dead as a residential street. The Judiciary Building and Station Place diirectly across the street took care of that.

Whether the neighborhood is eventually helped or hurt by those two large buildings will depend a great deal on what kind of a buffer zone you have across the street. C2A is the only status that promises the chance of small offices and businesses that could survive as a buffer strip.

Thank you for your consideration of our viewpoint.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Henry S. McCall".

Henry S. McCall