

December 27, 2024

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**VIA IZIS**

Anthony Hood, Chairperson  
District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 200-S  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application for Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) Modification Without a Hearing to Z.C. Order No. 07-21, as amended by Z.C. Orders 07-21A, B, and C (2201 M Street NW (Sq. 0050, Lot 0087))

Dear Chairperson Hood:

Please accept this letter as a Statement in Support of the Application of BCORE 2201 M ST NW LLC (hereinafter referred to as BRE Hotels and Resorts and/or the “Applicant”). The Applicant is the owner of the property located at 2201 M Street NW (Sq. 0050, Lot 0087) (the “Property”). The Applicant now seeks approval for a Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) Modification Without a Hearing to Z.C. Order No. 07-21, as amended by Z.C. Orders 07-21A, B, and C. (*See* Exs. 1, 2, 3 and 4). This Application is made pursuant to Subtitle Z, Section 703 of the D.C. Zoning Regulations. The purpose of this Application is to modify a condition in Z.C. Order 07-21C related to permitted signage on the existing hotel on the Property.

**I. Background**

The Zoning Commission approved Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) 07-21 on May 12, 2008 to allow the Property to be developed with a hotel and a restaurant on the ground floor. On May 10, 2010, the Zoning Commission granted a two-year extension to the original PUD in Z.C. Order 07-21A. On November 28, 2011, the Zoning Commission approved modifications to the approved PUD for a revised hotel design. In 2014, construction on the Property concluded and the Property is now occupied with a Hilton Garden Inn and restaurant on the ground floor. In Z.C. Order 07-21C, dated July 24, 2017, the Zoning Commission approved modifications to signage permitted on the hotel building. The Zoning Commission modified Decision No. A.1. of Z.C. Order No. 07-21B as follows:

The PUD shall be developed in accordance with the architectural plans and elevations prepared by Shalom Baranes Associates, dated October 7, 2011 (Exhibit 24), as supplemented by the plans presented at the public hearing (Exhibit 36) (the “Plans”), as modified by the guidelines, conditions, and standards herein. Notwithstanding the notes on pages A1 and A2 of Exhibit 24, but subject to the flexibility allowed under Condition No. 7(e) (discussed at paragraph 43(b) of this Order), the hotel shall have two signs: (i) one hotel sign shall be above the hotel's entrance on 22nd Street, as

shown on pages A1 and A2 of Exhibit 24, and that sign cannot be at a different location or be vertically mounted on the façade of the hotel or illuminated from within, and (ii) one hotel sign shall be an externally-illuminated vertical blade sign located on the building's M Street façade near the corner with 22nd Street, and shall be three feet by 10 feet (30 square feet) with two spot lights mounted on each side near the base of the sign. The signage area, locations, and approximate dimensions shall be consistent with Exhibit No 47A of Z.C. Case No. 07-21C. The building shall not have any signage at the top of the building. Ground floor retail signage shall be consistent with either Exhibit 36 of Z.C. Case No. 07-21B or Exhibits 22B and 22D of Z.C. Case No. 07-21C.

In 2022, the Property was sold to its current owner, a subsidiary of BRE Hotels and Resorts. The current owner has no affiliation with the prior owner and developer of the Property. In early 2024, at the direction of Hilton, BRE Hotels and Resorts undertook certain renovations and brand upgrades for the Hilton Garden Inn hotel on the Property. One of these changes requested by Hilton was to install a sign at the top of the building. As such, a sign consultant hired by BRE Hotels and Resorts submitted a sign permit application to the Department of Buildings ("DOB") seeking approval to install a new illuminated wall sign at the top of the Hilton Garden Inn building. *See* Exhibit 5. Neither BRE Hotels and Resorts nor its sign consultant were aware at the time of the PUD condition restricting signage on the Property. Moreover, on April 11, 2024, DOB issued a Sign Permit to permit placement of the proposed sign (as well as modifications to other signs and placement of two window decal signs). *See* Exhibit 6. BRE Hotels and Resorts subsequently installed the approved signs. The wall sign at the top of the Hilton Garden Inn building can be seen in the photograph attached as Exhibit 7.

On December 4, 2024, DOB issued a letter to the current owner of the Property that was titled "NOTICE TO REVOKE BUILDING PERMIT B2406696." *See* Exhibit 8. In the letter, DOB stated that the April 11, 2024 sign permit "was issued due to administrative or clerical error" and that the permit would be revoked on February 2, 2025 unless the owner: (1) submits a new permit that complies with the PUD conditions in Z.C. Order No. 07-21C; or (2) files an application to modify the signage condition in Z.C. Order No. 07-21C. As such, this application followed.

## **II. Proposed Modifications to Z.C. Order 07-21C**

The Applicant now seeks to modify Decision No. A.1. of Z.C. Order No. 07-21C to allow the wall sign currently installed at the top of the Hilton Garden Inn building, with the condition that the sign shall never be illuminated. The Applicant is now aware of the history of the PUD and signage on the building. As such, the Applicant understands that illumination of the sign may draw objections from the community and, therefore, is not seeking approval to illuminate the sign that is currently installed.

Notwithstanding prior proceedings related to signage on the Hilton Garden Inn building, the Applicant's current modification request should be approved for several reasons. First, three separate and nearby competitor hotels all have signage installed at the top of their buildings. This includes the Marriott and Hyatt Place hotels directly across 22<sup>nd</sup> Street from the Property and the Embassy Suites located on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street in the same square as the Property. (*See Photographs at Exhibit 9*). Wall signs of this type are common in this neighborhood. Other notable examples include the Legacy West End apartments, also located on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, and the George Washington University Hospital. (*See Exhibit 10*). There is no objective reason why the Hilton Garden Inn should be treated differently than other buildings directly adjacent and/or nearby to the Property.

Further, upon receiving the December 4, 2024 letter from DOB threatening to revoke the sign permit, the Applicant's representatives reached out to ANC 2A to discuss the sign and no concerns were raised. Although ANC 2A did not have a regular hearing scheduled for December of 2024, the current ANC 2A commissioner for single member district 2A06, which includes the Property, wrote a letter in support of this application, which is attached here as Exhibit 11.

### **III. Conclusion**

For all of the reasons discussed in this letter, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Zoning Commission approve this application for a modification without a hearing to Z.C. Order 07-21C related to permitted signage on the existing hotel on the Property.

Sincerely,



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Zachary G. Williams

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that a copy of this Application was sent to the below addresses by e-mail on December 27, 2024.



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Zachary G. Williams

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