



**ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 2F**  
**Government of the District of Columbia**  
**5 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005**  
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April 11, 2014

Gretchen Pfaehler, Chair  
Historic Preservation Review Board  
c/o Historic Preservation Office  
D.C. Office of Planning  
1100 4th Street, S.W., Suite E650  
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Proposed Construction at Columbia Place at 9<sup>th</sup> and L St. NW  
(Square 369)

Dear Chairman Pfaehler and Members of the Board:

On April 10, 2014, at its regularly scheduled and duly noticed public meeting, at which a quorum was present and acting throughout, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2F (“the ANC”) voted unanimously (5-0-0) to approve the conceptual design and massing plan for the proposed new construction at Columbia Place at the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and L St. NW (Square 369), contingent upon the applicant returning to the ANC Community Development Committee (CDC) and full ANC for final design approval. The project is located in the Shaw Historic District and contributes to its character.

The site, which extends west down L St. and north up 9<sup>th</sup> St. is currently occupied by nine historic buildings, including six that front 9<sup>th</sup> St. and three that front L St. The applicant proposes a two-phase construction project that would result in a 12 story dual brand hotel with 500 keys and a 12 story residential building with 200 units. Included in the applicant’s plan is a proposal to raze two adjacent mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> century historic buildings on the portion of the site that fronts L St.

The applicant first approached the ANC, through the CDC, for concept and massing approval during the first part of 2014. The proposal presented to the CDC at that time included the demolition of all historic buildings along L St. and massing along the same block that the committee found overly imposing and out of character with the historic district. In addition, the applicant proposed maintaining the historic buildings on 9<sup>th</sup> St. back to a uniform 40 feet and removing the portions of the buildings that extended beyond that point. The committee requested a revised plan from the applicant that explored saving, moving, or incorporating the historic buildings on L St. and a revised massing scheme that was more deferential to and respectful of the historic character of the neighborhood.

The applicant returned to the CDC in March and presented the current plan, which preserves the largest of the three historic buildings along L St. and features massing in the new construction portion of the building that highlights and enhances the historic building. In addition, the revised plan also considers the historic value of each individual building along 9<sup>th</sup> St. and only removes those portions of each building that are not essential to its historic character.

While it is the ultimate desire of the ANC to see all of the historic buildings on the site incorporated into the new structure or preserved elsewhere, the commission recognizes the practical difficulty that such a design would impose. That point notwithstanding, the ANC applauds the lengths to which the applicant has gone to produce a plan that not only preserves, but highlights the existing historic buildings in the new design. Furthermore, the ANC encourages the applicant to reuse and feature elements of the to-be razed L St. structures in the common spaces of the new building. Doing so would allow the historic character of these buildings to continue in the new life of the site and would be true to the spirit of incorporating the city's past into its future, which is at the heart of our historic preservation laws. The ANC believes a design that incorporates these elements will produce a building that is maximally harmonious with and respectful of the Shaw Historic District.

After careful scrutiny and consideration, the ANC urges the HPO and HPRB, pursuant to District of Columbia Code § 1-309.10, to accord great weight to its advice and approve the conceptual design and massing plans for this project and endorse the requested changes to the final project design.

Respectfully Submitted,



Walt Cain  
Vice Chairman, ANC 2F

Cc: (Via email only)  
ANC 2F Executive Director  
Carolyn Brown, Holland & Knight  
Members of the ANC and CDC