

GOVERNMENT  
OF  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

+ + + + +

ZONING COMMISSION

+ + + + +

PUBLIC HEARING

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 IN THE MATTER OF: :  
 :  
 MODIFICATION TO APPROVED :  
 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT AT : Case No. 94-01A  
 SQUARE 247, LOT 96 - 1331 L :  
 STREET, N.W. :  
 -----:

Thursday,  
June 1, 2006

Hearing Room 220 South  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

The Public Hearing of Case No. 94-01A by the District of Columbia Zoning Commission convened at 6:30 p.m. in the Office of Zoning Hearing Room at 441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001, Carol J. Mitten, Chairperson, presiding.

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

CAROL J. MITTEN	Chairperson
ANTHONY J. HOOD	Vice-Chairperson
GREGORY JEFFRIES	Commissioner
JOHN PARSONS	Commissioner (NPS)
MICHAEL G. TURNBULL	Commissioner (AOC)

OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

SHARON S. SCHELLIN	Secretary
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OFFICE OF PLANNING STAFF PRESENT:

JENNIFER STEINGASSER  
JOEL LAWSON  
STEVE COCHRAN

D.C. OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL PRESENT:

MARY NAGELHOUT, ESQ.

The transcript constitutes the minutes  
from the Public Hearing held on June 1, 2006.

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**P R O C E E D I N G S**

(7:28)

1  
2  
3 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: We don't have much  
4 time in between, so we're going to convene our public  
5 hearing for tonight.

6 This is a public hearing of the Zoning  
7 Commission for Thursday, June 1st, 2006. Again, my  
8 name is Carol Mitten, and again we have Mr. Hood, Mr.  
9 Jeffries, Mr. Parsons and Mr. Turnbull with us this  
10 evening.

11 The subject of this evening's hearing is  
12 Zoning Commission Case No. 94-01A, and this is a  
13 request by 1331 L Street, Northwest LP, for approval  
14 of a modification to a planned unit development for  
15 property located at 1331 L Street, N.W., which is  
16 known as Lot 96 in Square 247.

17 Notice of today's hearing was published in  
18 the D.C. Register on March 24th, 2006, and copies of  
19 that hearing announcement are available to you and  
20 they're on the table by the door.

21 This hearing will be conducted in  
22 accordance with the provisions of 11 DCMR section 3022  
23 and the order of procedure will be as follows.

24 We'll take up any preliminary matters  
25 followed by the presentation of the Applicant's case,

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1 report by the Office of Planning, reports by any other  
2 government agencies, report of Advisory Neighborhood  
3 Commission 1F, organizations and persons in support  
4 and organizations and persons in opposition.

5 The following time constraints will be  
6 maintained in this hearing.

7 The Applicant will have 40 minutes, which  
8 I don't think you'll need all of those. Organizations  
9 will have five minutes and individuals will have three  
10 minutes. The Commission intends to adhere to these  
11 time limits as strictly as possible in order to hear  
12 the case in a reasonable period of time.

13 The Commission reserves the right to  
14 change the time limits for presentations, if  
15 necessary, and notes that no time shall be ceded. All  
16 persons appearing before the Commission are to fill  
17 out two witness cards and those cards are on the table  
18 by the door.

19 Upon coming forward to speak to the  
20 Commission, please give both cards to the reporter  
21 who's sitting to our right, which I'm sure all of the  
22 gentlemen at the table have done already.

23 Please be advised that this proceeding is  
24 being recorded by the court reporter and is also being  
25 Webcast live. Accordingly, we ask that you refrain

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1 from making any disruptive noises in the hearing room.

2 When presenting information to the  
3 Commission, please turn on and speak into the  
4 microphone, first stating your name and home address.  
5 When you're finished speaking, please turn the  
6 microphone off because they tend to pick up background  
7 noise.

8 The decision of the Commission in this  
9 case must be based exclusively on the public record.  
10 To avoid any appearance to the contrary, the  
11 Commission requests that persons present not engage  
12 the members of the Commission in conversation during  
13 a recess or at any other time.

14 Mrs. Schellin will be available throughout  
15 the hearing to discuss any procedural questions that  
16 you may have. I'd ask, again, that you turn off all  
17 beepers and cell phones so as not to disrupt the  
18 hearing.

19 And at this time we'll take up any  
20 preliminary matters.

21 Mrs. Schellin.

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Just to advise that the  
23 Applicant has filed their affidavit of maintenance and  
24 it's in order.

25 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.

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1 Any preliminary matters?

2 MR. BRIGGS: None. Thank you, Ms. Mitten.

3 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Wait. I'm not quite  
4 ready; not quite ready.

5 MR. BRIGGS: I'm sorry.

6 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: I just wanted to know  
7 if you had any preliminary matters.

8 MR. BRIGGS: None.

9 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Okay; thank you.

10 Now, before we proceed, anyone who's  
11 planning on testifying this evening, if you'll rise  
12 now, raise your right hand, and direct your attention  
13 to Mrs. Schellin who will administer the oath.

14 [Witnesses sworn]

15 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you, and let me  
16 apologize for the delay in commencing this hearing  
17 this evening, but I'm sure you found the discussion  
18 riveting.

19 So, please proceed.

20 MR. BRIGGS: Thank you, Ms. Mitten and  
21 members of the Commission. I'm a member of the first  
22 of Holland & Knight. I'm here representing the  
23 Applicant, 1331 L Street Limited Partnership, the  
24 partners of which are DRI Development Services and the  
25 Paramount Group I will be joined by Chris Spitz,

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1 president of DRI, who will be making a brief  
2 presentation on the developer Applicant and its  
3 objectives and desires with regard to the 1331  
4 project, and then we'll have a presentation by David  
5 King of the Smith Group, a principal with that firm  
6 and a frequent presenter to this Commission, who will  
7 be making the Applicant's presentation with regard to  
8 the proposed architectural update for the approved  
9 project.

10 As you're aware from our submissions, this  
11 request is really to obtain the Commission's approval  
12 for an update of the architectural treatment of the  
13 exterior of this building.

14 As some background for the Commission,  
15 especially considering the nature of this planned unit  
16 development, this was a planned unit development with  
17 amended zone district change that was approved in 1991  
18 based upon architectural design that was begun in  
19 1988.

20 As part of the nature of that approval,  
21 the project was approved for a 10-story office  
22 building with ground floor retail. It had a proposed  
23 FAR of 9.25 FAR, which amounted to 170,720 square feet  
24 in total FAR, of which 11,072 square feet was to be  
25 retail.

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1           It provided for a lot occupancy of 98.7  
2 percent of the lot. One of the conditions of the  
3 approval was that the materials for the exterior of  
4 the building was to be brought back to the Commission,  
5 to be considered by the Commission, but outside a  
6 public hearing.

7           There was also a certain flexibility in  
8 other modifications to the adjustment as the PUD  
9 project was to be reviewed and approved by the zoning  
10 administrator. With regard to the community benefits  
11 that were set forth in that project, there was a  
12 proffer for \$3 million to be paid to the Salvation  
13 Army for a residential project.

14           Additionally, there was an obligation to  
15 spend and commit within and invest within the  
16 boundaries of ANC 2F, at least \$500,000.

17           Additionally, the proposal was to require  
18 that upon the commencement and completion of the  
19 project, that the alley to the east of the building be  
20 increased by 2.5 feet. They also had agreed, during  
21 that PUD approval of 1991, to first source and LSDB  
22 requirements. The PUD covenant was filed against this  
23 building, against the land and duly encumbers the  
24 property at this time.

25           The project was extended several times, at

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1 least three times, and now has a life that expires as  
2 of December 2009.

3 The proposal before us is only one of  
4 architectural treatment. There is no change in the  
5 proposed use of the project. There's no change in the  
6 proposed density or lot occupancy of the project.  
7 There's no decrease in the amount of off-street  
8 parking or change in the location where the access to  
9 the parking would come. Nor is there any change in  
10 treatment of the proffers.

11 And in fact I should note that all of the  
12 proffers of a monetary nature have been paid. The \$3  
13 million was invested with the Salvation Army and that  
14 project is completed. The \$500,000 was invested  
15 within the boundaries of ANC 2F, and I believe the  
16 record of the Commission in this case notes the  
17 certifications that were required by the PUD order to  
18 confirm those obligations.

19 As the administrative matters, Ms.  
20 Schellin has already noted that the affidavit of  
21 posting and maintenance was set forth. I believe you  
22 did receive both an initial application and then the  
23 prehearing statement, that we note has appeared in the  
24 record.

25 With regard to Mr. King, Mr. King is an

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1 architect with the Smith Group. He's appeared before  
2 this Commission on numerous occasions and I believe  
3 has been recognized as an expert in the field of  
4 architecture by this Commission, but I would request  
5 that he be further recognized for the purposes of this  
6 hearing.

7 I also would like to note that ANC 2F has  
8 strongly supported this project, and you have a letter  
9 of support in the record, and finally, the support of  
10 the Office of Planning but I'm sure the Office of  
11 Planning will be able to present on that basis.

12 With that, I'd like to turn it over to  
13 Chris Spitz, the president of DRI Services, to make a  
14 brief presentation concerning the Applicant. Thank  
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.

17 MR. SPITZ: Good evening, members of the  
18 Commission. Thank you for allowing us to present this  
19 evening. As David said, my name is Chris Spitz. I'm  
20 the president of DRI Development Services LLC.

21 The partners of 1331 L Street NW Limited  
22 Partnership are DRI, affiliates of DRI, and affiliates  
23 of Paramount Group from New York. The developers have  
24 extensive commercial development experience in the  
25 Washington, D.C. area, and includes other projects

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1 within Square 247. DRI is a company that's been in  
2 business since 1964 and has developed several office  
3 buildings in downtown Washington, starting in 1989.

4 This particular property was acquired by  
5 the owners in November of 2005. We believe that we  
6 have an understanding of the market dynamics affecting  
7 the project. We've just completed 1121 14th Street,  
8 which is on 14th Street, obviously, on the west side  
9 of this square.

10 When we purchased the property, we also  
11 purchased the rights to the existing PUD. We analyzed  
12 that PUD, which dates back to early 1990, and saw that  
13 there was some opportunity for modifications to meet  
14 current demand of tenants in the market.

15 Three areas were highlighted in the review  
16 of that PUD, that needed modification. One was the  
17 market demand, current market demand for increased  
18 access to natural light to the interior of the  
19 building. The second was increased floor plate  
20 efficiencies, and the third one was market demand for  
21 increased energy efficiency due to technological  
22 advances.

23 We looked at this square and 1331 L Street  
24 was a parking lot. It actually would fill in the  
25 remaining development for the square. It would also

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1 add some vibrancy to L Street, which is not there  
2 presently.

3 We have designed into the project, as was  
4 required by the original PUD, some pretty interesting  
5 retail space, and which David King will walk through  
6 in his presentation.

7 We look forward to moving the long-stalled  
8 project to completion as expeditiously as possible.  
9 We want to point out, as mentioned by David Briggs,  
10 all monetary conditions and proffers for the PUD  
11 approval have been satisfied.

12 In conclusion, we request your approval of  
13 the proposed design modifications and we thank you for  
14 your time and consideration, and I'll turn it over to  
15 David King.

16 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.

17 MR. KING: Unless there are any questions  
18 for--

19 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: We like to hold our  
20 questions to the end.

21 MR. KING: Thank you. My name is David  
22 King. I'm with the Smith Group and with me tonight is  
23 my partner, Andy Roman, at the end of the table.  
24 We're going to try to leave the lights on. If you  
25 can't really see it, please, we can turn them off, or

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1 there's an additional exhibit on the boards to your  
2 right.

3 1331 L is located on the north side of L  
4 Street and is midblock, between 13th and 14th, and at  
5 this point L Street is one way from west to east, and  
6 that theme will come up over and over again in our  
7 discussion about direction on the site.

8 Our proposed design, just to reiterate  
9 what David said earlier, is it adheres exactly to the  
10 densities, to the size, to the uses and to the height  
11 that were in the first proposal.

12 Quickly, 170,720 square feet, 9.25 FAR,  
13 and importantly to us, 11,072 square feet of retail  
14 space. All our parking, 114 cars, remains below grade  
15 and is accessed along with the loading from the alley  
16 in the north, Green Court.

17 This is a view from the east looking on L  
18 Street. Externally, we've simplified and updated the  
19 design to respond, really, to a fundamentally changed  
20 marketplace. Tenant requirements and expectations now  
21 have changed substantially over the last two decades,  
22 since we actually began the design work.

23 Occupants are demanding more flexible  
24 buildings that provide different kinds of access to  
25 daylight, light and air, sustainable features, and

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1 other technologies, simply in terms of light and air  
2 exposure, didn't exist two decades ago.

3 Building technologies have changed to  
4 support that. New glazing products, such as low  
5 emissivity coatings are out now, which allow us to  
6 produce larger window areas and that still meet modern  
7 energy codes, which have also gotten more strict. So  
8 overall, energy performance of the buildings have been  
9 improving.

10 The roofscape in our proposal is actually  
11 simplified from the original proposal. We're focusing  
12 now on a single tower, and again on this theme of an  
13 asymmetrical site. We believe that actually not only  
14 does traffic approach the site from the 14th Street  
15 side, rather than 13th Street, but with McPherson  
16 Square Metro, pedestrian traffic is, by and large,  
17 accessing the building from the western side of the  
18 site.

19 Internally, to update for tenant purposes,  
20 I know that's not the subject of tonight, but the  
21 column grid's been revised, elevator cores have been  
22 revised. It's very fundamentally a different building  
23 from the workability for tenant improvements, and we  
24 think it will be very compelling.

25 The lobby has been moved to the west,

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1 again along that theme of the asymmetrical site  
2 disposition, but also to provide a more efficient  
3 access to the core and to actually improve the retail.  
4 When we looked back at the retail, we felt like it was  
5 not as viable as it should have been.

6 Now this is a map showing most of  
7 downtown, and I want to stress that the site is  
8 actually not in the Monumental Core, it's considerably  
9 to the north of it, and it's also a midblock location,  
10 and if you look at the buildings surrounding the site,  
11 both to the west, to the south and to the east,  
12 they're all higher in allowable height than our  
13 building is.

14 So we're midblock and we're surrounded by  
15 higher buildings. I mentioned our parking and loading  
16 access remains identical in its positioning off of  
17 Green Court, and that we think most of the flow of  
18 people again will be coming to the site from the west.  
19 Next, please.

20 Just to give you a sense of what I was  
21 talking about on the ground floor plan, the lobby was  
22 originally on the center line, the elevators were  
23 turned to the side. All of that's been changed, and  
24 serendipity for us is that it produces a larger block  
25 of retail on the east side of the site and that we

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1 think is a much more dynamic and much more viable  
2 piece of retail in a block that really does need it.  
3 It is not a very good retail location.

4 We're providing the mezzanine, which you  
5 see in some of the best, newest restaurants now in  
6 town, so we'll have enough size to attract a  
7 restaurant to this location and we'll have some visual  
8 interest with the mezzanine.

9 And the lower level, to make that believable.

10 Additionally, because of the eastern  
11 retail block, we're actually able to provide a  
12 windowed perimeter down the alley, actually up the  
13 alley, I guess, to the north, so that in terms of  
14 public safety and ambiance in that alley, you'll be  
15 looking at the side of a storefront rather than the  
16 side of a blank wall.

17 Additionally, the size then of the western  
18 block that remains to the left of the lobby, we think  
19 is viable for a small specialty shop. Next.

20 This is a view from the west, and we  
21 really are trying to maximize the use of glass and we  
22 want a crisp but sort of modern expression of the  
23 building and we think this is a look that's  
24 appropriate, not only from the inside, as I described  
25 in terms of tenant requirements now to make this

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1 viable, but we think that when--and looking back at  
2 this block, there's quite a wide and divergent range  
3 of neighbors, architectural styles, characters. We  
4 are midblock and we are in a somewhat dark location,  
5 and we think the glass answers a lot of concerns about  
6 exposure and the cacophony of the setting.

7 So we think it's a nice mediator in scale.

8 The single glass tower shifts to the west.  
9 That really is the emphasis in our minds. It enhances  
10 the verticality of the building and within that modern  
11 design idiom, we're providing not just set-backs,  
12 multiple glass types, stone retail base, and the tower  
13 and the trellis, to provide a sort of building that is  
14 par to four city and a response to understandable city  
15 scale, and yet focuses on pedestrians and retail  
16 entrances.

17 To summarize the tower's place in our  
18 minds and the project, we do want to call attention to  
19 the project, but we believe it will do it very  
20 successfully within the context of this block.

21 It is not a tower form that we think will  
22 be seen or have any kind of exposure beyond the  
23 confines of this particular block of L Street.

24 We have a view from the roof terrace, and  
25 that was a subject of last discussion. The tower and

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1 the roof trellis are fully integrated in the building,  
2 built out of the core building materials, and added,  
3 the roof terrace itself, these two features are one  
4 and are unconditionally open and unobstructed. The  
5 tower's built, at this point, of glass and steel. The  
6 trellis will provide a small amount of shade to the  
7 roof terrace. the tower itself will provide a small  
8 amount of weather protection to those tenants who are  
9 actually using the roof terrace during a function.

10 There is a glass railing proposed and that  
11 is simply, again, as a public safety device to  
12 separate folks from the edge of the building. That's  
13 what's shown in the rendering.

14 I want to reiterate that we don't see this  
15 as any type of a light fixture, a lantern, a beacon.  
16 This thing will not be glowing in the evenings and in  
17 fact we will be providing no lighting beyond what is  
18 necessary to ensure public safety and tenant safety  
19 when you're on that roof terrace after dark. Next.

20 We're going to use two different types of  
21 glass. The first is mostly clear, low emissivity  
22 coating, and that is used in the faces of the tower  
23 and the majority of the rest of the southeast, west,  
24 north faces of the building. There is a second glass  
25 type that will be used in the notches immediately

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1 adjoining the tower and in the second floor set-back  
2 that runs from the south to the east, and to the  
3 north, which is the accent above the retail itself.

4 The remainder of the framing for the wall  
5 system is painted aluminum. We're using a combination  
6 of spandrels. The building changes subtly as we move  
7 to the north, starting with glass, using metal and  
8 precast.

9 The retail storefront we're proposing to  
10 do in French limestone with very large window and  
11 glass door openings into the retail space itself.

12 We think the overall effect'll be  
13 exciting, it'll be transparent, and we think it's  
14 appropriate, given the location, given the  
15 marketplace, we think it'll be a new building that'll  
16 add a quality of street life and architecture in a  
17 quiet midblock location.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.

20 Anything else?

21 MR. BRIGGS: No. That is the conclusion  
22 and we're ready for any questions that may be  
23 available.

24 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Okay. Thank you, Mr.  
25 Briggs.

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1 Any questions from the Commission?

2 Mr. Parsons.

3 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: Help me with why  
4 the original design is unmarketable. I mean, you're  
5 outfitting the building with computers and better  
6 systems. I'm not talking about internally. I'm  
7 talking about externally, because that's the only  
8 reason we're really here, and why is it that this  
9 building that you or your colleagues designed, and an  
10 old firm named Keyes Condon and Florance, which I  
11 thought was fabulous, and I still do--but why is it  
12 that we're here?

13 Why is it that this building that we  
14 approved in 1994 is absolutely unmarketable?

15 MR. BRIGGS: Let me have Mr. Spitz, first.

16 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: And that's my term,  
17 not yours, but I assume that's why we're here.

18 MR. SPITZ: I wouldn't say that the  
19 building is absolutely unmarketable as it was designed  
20 back in 1990. However, the tenant demands have  
21 changed since the early 1990's. There is a similar  
22 building that was under a PUD, that is on the corner  
23 of 13th and L, which is the address of 1100 13th  
24 Street, which was built under a design that dated back  
25 to the 1990's. That building was finished two and a

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1 half years ago and it still doesn't have its first  
2 tenant.

3 It's from our perspective, the window line  
4 in the original design was not adding enough light  
5 into the interior of the building which is one a the  
6 reasons why we have proposed changing the facade to a  
7 glass facade, to address what the tenants are looking  
8 for. I think the last thing that we want, and  
9 hopefully anybody wants, is an office building that is  
10 constructed and then sits vacant for a long period of  
11 time.

12 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: All right. Now  
13 let's get into architecture because I'm really  
14 struggling with this and have voted against a couple  
15 of cases because I think we're going into a period  
16 that I really have trouble with.

17 I guess it was about five years ago that  
18 we abandoned our tower period and all of the facades  
19 now are becoming all glass, and although you've  
20 articulated this one and it has, you know I think a  
21 very nice fenestration, are we really creating another  
22 K Street, not here, but throughout the city, with now  
23 we're going through our all-glass period? And they're  
24 really curtain walls. That's all they are. And I'm  
25 struggling with why.

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1           And then we'll get to the top which is my  
2           real problem. But it seems like everything that's  
3           coming before us now is all glass, and very little  
4           articulation at all. You've got a little bit here  
5           above the entrance. But help me with where we're  
6           going architecturally here.

7           MR. KING: If I could respond, there are a  
8           number of issues, and if I ramble, stop me, please.

9           COMMISSIONER PARSONS: Please. I was.

10          MR. KING: I am guilty as charged. I am the  
11          designer of the original proposal and two decades have  
12          passed, which is an unusual position to be in, being  
13          back here. I am certainly not here to undermine or in  
14          any way change our impressions that the first proposal  
15          had real merits, given its context. But a whole  
16          variety of issues have surfaced. Everything from a  
17          movement in the architectural community as a whole, in  
18          terms of stylistic change in the marketplace, to  
19          tenant demands in response to buildings that have  
20          provided bigger glazed areas, and once the tenants  
21          begin to like that, it becomes the cost of entry, if  
22          you will, for a building, and you can picture from K  
23          Street to different corners of the city, now we're  
24          seeing a lot of all-glass buildings.

25                 There is the technology. Low emissivity

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1 coatings on glazing did not exist two decades ago. So  
2 all of a sudden, even though we've gotten more strict  
3 energy codes, you can now produce an all-glass  
4 building that performs as well or better as a building  
5 that had solid wall surfaces on it 20 years ago.

6 So we certainly don't want to have you  
7 think for a moment that the original design didn't  
8 have real merit in its day and age. We think it did.  
9 I think architectural styles always, both from the  
10 architect's standpoint, but also from public  
11 appreciation, from technology change, and we've been  
12 through many, I'm probably as guilty as anyone of  
13 spawning the "tower age" that you referred to. There  
14 is a constant search, at least in our practice, for a  
15 level of urbanity and variety, no matter what idiom  
16 we're pursuing, and I do think that we're serious in  
17 the sense of the all-glass building being compelling  
18 under circumstances we find ourselves in, but that the  
19 effort we've put into modulating that and providing  
20 change and variety will provide buildings that are  
21 going to weather better than some of the buildings  
22 from the '60s on K Street.

23 I think K Street, you had probably the  
24 disadvantage in that day and age, of building a large  
25 number of buildings cheek to jowl, in the same idiom,

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1 and one of the great strengths of the city as it gets  
2 built out is that it turns over more slowly and we're  
3 forced to wrestle with these realities, and our  
4 neighbor gets to wait two decades to wrestle with  
5 their own reality.

6 I do think in the context of this  
7 building, it is not in our minds at all an issue that  
8 we have too much glass or too many buildings of the  
9 same genre, and in fact I think you might see, if that  
10 were the case, us struggling against that.

11 We are doing masonry buildings now. They  
12 tend to be limited use of masonry with smaller-scale  
13 spandrels, and in fact we're proposing on the east,  
14 west, and north of this to integrate some precast  
15 concrete into the window wall system as a spandrel and  
16 column condition.

17 But, really, in our minds, it's a whole  
18 concurrence, a litany of issues ranging from what  
19 Chris and his group brings to the table as developers.  
20 They want to lease this building and, indeed, the  
21 building to our east did take a long time to get a  
22 signed lease in it. And our perception of the tenant  
23 market, our perception of the architectural context as  
24 a whole, and our appreciation for the city and the  
25 right way to respond.

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1                   COMMISSIONER PARSONS: Let's presume the  
2 building on the left side of your prospective sketch  
3 there is 30 years old, and has about run its course,  
4 and the time has come to strip it. Would you imagine  
5 a glass wall on that, given what we're doing today?

6                   MR. KING: We're in the process, over the  
7 last couple years, and ongoing now, renovating a lot  
8 of buildings from the '50s, '60s and '70s downtown.  
9 Some of them are of real architectural merit and some  
10 of them are pretty nasty and deserve to be, the walls  
11 stripped off and started over.

12                   We just went through two fascinating  
13 discussions at the Commission of Fine Arts on a Ed  
14 Durrell Stone building, New York architect, Kennedy  
15 Center, National Geographic, for the NASA family, and  
16 the way to treat that, and also, a building at the  
17 corner of 17th and Pennsylvania, that we had also, in  
18 our early days, had somewhat ridiculed. It had the  
19 kind of hexagonal-shaped windows and the stone and  
20 everything else, and we found that the Commission, and  
21 the historic resources community here has looked at  
22 architecture of the '50s and '60s, and has really sort  
23 of revised their thinking.

24                   I think we probably took too harsh a  
25 broadbrush negative answer, typically, to that kind of

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1 architecture, and some of it is of real merit. In  
2 response to how we might deal witness that corner,  
3 you'd have to hire us first but--

4 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: All right. So  
5 somebody might hug the FBI building, huh?

6 MR. KING: There are a few of them that no  
7 one will love and especially with that storefront.

8 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: All right. Now you  
9 didn't include a night shot, as you did previously.  
10 This is the one that got our attention. We have no  
11 revision to this diagram in your current submission,  
12 that I could find.

13 MR. KING: No.

14 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: So we go to the  
15 issue of the roof. So we've had proposals in the last  
16 two months. Now we're going through our trellis  
17 period, and I see some images in Lead assemblies Vegas  
18 and Miami, and other places, where everybody's  
19 building trellises, and I'm very troubled by that,  
20 because they're going to be trite in about five years,  
21 and I wonder if you could comment about that, and how  
22 you're going to illuminate it, other than you showed  
23 here.

24 MR. KING: Right. That is a design that  
25 has now been revised--

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1 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: Yes?

2 MR. KING: --and we are not planning on  
3 illuminating the trellis or the tower, and I just want  
4 to reiterate that as clearly as we possibly can. The  
5 trellis has both less solid surface than than that  
6 rendering implied. The tower has been lowered and  
7 thinned. But all of that roofscape is unlit, except  
8 we do have to provide one foot candle on the terrace  
9 surface in order for public safety. It's law. You  
10 have to meet code by providing some lighting.

11 We can do that in ways that are shielded,  
12 so that we're not uplighting any kind of feature on  
13 the roof, or uplighting the inside of the tower.

14 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: So these are  
15 footlights inside the parapet? Something like that?

16 MR. KING: That we could get the foot  
17 candles to work doing it that way, off the wall of the  
18 penthouse and off the wall of the parapet.

19 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: So how many  
20 trellises are you designing in your office? I mean,  
21 are we going through this period where every building  
22 is going to have a horizontal layer on top,  
23 essentially creating 15 feet of additional height,  
24 where we struggled, for years, to push the penthouses  
25 back, 18 and a half feet, to get 18 and a half? Now

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1 we're coming forward, calling them architectural  
2 embellishments, and it doesn't violate the height act  
3 and all that kind a stuff.

4 But what are we doing here?

5 MR. KING: Well, I'm supposed to say, as  
6 an architect, this is the only trellis, we're  
7 designing anything like this, cause our client is at  
8 the table.

9 We do have no other building quite like  
10 this in the office. We're not proposing this as sort  
11 of a major solution that we think is simply stylistic.  
12 We did feel, given this location, midblock, that there  
13 was strong justification, and the original design  
14 advocated the same position, that being in a canyon,  
15 really, of lower buildings and being midblock and  
16 wanting to lease office space, we had an agenda to  
17 sort of put ourselves on the map, if you will, and we  
18 thought that using the kind of exuberance that is  
19 actually propounded in the original height act, that  
20 embellishment would be encouraged.

21 This midblock location was one where it  
22 made perfect sense, especially on our belief that you  
23 will not see this from a distance, and there are I  
24 think good or bad examples, if you will, of buildings  
25 that probably didn't take into full cognizance their

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1 impact on the skyline, when they proposed lighting  
2 things up on the roof.

3 So we're not proposing that. We really  
4 see the top as both a piece of accent for the building  
5 architecture, but also it is a roof terrace and it's  
6 for the use of the tenants and that trellis we think  
7 will provide some shade, and a place to get in out of  
8 the rain.

9 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: Why didn't you  
10 continue the trellis down the other side of the  
11 building?

12 MR. KING: The roof terrace itself's  
13 limited to the south face of the building, so you exit  
14 the penthouse moving southward, and there's a paved  
15 area then across that south facade.

16 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: Don't you think it  
17 looks unfinished as a piece of architecture, just  
18 hanging out there like that?

19 MR. KING: Not personally. There's a  
20 time-honored tradition of front faces versus alley  
21 walls in urban buildings, and it's not quite the  
22 analogy to the marble wall with trim on it versus the  
23 brick alley wall, but there's an offset in the  
24 architecture at this point, that continues all the way  
25 down the building and the storefront changes and the

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1 body of the building changes, and the trellis changes  
2 accordingly.

3 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: All right. So you  
4 lightened this up, the tower, that is. I don't mean  
5 illuminated. Lightened up the structural membranes,  
6 I guess is the way to put it. It doesn't have a frame  
7 around it anymore.

8 MR. KING: No.

9 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: And there'll be  
10 absolutely no illumination inside of it?

11 MR. KING: No.

12 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: After you get to  
13 the 12th floor, or wherever that is.

14 MR. KING: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: And what is its  
16 function?

17 MR. KING: Really, it's a roof--what is  
18 the tower's function per se?

19 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: It's got an  
20 elevator core in it or what is its function?

21 MR. KING: No. The elevator core's within  
22 the penthouse itself. The tower is--could we go back  
23 to that rendering, Andy. The tower is empty at this  
24 level, at the roof terrace.

25 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: I guess I meant the

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1 shaft of the tower. What is it--

2 MR. KING: Oh, it's office space within  
3 it, so--

4 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: It's just office  
5 space?

6 MR. KING: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: So it functionally  
8 has no particular purpose. It's strictly decorative  
9 and ornamental. That's all it is?

10 MR. KING: The development strategy might  
11 feel a little bit differently. Again, we believe the  
12 western corner of this block is the best office space  
13 as well as the direction from which traffic comes, the  
14 direction in which pedestrians walk from Metro. So  
15 the tower form itself arose out of an effort to get  
16 two very premium quality office corners as close to  
17 that western end of the site as we could.

18 IF you're looking at it very much from the  
19 inside out and very much from the leasing strategy,  
20 putting that notch in and creating that tower at the  
21 lower levels is a very leasing strategy.

22 COMMISSIONER PARSONS: I guess I better  
23 quit, Madam Chairman. An interesting dialogue. Thank  
24 you very much.

25 MR. KING: Thank you.

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1 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: It was interesting.  
2 I appreciate it too. Anyone else, questions? Mr.  
3 Turnbull?

4 COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: I just have a  
5 couple. Getting back to the roof plan, on SP1, is the  
6 shaded area in the front of the building, is that the  
7 occupied area?

8 MR. KING: I'm going to check the drawing.  
9 I believe we toned the paved surface area.

10 COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Right.

11 MR. KING: Right. The tone is the--

12 COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: That is the  
13 occupied area?

14 MR. KING: --enhanced paved area in which  
15 you could walk.

16 COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: I guess what's  
17 confusing about this photo here is that when I look on  
18 the plan, it looks like this tower abuts up to the  
19 corner of the fan room, which would mean it would  
20 touch part of the--you really don't see that.

21 MR. KING: We've cropped out, you're sort  
22 of in the penthouse, if you see the white shape in the  
23 bottom of the rendering.

24 COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Right.

25 MR. KING: Okay. That is effectively the

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1 volume of the penthouse, unprojected, because we  
2 couldn't figure out how to get a view this expansive  
3 of what was going on.

4 COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Now the penthouse  
5 is 18 and a half feet above the roof?

6 MR. KING: Yes, it is.

7 COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: But the tower  
8 soars another--

9 MR. KING: The tower is just a couple of  
10 feet above that. Four feet above the penthouse.

11 COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Four feet above  
12 the penthouse. Okay. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Anyone else?  
14 Questions? Comments?

15 I just wanted to say I am very familiar  
16 with L Street and this location, and it does need some  
17 help, it's very architecturally challenged, and one of  
18 the things I didn't have a full appreciation for, when  
19 I first saw it, when we set this down, is the lighting  
20 that goes along the alley. I mean, the folks that  
21 need to get to Green Court, it's a very nice animation  
22 for them as well as for people on the street. So I  
23 think it's nice. Thanks.

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I'm going to ask  
25 a question, Madam Chair. Mr. David Green?

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1 MR. KING: Mr. King.

2 VICE CHAIRPERSON HOOD: King. I'm sorry;  
3 long evening.

4 What is the purpose--and you may have  
5 mentioned this in your dialogue with Commissioner  
6 Parsons. What is the purpose of the trellis?

7 MR. KING: It is both a part of the crown  
8 of the building but it's also a shade device for the  
9 roof terrace. It gives a little bit of sun relief.

10 VICE CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. All right.  
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Okay. Thank you  
13 very much. Now we're ready for the report from the  
14 Office of Planning.

15 Ms. Steingasser.

16 MS. STEINGASSER: Madam Chair,  
17 Commissioners, the Office of Planning recommends  
18 approval of this PUD modification and as an office, we  
19 did appreciate the architectural design and the  
20 revisions that the Applicant has made to the design.  
21 We especially like the ground floor treatment. We  
22 spent a lot of time talking about the roof. But what  
23 they've done and the emphasis they've placed along the  
24 alleys in the rear, we found very responsive and  
25 really gave good emphasis to the safety, and lighting

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1 that court, cause there are, as I said in the report,  
2 properties back that face only off the court. So  
3 there's a lot of interaction, going back and forth  
4 there, that the previous design did not address and  
5 made it feel like an alley.

6 This has drawn its lights and windows down  
7 around the building to the back and it's really opened  
8 that up, and we do recommend approval.

9 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.

10 Any questions for Ms. Steingasser?  
11 Anybody have questions?

12 Where did Mr. Briggs go? Do you have any  
13 questions? Okay. Just have to ask. Okay. Thank  
14 you. I don't think we have any reports from other  
15 government agencies. Am I overlooking anybody? No.

16 Do we have anybody here from ANC 2F?

17 Okay. Then I would note for the record  
18 that we have at Exhibit No. 16 their letter outlining  
19 the vote that they took in favor of the application.  
20 It was unanimous.

21 Is there anyone who'd like to testify in  
22 support of the application?

23 [No response]

24 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Anyone who'd like to  
25 testify in opposition to the application?

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1 [No response]

2 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN:

3 Okay. Mr. Briggs.

4 MR. BRIGGS: Thank you, Ms. Mitten. I  
5 appreciate the Commission's consideration of this  
6 application. I know our client does wish to proceed,  
7 to get into development. One of the reasons they got  
8 into this project is to move this project forward,  
9 after having seeing it sit with the prior owner for  
10 many, many years, vacant. They would like to get this  
11 project underway before the winter season starts, to  
12 get the sheeting and shoring. So we would like  
13 action, if it's within the scope and desire of the  
14 Commission, even a bench decision tonight. Otherwise,  
15 action at your June meeting. Thanks very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you.

17 I think we probably are ready to move to  
18 a vote. Believe it or not, we're in a decisive mode  
19 today.

20 And just so you're clear, this would be  
21 proposed action and then there'd be the referral  
22 period, and so on.

23 So I would move approval of modification  
24 in Case No. 94-01A.

25 COMMISSIONER JEFFRIES: Second.

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1 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Any discussion?

2 [No response]

3 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Okay. All those in  
4 favor, please say aye.

5 [Chorus of ayes]

6 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Those opposed, please  
7 say no.

8 [Chorus of nays]

9 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Mrs. Schellin.

10 MS. SCHELLIN: Staff have recorded the  
11 vote four to one to zero to approve Zoning Commission  
12 Case No. 94-01A for proposed action, Commissioner  
13 Mitten moving, Commissioner Jeffries seconding,  
14 Commissioners Hood and Turnbull in favor.  
15 Commissioner Parsons opposed.

16 CHAIRPERSON MITTEN: Thank you very much.  
17 Thank you all for your patience, getting through that  
18 special public meeting earlier, and we're adjourned.

19 [Whereupon, at 8:10 p.m., the Commission  
20 was adjourned.]

21

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25