



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013



May 18, 2005

Lisa Burcham
Associate Director
Historic Preservation Division
801 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 3000
Washington, DC 20002

Re: HPA #05-196 (Capitol Hill Hospital/MedLINK, 700 Constitution Avenue NE)

Dear Ms. Burcham,

On May 12, 2005, ANC 6A voted unanimously to send a letter with the following recommendations on the proposal before the Historic Preservation Review Board for concept/demolition, alteration, and new construction of up to 300 residential units at the MedLINK site in ANC 6C. This site is directly across 8th Street NE from our ANC.

(Note that these recommendations are based on a review of the first two iterations of architectural plans in anticipation of HPRB review on May 26, 2005. We have since learned that the architect is making further revisions prior to presentation to HPRB.)

- 1) ANC 6A supports residential redevelopment at a moderate density of no more than 275 units that will not overwhelm the surrounding neighborhood, which is composed primarily of rowhouses and some small apartment buildings. The previously approved development plans for the site had a total of 275 units. This density (and a higher parking ratio) could easily be achieved if our other recommendations on the massing and use of specific buildings are adopted (see #2, #3, #7, and #8).
- 2) ANC 6A supports the renovation of the 1928 historic building and demolition of later additions to allow reconstruction with underground parking at a greater than 1.1-to-1 parking space to unit ratio. New construction, particularly along Massachusetts Avenue NE, should reference the 1928 building, the St. James church and nearby historic rowhouses for guidance on appropriate height, massing, and materials. With respect to height and massing, the "B" building as currently proposed is out of scale with the 1928 building, which is the immediate contributing historical structure on the property. Rather than providing a stepped transition between the 1928 building and the 1975 tower on the west side of project, the "B" building as proposed is simply another building that would be out of scale with surrounding contributing structures. With respect to materials, particular care should be exercised where extensive expanses of glass are proposed, as in the "C" and "E" buildings.
- 3) ANC 6A supports the 3-story height of the proposed "D" and "E" buildings at the corner of 8th and C Streets NE and along C Street NE as consistent with the scale of rowhouses opposite. There should not be any shifting of density allowed if the height of the "A" or "B" buildings is reduced per our recommendations (see #2, #7).



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- 4) ANC 6A recommends that the project not include the vehicle drop-off court along the southern (Massachusetts/Constitution Ave) edge of the project. A pedestrian entrance with green space and landscaping would be more desirable and consistent with the pattern of semi-public gardens in the public space. Furthermore, most vehicles would approach from the west, and would have to turn across traffic flow on Constitution and Massachusetts to use the proposed drop-off court.
- 5) ANC 6A supports multiple points of pedestrian entry into the residential buildings to prevent long “dead zones” along the sidewalk.
- 6) ANC 6A supports vehicular access points on 7th, 8th, and C Streets NE to spread the traffic burden among the surrounding residential streets.
- 7) ANC 6A supports widening the 8th Street NE entrance as planned to provide additional space for the St. James church. We also recommend a step-down in the height of the “A” building on 8th Street NE as it approaches the church.
- 8) ANC 6A would support a gym, indoor pool or other health-related amenity in the renovated 1975 tower (“C” building) that could be open to the surrounding community. This is a use that would reflect the long tradition of health-related uses on the site, although it may require additional zoning approvals.
- 9) HPRB should consider whether the first phase of the project would meet HPRB approval if proposed without the second phase. There is a strong possibility that the second phase may take years to be completed, or may never occur.

If you have any questions about these recommendations, please contact Commissioner Cody Rice at (202) 544-3734.

Respectfully yours,

Joseph Fengler
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

cc: Councilmember Sharon Ambrose
Robert Sponseller, Shalom Baranes Associates
Commissioner Michael Sherman, 6C06
Commissioner Bill Crews, 6C07