

ANC1C Resolution
Proposed Development at 1815 Columbia Road, NW
February 3, 2016

WHEREAS, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) has received an application for a conceptual review of plans for 1815 Columbia Road, NW that would replace the existing structure, which is less than 20' height, with a 70' tall building with 9,821 square feet of gross floor area space.

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital (2006) states the following:

910.6 - Policy UD-2.2.1: Neighborhood Character and Identity: Strengthen the defining visual qualities of Washington's neighborhoods. This should be achieved in part by relating the scale of infill development, alterations, renovations, and additions to existing neighborhood context. 910.6 (Chapter 9 Urban Design)

910.11 - Policy UD-2.2.4: Transitions in Building Intensity: Establish gradual transitions between large-scale and small-scale development. The relationship between taller, more visually prominent buildings and lower, smaller buildings (such as single family or row houses) can be made more pleasing when the transition is gradual rather than abrupt. The relationship can be further improved by designing larger buildings to reduce their apparent size and recessing the upper floors of the building to relate to the lower scale of the surrounding neighborhood. 910.11 (Chapter 9 Urban Design) (see Figure 9.10, below)

Policy UD-2.2.7: Infill Development: Regardless of neighborhood identity, avoid overpowering contrasts of scale, height and density as infill development occurs. 910.15 (Chapter 9 Urban Design)

Policy MC-1.1.3: Infill and Rehabilitation: Encourage redevelopment of vacant lots and the rehabilitation of abandoned structures within the community.... Infill development should be compatible in scale and character with adjacent uses. 2008.4 (Volume 2: Area Elements)

Policy MC-2.4.1: Protecting the Character of Adams Morgan: Protect the historic character of the Adams Morgan community through historic landmark and district designations, and by ensuring that new construction is consistent with the prevailing heights and densities in the neighborhood. 2014.5 (Volume 2: Area Elements)

Policy MC-2.4.3: Mixed Use Character: Encourage retention of the older mixed use buildings along 18th Street and Columbia Road and facilitate infill projects which complement them in height, scale, and design.... (Volume 2: Area Elements)

WHEREAS, District of Columbia Historic Preservation Guidelines, New Construction In Historic Districts, includes the following provisions:

Scale - 4.1 - The scale of a new building should usually respect the prevailing scale of its neighbors.

Proportion - 5.1 The design of a new building should respect, but not necessarily exactly duplicate, the existing proportions of neighboring buildings.

Rhythm - 6.1 A new building should respect the rhythm of its neighbors as well as that of the street.

Massing - 7.1 A new building should respect the massing of neighboring historic buildings.

Height - 8.1 While a new building does not necessarily need to be exactly the same height as its neighbors to be compatible, it should be designed to respect existing building heights. For example, a new five story building in a block of two- and three-story buildings usually detract from the character of a street. Similarly, a new one-story building in a block of four- or five-story buildings will be out of character.

WHEREAS, the property at 1815 Columbia Road is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is presumed to be a contributing structure in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District and should be assessed according to Historic Preservation Guidelines.

WHEREAS, the owner of 1815 Columbia Road NW has stated that community engagement will not be sought.

WHEREAS, neighboring business owners and residents have expressed concerns regarding the impact of a large scale building on their businesses in terms of light, air and increased density.

WHEREAS, the conceptual design for the new building at 1815 Columbia Road is clearly incompatible with the above guidelines and provisions, particularly in terms of its proposed height and scale in relation to its neighborhood context.

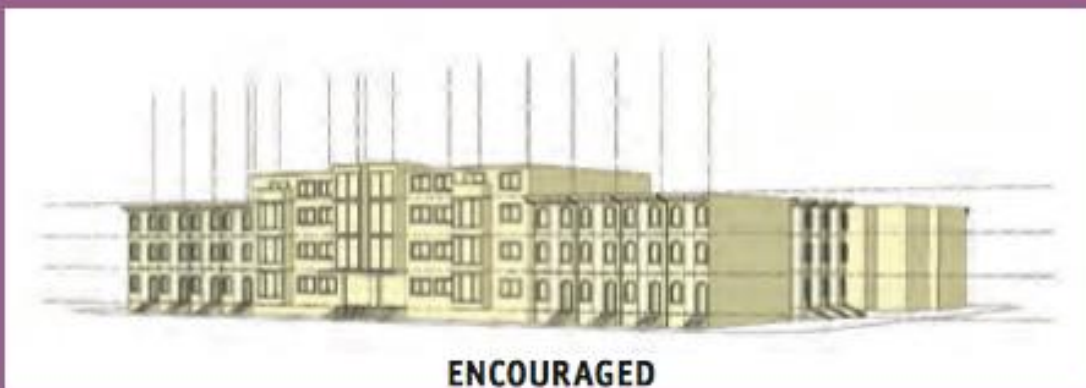
THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that ANC 1C opposes the conceptual plan for 1815 Columbia Road NW on the basis of its incompatibility with the above-referenced provisions in Title 11 DCMR zoning regulations, the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, District of Columbia Historic Preservation Guidelines and the purposes of the Kalorama Triangle Historic District.

FURTHERMORE, ANC 1C urges the HPRB to deny the proposed conceptual design plan.

AND FINALLY RESOLVED, ANC 1C authorizes any ANC 1C Commissioner to represent this resolution in any hearing by HPRB or other District agency.

Figure 9.10:

Complimentary Massing for New Development in Historic Districts and Areas of Strong Architectural Character 910.8



The top illustration shows inappropriate massing within the context of a historic district. The bottom illustration shows appropriate massing.