The COMMITTEE of 100 on the FEDERAL CITY
founded 1923

TESTIMONY OF JAMES E. NATHANSON, TRUSTEE
Committee of 100 on the Federal City

Zoning Commission Case 98-14c
PUD and Map Amendment
1000-1010 16th Street NW
Washington DC

December 17. 1998

TERSH BOASBERG
CHAIRMAN

ELLEN MCCARTHY
VICE CHAIRMAN

JAMES H. HANNAHAM
SECRETARY

JAMES E. NATHANSON
TREASURER

TRUSTEES:

JOSEPH R. BENDER
CHARLES I. CASSELL, AIA
STEPHEN W. COLEMAN
W. KENT COOPER, AIA
JIM DOUGHERTY
KATERI A. L. ELLISON
ANDREA C. FERSTER
DAVID GRINNELL
JEFF S. LEE
TERRANCE J. LYNCH
NELLIE LONGSWORTH
PHIL MENDELSON
ARTHUR COTTON MOORE, FAIA
DONALD BEEKMAN MYER, FAIA
PHYLLIS MYERS
RICHARD NETTLER
JOSEPH PASSONNEAU, FAIA,ASCE
ELIZABETH SOLOMON

P.O. BOX 57106
WASHINGTON, DC 20037
PLEASE REPLY TO:
MARY D. HEWES, ADMINISTRATOR
TELEPHONE (202) 736-2783

I am Jim Nathanson, a Trustee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. I am representing the Committee in opposition to the application in Zoning Commission Case 98-14c for the Solar Building, 1000-1010 16th Street NW. The Committee of 100, the city's oldest planning and advocacy organization, was founded in 1923 to advance the fundamental planning, environmental, and community values that give the Nation's capital its historic distinction, natural beauty, and overall livability. At their most recent meeting on December 10, 1998, the Trustees voted unanimously to express opposition to the application that is the subject of today's hearing.

The proposal before you represents the worst in planning and spot, ad-hoc zoning practices that too often rear their ugly heads in the District of Columbia and represents practices that require constant vigilance by those interested in the valid planning and aesthetic values that enhance living and working in the District of Columbia.

One look at the streetscape on lower 16th Street from Lafayette Park to Scott Circle must lead one to wonder why such a proposal has ever come this far. The highest building is approximately eighty feet, and the uniformity creates a positive visual impact. The ten-foot-wide sidewalks and forty-feet setbacks create an unusual graceful, unique openness that frames Lafayette Square and the White House—a view that is a national treasure.

The proposed eleven-story height and use of frontage for an underground parking garage will destroy the symmetry, scale and beauty now associated with the 16th Street corridor.

ZONING COMMISSION
CASE No. 98-14c
EXHIBIT No. 47

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.98-14
EXHIBIT NO.47

Other recent improvements on lower 16th Street buildings respect the existing streetscape. Allowing this proposed exception will both destroy the streetscape and, even worse, encourage additional such proposals that will threaten the current scheme's beauty, create another "K Street canyon" and destroy a cherished national view.

Current policy and law dictate that you must deny this application. Both the current and newly revised version of the Comprehensive Plan support maintaining the 16th streetscape. Section 1139.15, a map amendment revision of the revised Comprehensive Plan, dictates even more the rejection of the proposal. It downsizes the frontages on both sides of 16th Street between Scott Circle and I Street NW from high density commercial to mixed use high density residential/ medium high density commercial. The committee report states the purpose to be to conform *with existing scale and uses*, and to protect the special character of this part of 16th Street. (Committee Report, December 1, 1998, on Bill 12-99, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 1998, page 17).

Section 1120 designates the lower 16th Street area as a Special Treatment Area. The proposal before you definitely conflicts with all policy perspectives that follow that designation. (Committee Report, December 1, 1998, on Bill 12-99, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 1998, section 807).

Sixteenth Street is an historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Implementation of this PUD proposal would be the beginning of the end of the current unique vistas. This proposal may even require comment from the appropriate historic preservation agencies before you can act. Additionally, the Carlton Hotel, diagonally across from the proposed Solar Building PUD, is an individually designated historic landmark, and the proposed three additional floors to the Solar Building certainly will impact negatively on the Carlton as well as on the entire 16th and K Streets intersection.

This proposal offends both good planning and common sense. Allowing this PUD to go forward would allow the beginning of the destruction of the current wonderful vista in the lower 16th Street streetscape. The Committee of 100 on the Federal City strongly urges that you reject the requested PUD and associated map amendments.