



November 1, 2013

David Holmes, Chair ANC 6A
Omar Mahmud, ANC 6A
Dan Golden, ANC 6A
Andrew Hysell, ANC 6A

Dear ANC 6A Members,

We thank you all for taking time to meet with us again on 10/30/13 concerning the construction of the new Ben's Chili Bowl / Ben's Upstairs. From the very beginning, back in May of 2012, the Ben's Chili Bowl project team has enjoyed a cordial relationship with the ANC 6A members. Apologies are in order to the ANC 6A members and the neighborhood which we seek to serve, for not communicating some construction changes that have occurred with the project. Please note that the project team has met with and kept DCRA, Building Zoning Administration, among others, fully informed throughout the project. The project team is committed to improving its efforts to directly inform ANC 6A Members, as we did in the beginning, of our ongoing construction operations and specifically and how the finished product might affect the H-Street Corridor.

During our meeting the other night, we provided the ANC 6A Members a timeline outlining a list of events that led up to the projects' current state. Hopefully, all parties have a better understanding of what has occurred to date, why certain decisions were made and the appearance of our final design and plan. Most importantly, we outlined many safety issues that had a direct impact on the preservation process, which necessitated changes in construction techniques, but not in the final design.

As we discussed, during the initial construction team canvass of the existing building we discovered significant water damage; crumbled brick, falling brick, deteriorated wood, and deteriorated grout (see Exhibit B, attached). The east party wall required a "parge coat" to hold existing brick in place during deconstruction and underpinning. Parging provides structural cohesiveness to masonry walls whose mortar has begun to fail. A parge coat can also be used to create air tightness for adjacent tenants (See Exhibit B). This process could not be used effectively for the (168) square feet – 12 to 15 feet in the air that needed to be preserved on the H Street North Façade (see Exhibit A, attached). Therefore, an alternate preservation process had to be formulated to protect the public and the workers.

The final product will be a 2-story replica of the existing "George's Place" as it relates to character and architectural features. The project team understands the value of the "original look" buildings, and will take appropriate measures to keep the "original look" appearance. Henceforth, many of the existing bricks salvaged during the deconstruction process will be used on the H-Street façade while "in-kind" brick will be used on the west side (10th Street) façade.

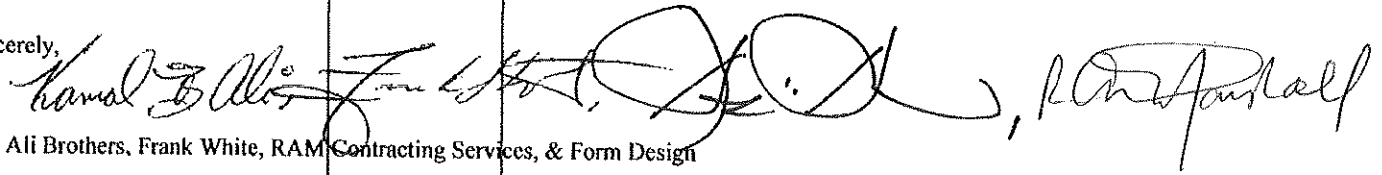
Some of the character defining features the project team is replicating include the shape of the windows, location and the projection of the storefront where it chamfers off the 10th and H-Street intersection, and masonry dentals along the top parapet. The building will also be painted to match the existing "light blue" and "white" building colors. Just imagine "Georges Place" with people sitting in the projected storefront window enjoying a half smoke with chili!

Unbeknownst to the public and the ANC 6A Members, careful financial consideration was given to the design of the new Ben's Chili Bowl / Ben's Upstairs. The preservation/salvaging operation is costing the Ali brothers over \$124,000 in additional construction costs, architectural and engineering fees. The salvaging of the masonry during the deconstruction is only the first step; secondly we must carefully remove all of the paint (some contained lead) chip away the mortar/grout, and then align the non-standard existing brick appropriately to give the same architectural character. Additionally, the project start date was pushed back because of the salvaging operation and has already delayed the opening of the restaurants by more than 6 months.

With all of the above mentioned dynamics and circumstances, the project team recognizes we should have communicated better to avoid the misunderstanding we have caused. We hope that our meeting last night serves as a positive measure to move forward, and furthering of the strong relationship with this community which Ben's seeks to cultivate and maintain. We want to thank the ANC 6A Members Holmes, Golden, Hysell, and Mahmud for their thoughts, straight forward approach, and being receptive to the project teams detailed and technical information.

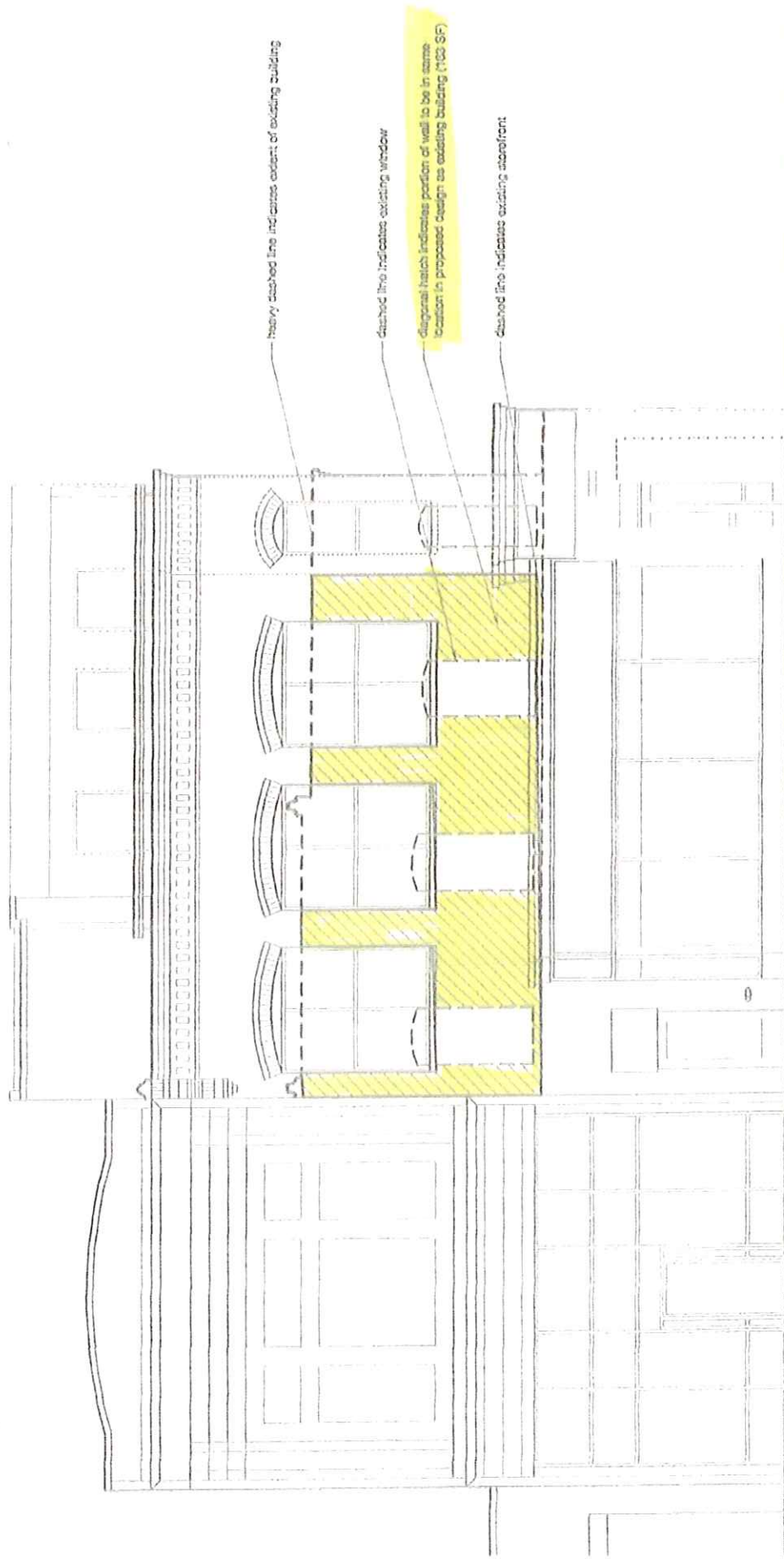
We thank you for your time, and welcome the opportunity to meet with ANC 6A members and the general public as requested. Please feel free to contact the owner's rep, Frank White 301-922-3885.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Hamad B. Ali, Frank White, and R. White. The signatures are written in black ink and are somewhat stylized and overlapping.

The Ali Brothers, Frank White, RAM Contracting Services, & Form Design

EXHIBIT A



heavy dashed line indicates extent of existing building

dashed line indicates existing window

diagonal hatch indicates portion of wall to be in same location in proposed design as existing building (103 SF)

dashed line indicates existing storefront

H St North Facade

Exhibit B - Ben's Chili Bowl (H Street)



Hand decon of cornice.



Parging of falling and deteriorating brick and grout.



Parging of falling and deteriorating brick and grout.

Exhibit B - Ben's Chili Bowl (H Street)



Salvaged brick.



Salvaged brick.



Salvaged brick, coursing review.