



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1C

PO Box 21009, NW, Washington, DC 20009

www.anc1c.org

Representing Adams Morgan

Commissioners:

Julie Seiwel (1C01)

October 7, 2016

Hector Huevo (1C02)

David Maloney

Ted Guthrie (1C03)

DC Office of Planning/Historic Preservation Office

Gabriela Mossi (1C04)

1100 4th Street SW, Suite E650

Alan Gambrell (1C05)

Washington, DC 20024

Billy Simpson (1C06)

***Re: ANC Resolution Regarding the Project at 1815
Columbia Rd., NW***

Wilson Reynolds (1C07)

JonMarc Buffa (1C08)

Dear Ms. Brockett:

I am writing on behalf of ANC 1C. At its duly noticed October 5, 2016 meeting, with a quorum present, ANC 1C unanimously (6-0) approved the attached resolution opposing the Project at 1815 Columbia Rd., NW because the Project, as currently proposed, is incompatible with the historic nature and character of the Kalorama Triangle Historic District and fails to comply with Historic Preservation Guidelines.

Sincerely,

JonMarc P. Buffa, Esq.

ANC1C-08 Commissioner

Chairman, Planning, Zoning, and Transportation Committee

ANC Resolution Regarding the Project at 1815 Columbia Rd., NW

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1C ("ANC1C") adopts the following resolution, votes to send it to the Historic Preservation Review Board ("HPRB"), and authorizes any Commissioner of ANC1C to represent ANC1C before HPRB in connection with this matter:

Whereas, the owners of the 1815 Columbia Rd., NW (hereinafter "The Project") have submitted an application for a conceptual review of plans to build an addition to the existing structure and/or a new structure;

Whereas, the Project is located within the Kalorama Triangle Historic District and listed as a contributing structure in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, it must comport with its historic designation obligations and the historic district;

Whereas, the historic district designation recognizes, and HPRB is legally required to preserve, the special architectural and landscape characteristics of the area;

Whereas, District of Columbia Historic Preservation Guidelines call for compatibility of additions and new construction, with particular attention to setbacks, massing, and height;

WHEREAS, neighboring business owners and residents have expressed numerous concerns about this Project because it clearly does not with historic guidelines.

Whereas, the Project's proposed scale, massing, and height exceed that of the adjacent commercial and historic buildings;

Whereas, there are significant concerns about the Project's failure to comply with setbacks on all sides of the lot;

Whereas, there are potential zoning compliance issues that, in turn, have an impact on the Project's proposed compliance with historic preservation guidelines on height, scale, and setbacks. These include height, massing of the structure in relation to FAR, the rear yard setback, and lot occupancy.

WHEREAS, District of Columbia Historic Preservation Guidelines require:

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.

Therefore, it is the view of ANC1C that the Project, as currently proposed, is incompatible with the historic nature and character of the Kalorama Triangle Historic District and fails to comply with Historic Preservation Guidelines.

Therefore, ANC1C calls on HPRB to:

I. Determine that 1815 Columbia Road is a contributing structure in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District. The Property owner has unpersuasively claimed that the building is not a contributing structure in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District. This claim cannot withstand scrutiny. The property at 1815 Columbia Road is listed as a contributing structure in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. It is beyond dispute that this is contributing structure in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District and therefore HPRB must assess the Project accordingly.

As a historically designated property that is a contributing structure to the Kalorama Triangle Historic District, the Project must be reviewed under a heightened level of scrutiny. The Project fails to mitigate its impact on both the historic structure and the historic district generally. The design clearly fails to comply with historic guidelines and so HPRB should reject the Project.

II. Require that the height be reduced. The current building is less than 20 feet in height. The Project proposes to build a 70 foot tall building (80 feet tall when the mechanical apparatus is included) with approximately 9,800 square feet of gross floor area space. However, the applicable zoning only allows a building to be 65 feet tall. On its face, the building cannot be built this tall.

Even if the Project's proposed height were to be reduced to 65 feet, it would be jarring. It disappointedly resembles the type of pop-up that HPRB has thoughtfully considered and rejected in Adams Morgan. The Project is at least four stories taller than the adjacent buildings. It is out of character and context with the neighboring structures in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District. The Project violates Historic Guideline 4.1 which states: "The scale of a new building should usually respect the prevailing scale of the neighbors"; and Historic Guideline 8.1 which states: "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."

Also, the Project violates Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital (2006). The Comprehensive Plan states:

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, *infra*)

A review of the Projects' renderings evidences a building that is even larger and more incongruous than the "discouraged" image in Figure 9.10, *infra*. As such, a significant reduction in the height of the Project is warranted (*i.e.*, a three floor reduction).

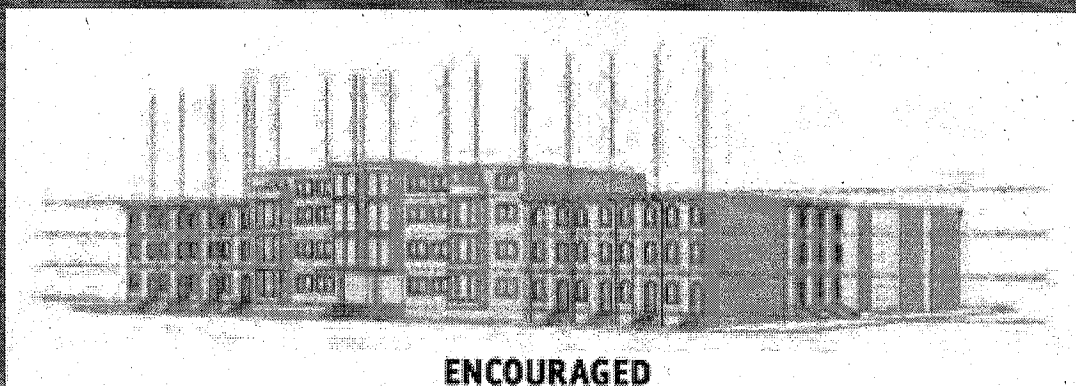
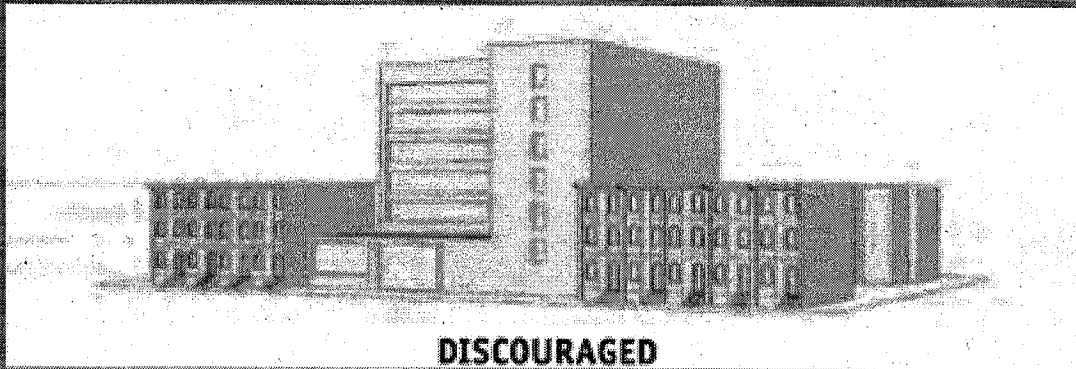
IV. Require the Project to substantially reduce its massing and maintain consistency with setback of neighboring buildings. The Project proposes a mass that is significantly larger than neighboring structures. It violates Historic Guideline 5.1 (proportion) which states: "the design of a new building should respect, but not necessarily exactly duplicate, the existing proportions of neighboring buildings" and Historic Guideline 5.1 (massing) which states: "a new building should respect the massing of neighboring historic buildings." The massing and scale should be significantly reduced to be more consistent with other structures in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District. The Project should be revised to respect the required setbacks.

IV. Require that the materials be further revised and enhanced. The design is visually incongruous with its neighboring contributing elements. The existing structure is listed as a contributing structure in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places, yet the Project does not relate to the existing building's historic character. It has unadorned windowless walls that are visually objectionable and non-conforming with the exceptional architecture of both the existing structure and the surrounding buildings. The Project is prominently visually incongruous with its neighbors. Since the Project is extremely tall in comparison to its neighbors, the party walls must be made of materials that comport with its neighboring historic structures and the Kalorama Triangle Historic District. Windows or other elements should be added to make the unembellished walls visually appealing and consistent with the historic district.

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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.