

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD

MEETING

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IN THE MATTER OF: :

:

MOUNT VERNON TRIANGLE HISTORIC : Case Nos.

DISTRICT AMENDMENT, : 20-11

917-921 6th STREET NW, AND : and

504-508 K STREET NW : 20-12

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Thursday,

June 24, 2021

The meeting of the District of

Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board

convened via Videoconference, pursuant to notice,

at 9:19 a.m. EDT, Marnique Heath, Chair,

presiding.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD MEMBERS

PRESENT:

- MARNIQUE HEATH, AIA, Chair
- ANDREW AURBACH, Historian Member
- MATTHEW BELL, FAIA, Architect Member
- LINDA GREENE, Citizen Member
- OUTERBRIDGE HORSEY, AIA, Citizen Member
- DR. ALEXANDRA JONES, Archaeologist Member
- DR. SANDRA JOWERS-BARBER, Historian Member
- GRETCHEN PFAEHLER, AIA, Architectural Historian

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:

STEVE CALLCOTT

KIM WILLIAMS

DAVID MALONEY

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 9:16 a.m.

3 CHAIR HEATH: Good morning and welcome
4 to the June 24th, 2021 meeting of the D.C.
5 Historic Preservation Review Board. My name is
6 Marnique Heath, chair of the Board.

7 Due to the COVID-19 public health
8 emergency, the Board is convening today's meeting
9 by WebEx. Public notice of this meeting has been
10 provided electronically to the HPR mailing list
11 and posted on the Office of Planning website.

12 Notice of the agenda cases being
13 considered today, as well as instructions for
14 providing public testimony and video access to
15 today's meeting, was provided on June 3rd.

16 I'll now ask that each board member
17 participating in today's meeting identify
18 themselves for the record.

19 Board Member Aurbach?

20 MEMBER AURBACH: Reporting, Board
21 Member Aurbach present.

22 CHAIR HEATH: Good morning.

1 Good morning, Board Member Bell.

2 MEMBER BELL: Matt Bell present.

3 CHAIR HEATH: Good morning, Board
4 Member Greene.

5 MEMBER GREENE: Good morning, board
6 members. Linda Greene present.

7 CHAIR HEATH: Good morning, Board
8 Member Horsey.

9 (Pause.)

10 CHAIR HEATH: I don't hear him.
11 Actually, I don't see him yet either. I do know
12 that he's planning to join, so I'll circle back.

13 Board Member Jowers-Barber?

14 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: Good morning.
15 Board Member Dr. Sandra Jowers-Barber present.

16 CHAIR HEATH: Board Member Jones?

17 MEMBER JONES: Good morning. Board
18 Member Jones present.

19 CHAIR HEATH: And Board Member
20 Pfaehler.

21 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Good morning. Board
22 Member Pfaehler present.

1 CHAIR HEATH: Thank you. Excellent.
2 I'd like to go over a few procedural points
3 specific to the WebEx format for today's meeting.

4 We're not using the video function for
5 the board members and applicants. Instead, the
6 video will feature their project plans that are
7 before the Board.

8 All of the project plans have been
9 provided by applicants or witnesses and pre-
10 loaded into a presentation that HPO staff will
11 advance. We do not have the ability to call up
12 plans or other documents that have not been
13 provided in advance.

14 To ensure that it's clear who's
15 speaking, each board member, HPO staff,
16 applicants and those public members testifying,
17 should identify themselves by name when they
18 speak.

19 To ensure that the public knows that
20 we've received and read any written
21 correspondence submitted, I'll acknowledge each
22 letter received.

1 All correspondence received by the
2 Board has been posted on the Office of Planning
3 website in the HPRB project plan's files.

4 Each case will be heard according to
5 our normal order with the staff summarizing the
6 case and HPO recommendation followed by the
7 applicant's presentation.

8 Then, the applicant -- following the
9 applicant's presentation, the Board will ask
10 questions of the applicant and I'll then
11 acknowledge any ANC resolutions and written
12 public comments received.

13 Finally, I'll call the names of each
14 organization and individuals who have registered
15 in advance to testify verbally. Organizations
16 will be provided five minutes and individuals
17 will be provided three minutes.

18 After all testimony has been
19 considered, the Board will deliberate, address
20 the ANC resolution for specificity and vote on
21 the case.

22 If there's a split vote, I'll do a

1 roll call so that each member can identify their
2 vote to ensure that it's accurately recorded.

3 Then finally, I'd like to remind the
4 Board and presenters to please mute your
5 microphone when you're not speaking in order to
6 limit background noise.

7 In accordance with the ANC Act, the
8 Historic Preservation Review Board is committed
9 to giving careful consideration to the community
10 and the ANC comments that we receive.

11 Our regulations require us to give
12 great weight to properly adopted written
13 recommendations of ANCs in the matters that come
14 before us.

15 To ensure that great weight is given,
16 the Board discusses and addresses each issue or
17 concern raised in the ANC resolutions as part of
18 our deliberation and addresses that discussion in
19 the public record of the case as recorded in the
20 live videos of our meetings.

21 Following the meeting, on the Board's
22 behalf, HPO archives the video recordings on the

1 HPO website keeping them accessible to the
2 public.

3 They prepare a written record of the
4 Board's actions, which includes a report of our
5 findings and conclusions on any issues and
6 concerns raised in the ANC resolutions
7 articulating, with particularity and precision,
8 our reasons why the ANC did or did not offer
9 persuasive advice and post the written record on
10 the HPO website one week following the meeting
11 keeping it permanently accessible to the public.

12 CONSENT CALENDAR

13 CHAIR HEATH: We have three cases that
14 are on our consent calendar this morning. We do
15 have a request to discuss; A, the Mullett
16 Rowhouses at 2519 to 2523 Pennsylvania Avenue,
17 N.W., separately.

18 I will -- are there any comments on B
19 or C, the Cleveland Park Historic District case
20 or the Mount Pleasant Historic District case?
21 Any comments on those two?

22 (Pause.)

1 CHAIR HEATH: Then I will make a motion
2 that we approve those cases as noted.

3 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Board Member Pfaehler
4 will second.

5 CHAIR HEATH: Alright. So, a motion
6 has been made and seconded.

7 Any further discussion?

8 All those in favor signify by saying
9 "aye."

10 (Chorus of aye.)

11 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Anyone opposed?
12 So, that motion carries.

13 Would any board members who have
14 comments on the Mullet Rowhouses like to make
15 your comments at this time?

16 Gretchen, would you like to start?

17 A. MULLETT ROWHOUSES

18 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Sure. Sure. Thank
19 you. I do have some comments. In large part, I
20 agree with the staff report.

21 I think the staff report was very
22 clear on the seven items that we requested. I

1 think one through five were met in the materials
2 evident -- or that they were met in the materials
3 that we provided.

4 I'm not convinced that 6 and 7 were
5 completely met. No. 2, in particular, which is
6 that we ask for a preservation plan to be
7 developed for the treatment of the facade --

8 CHAIR HEATH: Um-hmm.

9 MEMBER PFAEHLER: -- I think some of
10 the comments in the staff report regarding what
11 might be indicated in the plans about masonry
12 openings, roofing elements that might or might
13 not change, are things that should be contained
14 in the preservation plan.

15 So, I would still request that staff
16 ask for a preservation plan before the work is
17 allowed to proceed, and I think that the
18 preservation plan should show that the applicant
19 has made a detailed review of the materials and
20 the condition of the front facades and the roofs.
21 It then should make recommendation for specific
22 treatments.

1 Some of those windows have windows
2 within windows. Some of those windows are --
3 look like they might be a window -- original
4 window frames.

5 So, some of the materials that we have
6 with just notes with arrows pointing, I don't
7 feel, are sufficient for the prominence of this
8 building on Pennsylvania Avenue, so I think that
9 would be a helpful tool for staff.

10 As it relates to simply the roofing,
11 I think, understanding the condition and the
12 materials, I don't have an issue with the
13 synthetic -- it's hard to say it, but synthetic
14 slates that might be proposed. I would leave it
15 to staff's assessment about the quality of the
16 slate and the visibility of it and the perception
17 from the street on Pennsylvania Avenue.

18 Related to No. 7, which is we ask for
19 the project return for review of design
20 development addressing the conditions allowing
21 for community discussion of the project, I didn't
22 see any updates or information from the ANC or

1 any letters from neighbors.

2 So, I would just ask that the
3 applicants provide an update on the
4 communications that they had and a summary of
5 what the nature of those communications were so
6 that staff has that information and can use it to
7 the best ability for the District. Those are my
8 comments.

9 CHAIR HEATH: Thank you for those.
10 Does anyone else have any comments?

11 (Pause.)

12 CHAIR HEATH: Alright. Then I will
13 make a motion that we approve this application
14 with the comments noted by Board Member Pfaehler.

15 Is there a second?

16 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: Board Member
17 Jowers-Barber seconds it.

18 CHAIR HEATH: Excellent. Thank you.

19 Any further discussion?

20 All those in favor, signify by saying

21 "aye."

22 (Chorus of aye.)

1 CHAIR HEATH: Anyone opposed?

2 Great. Then that motion carries as
3 well and we're ready to proceed with our first
4 case of the morning, which is a historic landmark
5 and district -- well, the first two cases as
6 historic landmark and district hearings in the
7 Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District.

8 HISTORIC LANDMARK AND DISTRICT HEARINGS

9 CHAIR HEATH: We have an amendment
10 that's proposed as a boundary expansion and then
11 three buildings that are proposed for landmark.

12 Would the staff like to make your
13 presentation first?

14 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you, Chair.
15 Good morning, Members of the Board. For the
16 record, this is Kim Williams with HPO.

17 I would like to start the presentation
18 by giving some background information that's
19 relevant to both the expansion to the Mount
20 Vernon Triangle Historic District and to the
21 landmark application, which are both before the
22 Board this morning, and that background

1 information goes back quite a ways now.

2 Our office, the Office of Planning
3 Historic Preservation Office, has been engaged in
4 planning the historic preservation process at
5 Mount Vernon Triangle for more than 15 years now.

6 In 2003, the Office of Planning, along
7 with other D.C. agencies and property owners,
8 launched a Mount Vernon Triangle Planning
9 Initiative to help create a vibrant and
10 distinctive mixed-use, in-town neighborhood. At
11 that time, it was underdeveloped and somewhat
12 blighted.

13 The area, which fans out east from
14 Mount Vernon Square between Massachusetts Avenue
15 on the south and New York Avenue on the north and
16 New Jersey Avenue on the east, was historically
17 part of a larger area that was just roughly
18 referred to as the "East End."

19 As part of this planning process, the
20 name, Mount Vernon Triangle, named for the shape
21 formed by those boundaries, obviously, was
22 coined.

1 And this aerial photograph of the land
2 is from 2003 and this was the cover document for
3 that 2003 planning initiative.

4 Next slide, please. As part of this
5 planning effort, the Historic Preservation
6 undertook an architectural and historical study
7 of the area and, in 2005, it prepared a National
8 Register multiple property document.

9 This report provided historic context
10 on the area's physical and social growth
11 highlighting its histories and important working-
12 class mercantile community.

13 This ethnically and racially diverse
14 community was largely spawned by, and depended
15 upon, the commercial activity of the 7th Street
16 Commercial Corridor and the Northern Liberties
17 Market, which was first at Mount Vernon Triangle
18 -- or, sorry, Mount Vernon Square and, after
19 1874, at 5th and K Streets, N.W.

20 This detail of the Sachse Birds' Eye
21 View of Washington 1884 shows the Mount Vernon
22 Triangle area.

1 You can see at the left side of the
2 photograph Mount Vernon Square after the market
3 stalls had been removed there and a new market,
4 Northern Liberties Market, which is sort of
5 center of the image, at 5th and K Street on the
6 north side of K Street.

7 Today's Historic District includes the
8 block just immediately south of the former market
9 building on either side of 5th Street there.

10 Next slide, please. In accordance
11 with the established format for multiple property
12 documents, the document identified various
13 building types and subtypes associated with the
14 area's history and it established registration
15 criteria for evaluating them.

16 The identified associated property
17 types included residential buildings like the
18 modest Conrad Kiefer House, which you see on the
19 right. This was built in 1878 for the German-
20 borne tailor and his family who lived above the
21 first-floor tailor shop.

22 And then in the middle of the collage

1 there are the flats at 462 K Street, which
2 dairyman J.J. Bowles built to work -- to house
3 his workers who were engaged in bottling and
4 delivering the milk, which he brought daily from
5 his farm in Montgomery County, to his bottling
6 plant in Prather's Alley in Mount Vernon
7 Triangle.

8 It also -- this document also
9 identified a variety of commercial building types
10 that illustrate the evolution of Mount Vernon
11 Triangle from a 19th-Century residential and
12 mercantile neighborhood to an automobile commuter
13 route.

14 So, some examples of these are the
15 building at the lower left of this collage, which
16 was built immediately across from the Northern
17 Liberties Market at 5th and K Street, and it
18 originally housed a feed store and a dry goods
19 store and particular flower store.

20 The buff brick Wittlin and Deckelbaum
21 Building in the upper left, with its independent
22 and refrigerated market stalls, was constructed

1 in 1932 to attract merchants to Northern Liberty
2 Markets after the demotion of Center Market.

3 This was an important phase in the
4 commercial transformation of Mount Vernon
5 Triangle. After the demolition of Center Market,
6 Northern Liberties Market became one of the
7 city's major markets and many of the merchants
8 from Center Market moved up there. So, that
9 building was indicative of that trend.

10 And then, of course, automobile-
11 related buildings like the Lord Baltimore Gas
12 Station at 6th and K Streets, which you see at
13 the center lower part of this photograph, before
14 its move and reconstruction.

15 In addition to identifying individual
16 buildings and establishing evaluation criteria,
17 the document also included groups of buildings or
18 historic districts as associated property types
19 that could qualify for listing as historic
20 districts in the National Register.

21 Can you change the slide, please.

22 Thank you. So, under this cover document the

1 D.C. Preservation League prepared a couple of
2 nominations.

3 They prepared a Historic District
4 application for the collection of buildings
5 around 4th and 5th and I and K Streets, N.W. And
6 you can see the boundaries of the -- proposed
7 boundaries for that historic district highlighted
8 in the dotted orange lines.

9 And it prepared landmark applications
10 on several other buildings associated with the
11 historical and physical patterns of development
12 within the boundaries of the larger Mount Vernon
13 Triangle area.

14 Three of these nominations were taken
15 to the Board for evaluation. Those are the ones
16 that the Historic District -- the three buildings
17 on 6th Street highlighted in orange. And on the
18 right side of the map, also highlighted in
19 orange, is the Emily Wiley House. Those were the
20 three nominations taken to the Board.

21 There were other nominations prepared.
22 You can see at the upper left part of the map

1 highlighted in sort of light green, those were
2 nominations prepared, but that never came before
3 the Board.

4 So, next slide, please. In 2005, the
5 Board designated the collection of 24 buildings
6 and an archaeological site as the Mount Vernon
7 Triangle Historic District recognizing it as a
8 significant remnant and a microcosm of the racial
9 and culturally diverse working-class merchant
10 community.

11 The District was designated under
12 Criterion A for its association with the
13 residents who, through entrepreneurial efforts,
14 contributed significantly to the building of the
15 community.

16 It was designated under Criterion C
17 for its varied collection of buildings that
18 illustrate those several phases of development of
19 growth in Mount Vernon Triangle.

20 And the Historic District was also
21 designated under Criterion D for a partially
22 excavated site within the boundaries that had

1 yielded a high concentration of artifacts
2 important to the social history of the merchant
3 community and remnants of which were known to
4 still be in place.

5 The Board also designated the Emily
6 Wiley House, which you see at the right of this
7 slide at 301 I Street, under the multiple
8 property document covers, a good example of an
9 Italianate urban townhouse built just after the
10 Civil War in 1867.

11 It was also designated for its
12 associations with its early -- with the Italian
13 immigrant community as it served as the parish
14 house to Holy Rosary Church.

15 The Board -- at that time in 2005 the
16 Board did not designate the three buildings, 917,
17 919, 921 6th Street, as landmarks and they had
18 not been included in the Historic District
19 because they were visually separated from the
20 collection of 24 buildings by a vacant lot at 6th
21 and K Streets.

22 Next slide, please. At the same time

1 that these cases were being brought to the Board,
2 DCPL submitted Landmark applications on several
3 other buildings on the 600 block of K Street on
4 the north side of the street.

5 Subsequent consultation with our
6 office, HPO, and owner/developer of the
7 properties, led to a legal agreement between DCPL
8 and the owner/developer resulting in the withdraw
9 of the Landmark applications on the four
10 buildings in the 600 block and their retention
11 and incorporation into a new building, which was
12 completed in 2015, which you can see here.

13 I was out there taking photographs.
14 It's very hard to get a photograph of these
15 houses from a distance because the trees, which
16 are now five years old, are the exact height of
17 the historic buildings, but -- so, you can see it
18 close up, though.

19 These historic buildings have been
20 preserved and retained as part of the larger
21 building and contribute significantly to the
22 livelihood of the streetscape.

1 Next slide, please. Two other single-
2 story buildings, the Hodges Sandwich Shop, which
3 you see on the upper right, which was formerly at
4 616 New York Avenue, and the Riteway Auto Top
5 Shop, which was formerly at 607-609 K Street, did
6 not fit into the project and were temporarily
7 moved to the site where the Lord Baltimore Gas
8 Station stood at the northwest corner of 6th and
9 K.

10 These are Google street view images.
11 In the upper right you can see the Hodges
12 Sandwich Shop in its original location in 2008,
13 and then in 2014 this Google street view shows
14 the Riteway Auto Top Shop behind the Lord
15 Baltimore Filling Station. And I'm not sure
16 where the Hodges shop is at that point, but it's
17 somewhere on that site.

18 Next slide, please. In 2018, when
19 construction was about to begin on the Lord
20 Baltimore Filling Station corner, DCPL consulted
21 with HPO and owner/developer about the
22 disposition of the two moved buildings, as well

1 as that of the Lord Baltimore Filling Station.

2 At that point, the same developer had
3 purchased a former used car lot at the southeast
4 corner of 6th and K diagonally across from the
5 Lord Baltimore site where he had already
6 envisioned it as a potential location to
7 reconstruct the Waffle Shop.

8 As you all know, the Waffle Shop is a
9 historic landmark. It originally stood at 522
10 10th Street and was dismantled pursuant to an
11 agreement with DCPL and other preservation groups
12 years before.

13 Several other possible sites had been
14 discussed by then, but none had been determined
15 as a suitable place to reconstruct the shop.

16 During consultation, a consensus
17 emerged that this site could also be appropriate
18 for the Hodges Sandwich Shop. There had been
19 multiple options considered for retaining the
20 Lord Baltimore Filling Station on its historic
21 site and incorporating it into the proposed 11-
22 story office building, but none of those design

1 options provided a compatible setting for this
2 diminutive filling station.

3 So, the SHPO, the S-H-P-O, recommended
4 relocating the Lord Baltimore Filling Station
5 across the intersection from where it could also
6 be restored along with the Waffle Shop and Hodges
7 in a context that was really comparable to its
8 historic setting.

9 So, here you have images of those
10 moved and restored buildings as they had been
11 reconstructed on the site.

12 And I want to emphasize here that
13 relocating historic buildings is not a
14 recommended preservation treatment. Such moves
15 are only done as sort of a last-resort
16 preservation measure.

17 In this case, the move and
18 reconstruction were considered appropriate. It
19 provided an opportunity to place the buildings in
20 an orientation and setting adjacent to similar --
21 to the original settings and context.

22 And HPO's long involvement in the

1 effort to retain historic structures would
2 enhance the character of Mount Vernon Triangle as
3 it continues to be developed with large
4 multistory office buildings and apartments.

5 After their move, all three buildings
6 were rehabilitated, according to the Secretary of
7 Interior Standards, for rehabilitation with fully
8 restored facades.

9 Next slide, please. So, with that
10 background information let's move to the cases
11 before us.

12 DCPL has submitted two applications.
13 One is an amendment to the Historic District,
14 which proposes to increase the boundaries of the
15 Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District one-half
16 block west to 6th and K Street to encompass six
17 additional buildings. You can see the boundaries
18 of the Historic District are light pink --
19 striated light pink and the darker pink is the
20 proposed expansion area.

21 These six buildings include the two
22 moved and renovated historic buildings, the three

1 6th Street residences and the reconstructed
2 Waffle Shop.

3 The expanded district would also
4 include a two-story brick wing which connects 921
5 6th Street to the moved buildings.

6 And the second application is to
7 designate the three buildings -- the three
8 dwellings on 6th Street as a historic landmark.

9 Next slide, please. Both applications
10 provide a thorough research and extensive history
11 of the individual properties. I do not want to
12 reiterate them here at length, we have
13 presentations by the applicants coming up, but I
14 will say that the histories of the buildings are
15 directly associated with the economic forces of
16 growth that created Mount Vernon Triangle as a
17 vibrant community and the buildings perfectly
18 illustrate these trends.

19 Two of the three houses, 917 and 921,
20 north and south of the row of three, are
21 associated with the German immigrant community
22 whose owners and builders were entrepreneurial

1 self-starters and upwardly mobile.

2 The Krey House at 917 6th Street was
3 built by Louie Krey, who established two
4 successive businesses. First, a furniture store
5 and then a wholesale poultry market center --
6 market near Center Market.

7 And the Killian House, the northern
8 house, was built by a woman who left a successful
9 milliner's shop downtown after the death of her
10 husband to build this house as a boarding house
11 where she rented rooms, many of them to German
12 immigrants new to the neighborhood.

13 Of particular note is the history of
14 919 6th Street in the middle. It was originally
15 built in 1855 as a two-story, wood-frame house
16 owned by a freed black Washingtonian and laborer,
17 Arnold Somerville, and his wife.

18 Although not quantified, the
19 Somervilles were part of what is known to be a
20 small group of pre-Civil War freed black property
21 owners both citywide and in Mount Vernon
22 Triangle.

1 The Somervilles retained ownership of
2 the house through successive generations
3 undertaking a major upgrade in 1886 converting
4 the wood-framed dwelling to a brick one.

5 I just want to note here that the
6 existing Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
7 designation notes that African Americans were
8 well-represented in Mount Vernon Triangle and
9 they helped build a vibrant community, including
10 its churches; but it also states that African
11 Americans tended to live off of the public
12 streets and in the alleyways.

13 The history of the Somerville House at
14 919 6th Street clearly illustrates that this
15 pattern was not universal and that African
16 Americans also occupied houses facing the
17 principal streets.

18 That property also provides the only
19 known physical remnant in Mount Vernon Triangle
20 of a house built by blacks before the Civil War
21 and retained by the same family for decades
22 further enhancing our understanding of the

1 culture history of Mount Vernon Triangle.

2 Next slide, please. While the three
3 dwellings on 6th Street enhance the history of
4 the residential development of Mount Vernon
5 Triangle, the Hodges Sandwich Shop and the Lord
6 Baltimore Filling Station complement the history
7 and architecture of its commercial development.

8 During the early to mid-20th Century
9 as automobile suburbs began to emerge to the
10 north and east of the city, Mount Vernon Triangle
11 became a heavily trafficked automobile commuter
12 route, especially along New York Avenue and K
13 Street, and the neighborhood became increasingly
14 commercial and industrial and less residential as
15 residents moved out and automobile-related
16 businesses, including repair facilities and
17 gasoline stations, moved in.

18 The commercial building now known as
19 Hodges Sandwich Shop was constructed in 1923 as
20 part of this transformation as the office of E.J.
21 Febrey Heating Company. It served that use for
22 more than 40 years before becoming a carry-out

1 restaurant in 1965.

2 The building was relocated one block
3 from its original site, which we saw in the
4 earlier slide, to its current site, its new
5 siting facing north along a major artery, and
6 with its east side, which you can see in the
7 photo in the top left here, abutting an alley --
8 or alongside an alleyway, reflects its original
9 orientation and context.

10 The Lord Baltimore House with canopy
11 design building followed a company motto. It was
12 part of a branding effort which sought to convey
13 a high level of quality in service and product
14 through a clean and attractive appearance.

15 The moved building, which you saw in
16 a previous slide on its original site, is -- sits
17 on a corner and is set back on the lot which
18 reflects its historic corner orientation just
19 immediately across the street.

20 Although the Waffle Shop is not
21 directly associated with Mount Vernon Triangle,
22 its restaurant use and design during the

1 automobile age are consistent with the historic
2 themes that characterize the mid-20th Century
3 growth of Mount Vernon Triangle.

4 The reconstruction is nine blocks
5 north of its original site, but it reflects its
6 historic setting on a downtown commercial street
7 in a mixed row of historic commercial buildings
8 and rowhouses.

9 Next slide, please. This is a view
10 looking from 6th and K Street northwest side
11 towards the existing Mount Vernon Historic
12 District, which you could see at the left center
13 part of the photograph, and towards the proposed
14 expansion area at the center and slightly right
15 part of the photograph.

16 The proposed amendment to the Historic
17 District offers an unorthodox case for expansion.
18 The three dwellings were not included within the
19 2005 Historic District because they were visually
20 separated from the tight collection of 24
21 buildings by this open site, which was then a
22 used car lot, even though their own individual

1 histories contributed to the history of Mount
2 Vernon Triangle.

3 Even more unorthodox is that the other
4 three buildings shown in the proposed expansion
5 area had been recently moved here.

6 Despite these irregularities, HPO
7 believes that with the move the physical
8 connection of the three dwellings to the existing
9 Historic District is compelling and relevant.

10 HPO concurs with the applicants that
11 the proposed expansion meets D.C. Designation
12 Criterion B and National Register Criterion A for
13 its association with the German immigrant and
14 African American communities and the residents'
15 roles in the social, cultural and physical
16 development in Mount Vernon Triangle particularly
17 as it relates to pre-Civil War freed black
18 history and demographics.

19 The expansion area also meets these
20 criteria for their associations with the
21 evolution of Mount Vernon Triangle from a
22 residential and commercial area to a highly

1 trafficked commuter route where commercial
2 development catered to automobile-related
3 business concerns.

4 In addition, the Lord Baltimore
5 Filling Station and the Waffle Shop qualify for
6 inclusion in the District under Criterion C. The
7 filling station is a rare purpose-built example
8 of its type, of a filling station, built in the
9 late 1920s representing a clear architectural
10 expression of its original purpose and function.

11 The structure is one of very few
12 house-with-canopy-style design filling stations
13 known to surviving D.C. although they were once a
14 common building type.

15 The Waffle Shop qualifies under
16 Criterion C and Criterion Consideration B for
17 reconstructed buildings as an architecturally
18 detailed and highly accurate recreation of a mid-
19 Century, quick-service restaurant.

20 Its reconstruction was accurately
21 executed in a dignified manner as part of the
22 restoration master plan, which is as required by

1 National Register listing under those criteria.

2 So, HPO recommends that the Board
3 approve the amendment -- the proposed amendment
4 to the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
5 and expand the boundaries to include the
6 collection of six buildings at the southeast
7 corner of 6th and K Streets.

8 I have some comments regarding the
9 period of significance, but I think it probably
10 would be better we just talk about those after we
11 hear from the applicants.

12 And then we can also get back to my
13 recommendations on the landmark, but, at this
14 point, HPO does not recommend that the Board
15 approve the three dwellings and historic
16 landmark. Their histories and architecture
17 reflected the area's broader history and
18 development and we believe they are more relevant
19 as contributing resources within the Historic
20 District.

21 So, with that, I think I would like
22 for the applicants to go forward. And unless you

1 have any pressing questions, it's probably better
2 that we save them, in the interest of time, for
3 after the other presentations. Thank you.

4 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Thank you, Kim.

5 MEMBER HORSEY: Can we please bring up
6 the map of the Historic District in the amendment
7 again, please. Thank you.

8 CHAIR HEATH: Sure. And that reminds
9 me, Outerbridge, I just want to acknowledge that
10 you are on the call because when I did the roll
11 call I don't think you had joined.

12 MEMBER HORSEY: Yes. Board Member
13 Horsey is present. Sorry to be late. Thank you.

14 CHAIR HEATH: No worries. Thanks.
15 Glad you were able to join us. Alright. You
16 didn't have a question about this now, you just
17 wanted to see it; is that correct, Outerbridge?

18 MEMBER HORSEY: I just wanted to see
19 the map again. Thank you.

20 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Excellent.
21 Alright. Is the applicant ready to make your
22 presentation?

1 MS. MILLER: Yes, we are.

2 CHAIR HEATH: Great. Good morning.

3 MS. MILLER: Good morning. Hello, my
4 name is Rebecca Miller. I am the executive
5 director of the D.C. Preservation League.
6 Preservation League is the citywide nonprofit
7 advocate for historic preservation.

8 We have been serving most of the city
9 since 1971, so we're celebrating our 50th
10 anniversary this year.

11 Joining me today is Peter Sefton, one
12 of DCPL's board members and also the chair of
13 DCPL's Landmarks Committee, which prepares the
14 research and documentation for the filing of
15 landmark nominations by the League.

16 And what I wanted to do first before
17 I turn it over to Peter, is -- Kim gave a great
18 summation of the planning history of this, but I
19 wanted to give a little bit of the history from
20 the legal point of view and planning that went on
21 from DCPL's perspective and our involvement in it
22 as we can see it going forward.

1 So, next slide, please. So, this all
2 started, as Kim mentioned, back in 2003
3 culminating with the designation of the Historic
4 District of Mount Vernon Triangle in 2005.

5 DCPL had also sought to preserve the
6 portion that Kim had mentioned on Square 451,
7 which is the corner of 6th and K where the Lord
8 Baltimore and Hodges locations were.

9 Next slide. Realizing that there was
10 going to be an issue with that particular square,
11 we entered into an agreement because, if any of
12 you remember that particular square, the
13 buildings were set apart from one another. There
14 were lots of missing pieces from different
15 demolitions over time.

16 But stepping back a little bit, the
17 Waffle Shop came into -- in fact, in 2007 the Art
18 Deco Society, the Committee of 100 and the
19 Federal City, the Downtown Artist Coalition, the
20 Recent Past Preservation Network and the Society
21 for Commercial Archaeology, filed a landmark
22 nomination on the Waffle Shop.

1 There had been an article in the paper
2 with regards to its history and a lot of
3 nostalgia went along with this particular
4 building. DCPL later joined in on the
5 sponsorship.

6 In 2007, the parties agreed to the
7 terms of a settlement agreement that was authored
8 by the law firm of Holland & Knight on behalf of
9 Douglas Development Corporation whereby DDC would
10 not oppose the designation of the Waffle Shop and
11 the preservation parties would agree to relocate
12 it to either Square 450 or 451 in the Mount
13 Vernon Square/Triangle neighborhood.

14 The agreement called for full
15 documentation of the building before it was
16 dismantled, including measured drawings of the
17 character-defining features.

18 Many of you -- I don't know if any of
19 you were on the Board at that point, but this
20 building was designated, including its interior,
21 at that point. And, as I think you all know,
22 there are only 18 designated interiors in the

1 District of Columbia.

2 Next slide. In September of 2009,
3 DCPL entered into an agreement that was written
4 by Holland & Knight with recommended treatment of
5 buildings that was prepared by Shalom Baranes
6 Associates and EHT Tracerics on Square 451 to
7 include the consolidation of the historic
8 buildings and to include the Lord Baltimore
9 Filling Station and Hodges Roast Beef building as
10 well.

11 And then in January 2012, the Square
12 451 agreement was amended to allow for the
13 movement of Hodges Roast Beef offsite. And the
14 picture that Ms. Williams showed was where you
15 saw the gas station. Hodges had actually been
16 moved to Square 450 in order to allow for the
17 development of the American Association of
18 Medical Colleges building.

19 In 2014, there was an amendment to the
20 Waffle Shop agreement, that was also prepared by
21 Holland & Knight, to allow for dismantling of the
22 Waffle Shop.

1 And this now includes that Douglas
2 Development would not oppose the designation of
3 the Lord Baltimore Filling Station on Square 451.
4 The original intent of that was to have the
5 buildings remain in situ where it was located on
6 Square 451.

7 Next slide. So, the amendment for the
8 Waffle Shop in 2016 allowed for the Waffle Shop
9 to be moved to Square 484, which was known as
10 Jemal's Auto Market at the time, and this --
11 well, it looks like the video may not play, but
12 the -- this shows the relocation of Lord
13 Baltimore and Hodges Roast Beef to Square 44 as
14 well and also that Douglas Development, per that
15 agreement, would not oppose the expansion of the
16 Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District to
17 include these buildings in it.

18 As many of you probably would
19 recognize, you know, preservation organizations
20 are made up of a lot of volunteers and they --
21 and we felt that it was more appropriate for
22 these buildings to be protected under the

1 preservation law as opposed to protected under an
2 agreement -- a private agreement under the
3 organization.

4 In addition to that -- the next slide,
5 please. So, moving of buildings is not uncommon
6 in D.C. In fact, the Historic Preservation
7 Review Board has approved the moving of several
8 buildings and this includes this 1902 former
9 dwelling that's contributing to the Mount Vernon
10 Square Historic District which was moved to allow
11 the development of a hotel.

12 Next slide. Or you also have this
13 1891 brick warehouse at 639 New York Avenue,
14 which was also a contributing building in the
15 Mount Vernon Square Historic District, which was
16 moved in 2017 to allow for the development of
17 this office building. Both examples were
18 reviewed and approved by the Historic
19 Preservation Review Board.

20 The individually landmarked Almas
21 Temple was moved to make way for an office
22 building as well, and also the historic Adas

1 Israel Synagogue was moved three separate times
2 to make way for different developments.

3 So, the National Register guidelines,
4 as Ms. Williams stated, allowed for moved
5 buildings to still be listed in the National
6 Register if the structure was moved, but has
7 significant architectural value or is connected
8 to an important historical event or person -- and
9 we will highlight that more during our later
10 presentation on the history -- or that the
11 building was rebuilt as part of a restoration
12 plan and no other similar building or structure
13 has survived. The Waffle Shop is it. That's the
14 one that survived the District of Columbia.

15 The moved structures meet these
16 guidelines and also, given the lack of
17 underground disturbance, may potentially have
18 architectural -- or, I'm sorry, archaeological
19 value in the future should there be any digs
20 onsite.

21 So, as I just wanted to highlight, the
22 moving of buildings has been something that has

1 been done here in Washington. They have been
2 continued to be protected.

3 Many of the consultants that you'll
4 hear from today have been involved in all of
5 these activities, so I look forward to your
6 questions later in the hearing, but I'll now turn
7 it over to Peter Sefton to give you the history
8 of the Mount Vernon Triangle and the three
9 subject properties for landmark designation.
10 Thank you.

11 MR. SEFTON: Hi. Good morning. I'm
12 Peter Sefton, as Rebecca says, chair of the DCPL
13 Landmarks Committee.

14 This morning, I'd like to go into a
15 little bit of the history of the buildings in the
16 expansion district -- the district. I'm going to
17 basically try and complement and accentuate some
18 of the things Kim and Rebecca talked about here.

19 We did do quite a bit of original
20 research on the expansion nomination and we're
21 glad to share the details of that with any of the
22 office or board members at any time, also to

1 answer any questions you may have as we go along.

2 But if we could see the next slide, as
3 Kim notes, 15 years ago the neighborhood east of
4 Mount Vernon Square was full of parking lots and
5 big empty spaces and it was also on the edge of a
6 very explosive and mass redevelopment.

7 So, with the very expert advice of the
8 Historic Preservation Office, DCPL sent
9 volunteers and we surveyed the blocks between New
10 York and Massachusetts Avenue.

11 Next slide, please. In parallel with
12 our survey, we also looked into the area's
13 history and, as Kim's noted, it started with a
14 road. In 1810, the 7th Street Turnpike connected
15 the city's downtown part of Mount Vernon Square
16 and that attracted a lot of new residents to the
17 area.

18 After the Northern Liberties Market,
19 which was in Mount Vernon Square, was demolished
20 in 1872, a group of entrepreneurs split off and
21 they erected a magnificent modern market building
22 at the corner of 6th and K Streets, which you saw

1 in our title slide.

2 Away the settlement then spread east
3 from 7th Street Mount Vernon Square and it
4 included merchants and entrepreneurs who
5 established new and a lot of varied kinds of
6 businesses and they started replacing, like, the
7 sparse, you know, framed houses that represented
8 the earlier settlement in the neighborhood with
9 brick ones.

10 As the Sachse map shows, which Kim
11 showed you, the neighborhood around the market
12 was thriving by the mid-1880s. And during -- and
13 one thing I wanted to point out in the inset is
14 the red X, if you can see it, marks the building
15 we're going to talk about today, the Somerville-
16 Thomas House at 1919 6th Street.

17 But as, you know, the early and mid-
18 20th Century progressed and automobile suburbs
19 expanded along New York Avenue and 7th Street and
20 Mass Avenue. These streets became heavily
21 trafficked commercial and computer routes and the
22 Mount Vernon Triangle District became

1 increasingly commercial.

2 It had a lot of food purveyor
3 warehouses and light industrial buildings and it
4 started to redevelop much more as commercial than
5 residential.

6 Can we see the next slide. By the
7 time of our survey, many blocks had been cleared
8 for the --

9 MS. MILLER: Stop, Peter.

10 (Pause.)

11 MS. MILLER: Sorry. Excuse me. Go
12 ahead.

13 MR. SEFTON: Oh, okay -- for the
14 extension of I-95 in the 1960s or during the
15 area's economic decline after World War II;
16 however, 24 historic buildings that formed a
17 cohesive group near the corner of 5th and K were
18 designated by the HPRB as the original Mount
19 Vernon Triangle District.

20 If we see the next slide. The Mount
21 Vernon Triangle meets National Register Criteria
22 A basically because it's a microcosm of this

1 working-class, commercial, and residential
2 neighborhood and the communities who helped
3 create it, and these include German, Irish and
4 Italian immigrants as well as African Americans.

5 If we can see the next slide. The
6 Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District meets
7 National Register Criteria C for incorporating
8 the building types that represent the mini strata
9 in this neighborhood's development over its 75-
10 year period of significance. And this chart here
11 kind of shows the wide distribution of buildings
12 within the District.

13 The next slide, please. Many of the
14 buildings in the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic
15 District are segments in the very long row that
16 wraps the southeast corner of the intersection of
17 5th and K Streets.

18 Kim showed a picture of the buildings
19 on the corner, which are the dominant ones in the
20 row. They are these three commercial structures
21 that were built between 1883 and 1885 as flour
22 and feed stores. Their uses kind of complement

1 the market buildings on the opposite corner.

2 But if we see the next slide, the row
3 also includes the very typical homes of two local
4 merchants, which are 468 K Street that was built
5 by Joseph Baur who kept a stove store around the
6 corner, and 470 K, which was built by William
7 Schluter, who was a neighborhood saloon keeper.

8 472 K might even have been built
9 before the market opened in 1876. In 1890 it was
10 a saloon kept by a German immigrant named William
11 Rupertus, and then by Irish proprietors named
12 Joseph Lane and the McCarthy family, who
13 accommodated a revolving cast of Irish and German
14 borders upstairs with their families.

15 Next slide, please. Today, this row,
16 which has been rehabilitated in the oversight of
17 the HPRB, illustrates a very important element of
18 the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District that
19 is composed of historic streetscapes, not just
20 individual buildings, but reflect three diverse
21 building types that are both commercial and
22 residential within a single block.

1 This is a good lens to look at the
2 area that's proposed for the boundary expansion,
3 too, that it really is this kind of very mixed
4 and diverse area in terms of building types.

5 If we can see the next slide. Why
6 does the Historic District contain only about
7 2/3rds of the historically significant buildings
8 that were found in the survey?

9 Well, as Kim has indicated, the main
10 reason is that many were not contiguous to the
11 main body of the District. Some of these, like
12 the Emily Wiley House, were designated and
13 others, like the buildings on the north side of K
14 Street, were incorporated in new developments
15 through agreements, but many others were lost,
16 including these -- this house at 419
17 Massachusetts Avenue.

18 If we could see the next slide. After
19 the closing of the downtown center market, the
20 deco-accented Mediterranean revival Wittlin-
21 Deckelbaum building opened as a modern
22 refrigerated meat market on the southwest corner

1 of 5th and K Streets. This is the western-most
2 building in the original Mount Vernon Triangle
3 Historic District.

4 If we could see the next slide. DCPL,
5 as Kim noted, didn't want to include the three
6 19th-Century houses at 917, 919 and 921 6th
7 Street in our original Historic District
8 nomination; however, the HPRB drew the Historic
9 District boundary to the immediate west of the
10 Wittlin-Deckelbaum building as this used car lot,
11 which replaced a bunch of historic buildings
12 probably in the 1950s, intervened between them
13 and the historic district.

14 In 2007, the HPRB continued to decline
15 to designate the three houses as individual
16 landmarks stating their significance would be as
17 contributing buildings to the Historic District.

18 In the past year, this situation has
19 changed quite a bit. As more and more
20 information has become digitally accessible, our
21 appreciation for the three houses' importance has
22 grown quite a bit. I'll explain why. And, in

1 addition, the replacement of the used car lot
2 with three contributing structures has eliminated
3 this issue of contiguity.

4 See the next slide. I'm first going
5 to describe -- here are the three contributing
6 buildings that have been substituted for the used
7 car lot.

8 If we could see the next slide. I'll
9 first describe how the Hodges Sandwich Shop, the
10 Waffle Shop and Lord Baltimore Service Station
11 should be considered contributing buildings to
12 this expanded district.

13 The Hodges Sandwich Shop is a small
14 flat-roofed, single-story, utilitarian building
15 with very few architectural flourishes and it's
16 located just across the alley to the west of the
17 Wittlin-Deckelbaum Building.

18 The shop's original incarnation was as
19 Hodges Restaurant, which for 60 years served a
20 roast beef sandwich. It was as an iconic
21 Washington menu item as Ben's Chili -- as chili
22 from Ben's Chili Bowl is today.

1 The restaurant's downtown location was
2 lost to redevelopment in 1963, but four years
3 later its longtime manager, Antonio Molia, opened
4 a reduced version of the restaurant as the
5 sandwich shop at 616 New York Avenue, which is on
6 the north side of the Mount Vernon Triangle.

7 Hodges gained a reputation as a haven
8 for cops and cabbies, as they said, as well as
9 neighborhood auto repairmen and other workers who
10 had to eat lunch on the fly.

11 616 New York Avenue had been erected
12 in 1923 and served as the office of the E.J.
13 Febrey Heating Company for more than 40 years
14 before it was converted to a carry-out.

15 The building, as Kim notes, was
16 restored to the Secretary standards and it's
17 typical of the small light-industrial warehouse
18 buildings that proliferated the Mount Vernon
19 Triangle during the automotive era.

20 It has businesses opened and operated
21 by individual entrepreneurs and it exemplifies
22 the functional buildings of the working-class

1 mercantile neighborhood.

2 Its current site is only one block
3 from its original site and it reflects the
4 building's historic orientation and setting
5 facing north on some arterial street with its
6 east elevation abutting a side alley.

7 If we can see the next slide. The
8 Waffle Shop was constructed across the street
9 from Ford's Theater in 1950 as a distinctive
10 commercial building in what you might call the
11 diner moderne style.

12 Its wave-pattern tile mosaic, the
13 large neon sign and the aluminum-framed all-glass
14 front facade exposed its brightly lit and more
15 modernistic interior to the public and it
16 attracted the attention of potential customers
17 who were passing by at the higher speeds of the
18 automotive age.

19 It was built in the design of Bernard
20 Lyon Fishman Associates and it became the
21 flagship of a major local chain of restaurants
22 that were operated by Blue Bell Systems, and

1 these restaurants served the more mobile post-war
2 world's growing demand for quickly prepared,
3 affordably priced meals for people away from home
4 at mealtimes.

5 As the staff report notes, the HPRB
6 designated the building as a historic landmark in
7 2008, but in 2013 it determined it had lost
8 integrity due to material degradation, water
9 infiltration and years of neglect.

10 The HPRB allowed the building to be
11 demolished after it was recorded by detailed
12 drawings. These drawings have been used to
13 reconstruct the building in a very consistent way
14 with the historic themes that characterize the
15 mid-20th Century Mount Vernon Triangle.

16 The reconstructed building is nine
17 blocks from its original site and it reflects its
18 historic setting on a downtown commercial street
19 in a row of historic commercial buildings and
20 rowhouses.

21 Significantly, the now-demolished
22 buildings that the used car lot was on the site

1 replaced included at least one restaurant over
2 the years.

3 If we can see the next slide. During
4 the 1920s, automobile registration doubled,
5 gasoline sales quadrupled and the number of
6 service stations across the country increased
7 eight-fold.

8 In 1927, the Lord Baltimore Filling
9 Station opened on the northwest corner of the
10 intersection of 6th and K Streets, which was
11 convenient to the very heavily trafficked K
12 Street and 7th Street corridors as well as
13 traffic from the market at 6th and K.

14 As part of a branding effort, Lord
15 Baltimore Station sought to convey a very high
16 level of quality service and product through an
17 attractive, clean appearance through typical
18 station buildings constructed of white-painted
19 stucco and brick and that dismissed any
20 association with the stereotypical grimy old-time
21 garage. And usually their buildings were topped
22 by a golden-colored metal roof to catch the eye

1 of passing automobile traffic.

2 Filling Station No. 12 followed the
3 Spanish revival style and it is in this house-
4 with-canopy design.

5 With the market and arterial streets
6 just a block away, 6th and K was a great location
7 for filling stations. Several neighborhood
8 filling stations catered to the same business,
9 one of which was on the site that the Lord
10 Baltimore Station currently occupies, which is
11 diagonal and across the intersection of 6th and K
12 from its original location.

13 Our review of building permits
14 indicated that about 150 gas stations were built
15 before 1930 in the District. Of these, only
16 about a dozen survived most heavily altered to
17 the point of being unrecognizable and this
18 scarcity accentuates the historic significance of
19 Station 12, which was restored with Secretary
20 standards.

21 Interestingly when that block
22 enclosure around the canopy that Kim's and

1 Rebecca's pictures showed was stripped off, a lot
2 of original detail was found underneath,
3 including the fluted canopy columns. And so,
4 those are original.

5 Let me see the next slide. On the
6 basis of this newly available information, we
7 were able to much more thoroughly and clearly
8 document how the three houses at 917, 919 and 921
9 6th Street convey essential themes in the Mount
10 Vernon Triangle story than we were able to do in
11 2007.

12 To start with, this group of three
13 dwellings is directly associated with the socio
14 and economic forces of growth that created Mount
15 Vernon Triangle's entrepreneurial working-class
16 neighborhood and the contributions of residents
17 who included a sizable German immigrant
18 population and many whom were associated with the
19 merchant community as well as this African
20 American community.

21 We'll begin by briefly describing each
22 of the houses and then summarize what their

1 relationship is in an ensemble in days about the
2 Historic District.

3 If we could see the next slide. 921
4 6th Street is a two-story rowhouse with accents
5 of the Queen Anne style that was very fashionable
6 when it was constructed in 1886. It was built by
7 Elizabeth Killian, who was the daughter of German
8 immigrants and the widow of a German immigrant
9 restaurateur, George -- John George Killian.

10 Elizabeth herself was an entrepreneur.
11 She operated a millinery business and took in
12 borders during her marriage. A resident to the
13 downtown business district, she likely used her
14 portion of her husband's estate to construct this
15 house in the Mount Vernon Triangle with its rich
16 connections to the German-American community.

17 Her new eight-room house was designed
18 to accommodate multiple tenants in addition to
19 herself and her children. She continued to
20 support her family by renting to a constantly
21 changing group of lodgers, many of whom were
22 German immigrants or of German descent, for

1 nearly 30 years.

2 Move to the next slide. The
3 Somerville-Thomas House at 919 6th Street is the
4 oldest house in the row. It began as a framed
5 dwelling, as Kim points out, and was probably
6 constructed before the Civil War.

7 Major alterations were made to it in
8 1886 when it was expanded and a new brick front
9 was added. This new facade has many of the same
10 fashionable Queen Anne elements as the house next
11 door at 921 6th, which was constructed about the
12 same time. These include the projecting bay with
13 chamfered corners, brick corbeling and segmental
14 arches whose wood panels were carved with simple
15 decorative details.

16 The second picture shows the rear of
17 the building, which recently had a bunch of
18 siding removed, which reveals the original framed
19 wall and back bay from the original building.

20 The juxtaposition of the front and
21 rear elevations reveal the evolution of the house
22 very clearly from a basic framed structure that

1 was common to the Civil War-era neighborhood to a
2 very fashionable-styled residence of the 1880s.

3 If we can see the next slide. It
4 should be noted that as of December 2020 the
5 Somerville-Thomas house had window sashes in
6 place. These were removed during -- at some
7 point during the spring. We don't know when. We
8 didn't see any permits for it.

9 In much of the 19th Century, the house
10 was associated with the Somerville-Thomas
11 families who were prominent members of the city's
12 African American middle class. Its earliest
13 known resident was Arnold Somerville, who was
14 born in Maryland circa 1794.

15 By 1818 he was living in the District
16 of Columbia where he married Eliza Elizabeth
17 Curtis. The couple's status as freed African
18 Americans was evidenced by the legal registration
19 of their marriages, which would not have been
20 possible had they been enslaved persons.

21 The 1830 census listed Arnold
22 Somerville who worked as a laborer as the head of

1 a household of eight, quote/unquote, free colored
2 persons.

3 By the 1850s the Somervilles were
4 plainly members of the city's African American
5 property-owning middle class. Although he may
6 have owned property earlier, in 1856 Arnold
7 Somerville was assessed tax on a portion of a lot
8 in the square and for improvements in the square,
9 meaning there was a house.

10 The post-Civil War years brought
11 changes to the Somerville household. In
12 September 1867 Arnold Somerville died. The Star
13 wrote an obituary for him and described him as a
14 well-known person, a 50-year resident of
15 Washington who had lived at the corner of 6th and
16 K Streets. So, he was quite a pillar of the
17 neighborhood.

18 The 1870 census found a smaller
19 household at 919 that included Arnold
20 Somerville's daughter Elizabeth Thomas, her
21 husband Charles Thomas, and her brother Benedict
22 Somerville.

1 The household worked in a variety of
2 trades. Benedict was a plasterer while Charles
3 worked as a brick maker, a barber, but mostly did
4 restaurant work and he dealt in oysters.

5 The Somerville's middle-class status
6 was attested to by the fact that Elizabeth Thomas
7 did not work.

8 In July 1886 Elizabeth Thomas filed
9 for a permit to transform the house into a more
10 modern and fashionable structure and she invested
11 a very substantial amount of money to bring the
12 appearance of this simple frame house up to the
13 standards of the new brick rowhouses being built
14 throughout the city.

15 Over decades, street paving and
16 improvements had raised the grade of many
17 streets. She contracted for her house to be
18 raised to modern grade and likely added the cast
19 iron stoop at this time.

20 In addition to a new brick foundation,
21 the front section of the house was rebuilt in
22 brick and increased in height. And its pitched

1 roof was replaced by a flat roof, which created a
2 roofline that was common to the newly constructed
3 rowhouses of the time.

4 The back section was also to be
5 altered, but not wrecked. The new brick front
6 facade incorporated simplified form. Most of the
7 decorative details were being used on the new
8 houses like its neighbor to the north at 921,
9 which was designed by an experienced
10 architect/builder in the same year. This
11 conversion from frame to brick represented a
12 trend in the Mount Vernon Triangle.

13 The 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance map
14 shows 919 6th as a brick shell with a frame rear
15 wall and back extension. And it also showed that
16 the east side of 6th Street had six brick houses
17 as well as to go with four wooden ones.

18 Elizabeth Thomas enjoyed her
19 refurbished house for only a short time before
20 she died in November 1887. By 1891 the house had
21 been rented to Mary Smith, a widowed laundress
22 born in Virginia probably as an enslaved person.

1 May Smith rented rooms in addition to
2 providing accommodations for her large family and
3 working as a laundress.

4 In 1891 her tenants included a
5 janitor, two drivers, eight female domestic
6 workers and two breeders. So, it was a very
7 large-scale boarding house. After 25 years as
8 the Smith family residence, 919 6th fell vacant
9 in 1960 and was thereafter rented to white
10 tenants.

11 The Somerville-Thomas House
12 illustrates some very important points about
13 downtown Washington in general as well as the
14 Mount Vernon Triangle in particular.

15 Many sources included in the original
16 Mount Vernon Triangle nomination depict the
17 area's African American population as inhabiting
18 alley houses; however, in addition to the 11
19 African American households who resided on
20 Prather's Alley in the square bounded by 4th, 5th
21 K and I Streets in the Historic District, the
22 1900 census enumerated African American residents

1 living at various streetfront addresses in the
2 Historic District.

3 The same is true of the streets
4 surrounding the Historic District, which add a
5 mix of white and African American residents as
6 well.

7 Most were renters and a portion of
8 home ownership was lower for African Americans
9 than among whites; however, there were several
10 families, like the Vigle family at 424 K, the
11 Russell family at 600 K, and the West family at
12 602 K, who were African American residents who
13 owned these houses, which are long since
14 demolished.

15 919 6th Street is, thus, a unique
16 surviving example of an early streetfront
17 dwelling essentially constructed and owned by
18 African Americans. It makes it very rare and
19 really unique in the Triangle, and probably
20 within downtown, as far as we were able to
21 research.

22 If we can see the next slide. The

1 Louis Krey House, which was constructed in 1893
2 at 917 6th Street, is the tallest, the newest and
3 the most elaborately decorated building in the
4 row.

5 It has a bay front ornamented with
6 semi-circular brick arches, stone blocks that are
7 carved with acanthus leaves, bull's-eye pattern
8 bricks and corbeling in this very handsome
9 pyramidal slate roof with finials.

10 The Krey House illustrates the
11 economic diversity within the row, as well as the
12 neighborhood. The Kreys were a very prototypical
13 upper middle-class Washington family at the turn
14 of the 20th Century.

15 Louis Phillip Krey, the son of German
16 immigrants, was a prominent local business figure
17 who, in 1893, chose this location to build his
18 new house in anticipation of soon getting married
19 and starting a family.

20 Throughout his career, Krey worked
21 within a dozen blocks within a short distance to
22 the house. His major venture was a partnership,

1 which was a prominent poultry wholesale and it
2 was part of an extensive network of commission
3 merchants in the vicinity of the center market at
4 7th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

5 It seems likely that Krey also had a
6 presence, or at least business dealings, with the
7 merchants of the Northern Liberty Market, which
8 was just a block to the east of his house.

9 By the early 1900s he was quite
10 successful and prosperous and he was a well-
11 respected leader in the local business community.
12 He served on the boards of businesses, banks and
13 charities. The Krey family occupied this house
14 into the late 1940s.

15 If we see the next slide. We've been
16 talking about how each of these houses
17 individually contributes to our understanding the
18 Mount Vernon Triangle area, but let's shift our
19 focus to how they contribute to the Historic
20 District as an ensemble.

21 One of the most important things they
22 illustrate is the stability of the neighborhood

1 as well as the diverse pattern of its
2 development.

3 Working-class neighborhoods are often
4 depicted in terms of transition, change and
5 decay. The earliest owners of the surviving
6 houses in the 6th Street row all lived in their
7 houses a minimum of 29 years. They weren't
8 transient at all.

9 The Killians -- Elizabeth Killian
10 lived at 921 from 1886 until 1950. The
11 Somerville-Thomas family resided at 919 from
12 before the Civil War until 1890. And the Krey
13 family occupied 917 6th from 1895 until 1947.
14 It's a very different pattern from what we might
15 expect.

16 And although the city became more
17 segregated in the late 19th and early 20th
18 Centuries, the 900 block had a consistent number
19 of houses with African American residents and one
20 residence from the 1880 through the 1940 census.

21 In addition to the Somerville-
22 Thomases, long-tenured African American residents

1 included the Bell family, members of whom lived
2 in the now-demolished house at 909 6th Street
3 from 1900 through 1940.

4 And despite the severe unemployment
5 and economic discrimination they faced, these
6 African American householders followed the same
7 economic strategies as some of their white
8 neighbors.

9 Unlike Elizabeth Killian, Mary Smith,
10 at 919, worked. She took in -- outside the home.
11 She took in laundry. However, like Killian, both
12 Mary Smith and Priscilla Bell appear to have
13 maintained their households by taking in lodgers.
14 Their house were economic resources as well as
15 shelter.

16 Although the Smith family had departed
17 919 6th by 1920, the block still contained two
18 African American households and remained racially
19 mixed with three African American households in
20 1930 and four in 1940.

21 This row particularly establishes the
22 less well-known information about these patterns

1 of development and lifestyles of both the Mount
2 Vernon Triangle and downtown Washington in
3 general.

4 If we could see the final slide. The
5 expanded boundaries we are proposing would
6 incorporate the building elements of the Mount
7 Vernon Triangle's history that are not fully
8 expressed by its current buildings.

9 These buildings illustrate patterns of
10 social and architectural development that are not
11 really a duplication of those embodied in the
12 currently designated area.

13 The expanded Mount Vernon Triangle
14 Historic District is significant under Criteria A
15 and C of the National Register as a unique
16 remnant of a primarily working-class neighborhood
17 replete with a combination of residential,
18 commercial and light industrial buildings that
19 historically characterize this section of the
20 city.

21 The expanded district has important
22 historical associations with the city's German

1 and Italian immigrants, as well as African
2 Americans who establish themselves here and
3 contributed significantly to the building of the
4 community.

5 As the sole surviving collection of
6 buildings in what was historically a larger
7 neighborhood, the Historic District will thus
8 offer a rare glimpse into the lifestyles of
9 residents of this community.

10 The expanded boundaries also include
11 buildings which express the specific elements of
12 the District's commercial development. The
13 original designation called attention to this
14 market-oriented District's evolutionary
15 adaptation to commerce during the automotive age.

16 The Lord Baltimore Filling Station,
17 the Hodges Sandwich Shop and the Waffle Shop
18 contribute new chapters to this history that is
19 not represented in the existing district.

20 Together, these buildings provide a
21 visible contrast to the subsequent and
22 surrounding late 20th and early 20th Century

1 high-end, high-rise residential development of
2 the east end and they serve as important visual
3 reminders to the area's more modern past.

4 Today, I think we see the Mount Vernon
5 Triangle District as a very vibrant district as
6 the Office of Planning's plans back 15 years ago
7 called on.

8 It has a core of historic buildings
9 that really give it roots and weight to the newer
10 construction and we feel that these buildings in
11 the expanded district will contribute to that by
12 telling some stories that are not represented by
13 the buildings in the existing district. Pleased
14 to answer any questions.

15 CHAIR HEATH: Great. Thank you for
16 your presentation. Before we take questions,
17 unless anyone has burning questions they want to
18 have answered right away, we will hear from the
19 owner.

20 Is the property owner ready to make
21 your presentation?

22 MS. BATTIES: Good morning, Madam Chair

1 and members of the Board. Can you hear me okay?

2 CHAIR HEATH: Yes, we can. Good
3 morning.

4 MS. BATTIES: Good morning. I'm Leila
5 Batties with the law firm of Holland & Knight and
6 serve as counsel to 921 6th Street, LLC, which is
7 the owner of the three buildings located at 917,
8 919 and 921 6th Street, N.W.

9 Also representing the owner this
10 morning, and we're all together in the same room,
11 are Emily Eig and Alyssa Stein of Traceries, and
12 Adam Rush, a structural engineer with Simpson,
13 Gumpertz & Heger.

14 Mr. Henok Tesfaye, the principal of
15 921 6th Street, LLC, will speak on behalf of the
16 ownership entity after my opening remarks.

17 921 6th Street, LLC, opposes the
18 Board's approval of Case No. 20-11 seeking to
19 expand the Mount Vernon Historic District, and
20 Case No. 20-12 proposing to landmark their
21 buildings on 6th Street.

22 In 2005, this board determined that

1 the 6th Street buildings should not be included
2 in the Mount Vernon Historic -- Triangle Historic
3 District and did not warrant landmark status.

4 Now, 15 years later under the same set
5 of criteria and with the same relevant facts as
6 to the history of the buildings, the Board is
7 being asked to change its position.

8 Regarding the extension of the
9 Historic District, it is now argued that by
10 virtue of the relocation of three buildings onto
11 K Street, the 6th Street structures are no longer
12 isolated from the historic core and, therefore,
13 should be included in the Mount Vernon Triangle
14 Historic District, but this infill approach is
15 problematic in that it relies on three ill-
16 situated structures that were only recently
17 relocated to this corner of K and 6th Streets and
18 have no meaningful relationship to the
19 significance established for the Historic
20 District.

21 In fact, the Waffle Shop was relocated
22 from F and 10th Street, which is several blocks

1 outside of the Mount Vernon Triangle District and
2 it was delisted as a historic landmark. The gas
3 station and Hodges Sandwich Shop were not
4 significant enough to be preserved in their
5 original locations.

6 Also, the three relocated structures
7 are now technically a single building by virtue
8 of a newly constructed two-story wing that is
9 historically inaccurate, nonsensical in its
10 relation to the Historic District, and
11 unsympathetic to the architectural design and
12 scale of the 6th Street buildings.

13 In her presentation, Emily Eig will
14 discuss, in detail, why this artificial cluster
15 of structures along K Street fails to meet the
16 criteria for the expansion of the Mount Vernon
17 Triangle Historic District.

18 The landmark application relies on,
19 quote/unquote, new information about the
20 Somerville family, specifically the status as
21 freed black property owners of 919 6th Street.

22 Mr. Tesfaye and the other partners in

1 the ownership entity are black and appreciate the
2 Somerville status of freed blacks and the
3 diversity of the black experience in the Mount
4 Vernon Triangle neighborhood.

5 As an acknowledgment, the owner is
6 willing to commission and exhaust this historic
7 documentation of the building.

8 Notwithstanding, the owner agrees with
9 the staff report, which concludes that the 6th
10 Street buildings do not meet the criteria for
11 designation as historic landmarks.

12 Notably, all of the buildings are in
13 poor condition and the one in the worst condition
14 is 919 6th Street, the one owned by the
15 Somerville family.

16 Emily Eig and Adam Rush will discuss
17 these aspects of the landmark application in more
18 detail during their statement.

19 Mr. Rush's findings conclude that the
20 amount of work required to stabilize and restore
21 the buildings would constitute a demolition under
22 the Historic Preservation regulations.

1 Before concluding my opening remarks,
2 I just note that the owner purchased the property
3 in August of 2020 and filed a demolition permit
4 in October of 2020.

5 In doing his due diligence prior to
6 the purchase, the owner learned of the Board's
7 2005 decision to limit the boundary of the Mount
8 Vernon Historic District to exclude the 6th
9 Street buildings and to deny the landmark
10 designation for those buildings.

11 There are no agreements in the land
12 records related to the preservation of these
13 buildings. There have not been any notable
14 changes to the Historic District, the history of
15 the 6th Street properties or the criteria for
16 evaluating these applications.

17 For these reasons, the owner had no
18 reason to believe that pursuing the redevelopment
19 of the properties would trigger the resubmission
20 of these applications by the applicant especially
21 given no outreach by the applicant to the owner
22 or input by the affected ANC.

1 In fact, the owner was reasonable in
2 thinking that it could proceed with new
3 construction on the site given the new
4 construction permitted adjacent to 921 6th Street
5 to create the connection for the relocated
6 clusters of structures.

7 In light of the foregoing, which will
8 be supported by the information presented by
9 Emily Eig and Adam Rush, we urge the Board to
10 deny both the application for the expansion of
11 the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District and
12 the application for the landmark designation of
13 917, 919 and 921 6th Street.

14 This concludes my opening remarks.
15 I'm now going to turn the presentation over to
16 Mr. Tesfaye. And after he gives his remarks,
17 Emily Eig will follow. Thank you.

18 MR. TESFAYE: Thank you, Leila. Good
19 morning. Good morning, members of the Historic
20 Preservation Board. My name is Henok Tesfaye.
21 I'm the core owner of the subject property, 917,
22 919, 921 6th Street, N.W.

1 I'm a minority African American
2 developer in the District of Columbia and I'm
3 proud to have the opportunity to have a minority-
4 owned development in a downtown area of the
5 District of Columbia.

6 In considering this development
7 opportunity, we looked at the sites that were
8 section sites that we could move forward with the
9 project with the requirements of any District of
10 Columbia subsidy.

11 We found the property at 917, 919 and
12 921 6th Street fits the criteria, as well as
13 would allow for a development to proceed, and
14 that the default are zoned as matter-of-right
15 without any requirement to go to the Board of
16 Zoning Adjustment for any other approvals. It
17 was perfect project for us.

18 As a part of our due diligence, we
19 were made aware of an application for historic
20 designation that was denied in 2005 by the
21 Historic Preservation Review Board. Therefore,
22 we were encouraged to move forward and have

1 acquired the property.

2 After we acquired the property, the
3 two applications for designation that are before
4 you today were filed and thereby halted our
5 development program in its tracks. As a minority
6 developer, we were shocked at the circumstances
7 and what this has done to us.

8 Beyond the matter of an individual
9 landmark designation, we are befuddled by notion
10 of that our three buildings should be included in
11 the Historic District merely because of some of
12 new established physical connection and
13 manufactured through relocation of the buildings
14 from other parts of the city.

15 We see nothing in the public record
16 that would indicate an agreement, including this
17 relocated building as a part of an expanded
18 Historic District let alone to include a building
19 we have acquired.

20 This discussion about action that the
21 public has no knowledge of or any input in or
22 even review board until the very day has an input

1 in and it's also unfair. The property owners are
2 just wishing to proceed with development of
3 properties in the District of Columbia.

4 The Review Board should not contest
5 this type of action. I certainly hope you
6 members of the Review Board would take us serious
7 the fact that circumstances of this case and deny
8 both proposed expansion of the Historic District
9 and the landmark application. Thank you.

10 MS. EIG: Good morning. I am Emily
11 Eig and I would like -- could you change the
12 slide for me, please.

13 Good morning, Chairman Heath and
14 members of the Board. My testimony this morning
15 on behalf of the owners of 917, 919 and 921 6th
16 Street is in opposition to the proposal to expand
17 the Mount Vernon Triangle historic District. I
18 will speak later about the landmarks.

19 Our opposition is not based on whether
20 the buildings hold significance, but rather the
21 unorthodox rationale for expansion that seeks to
22 use the significance of unrelated relocated

1 buildings as a justification for this expansion.

2 Would you change the slide? This
3 approach to expansion is inappropriate both
4 logically and procedurally. These buildings have
5 been provided with a false setting and present a
6 false association and it is precisely for these
7 reasons that the National Register does not
8 accept this approach as grounds for listing.

9 Next slide, please. Next slide,
10 please. Let me explain. There are certain
11 resources that, by their nature, such as
12 cemeteries, graves, moved buildings,
13 reconstructed buildings and buildings less than
14 50 years old, do not typically meet the
15 designation standard set forth by the National
16 Register.

17 For resources integral to the District
18 or it is exceptional and extraordinary, it can be
19 designated as falling within one of the seven
20 criteria considerations.

21 Next slide, please. One such
22 designation, Criteria Consideration B, relates to

1 a building or structure that has been removed
2 from its original location.

3 In explanation of what resources
4 qualify for designation under this criteria
5 consideration, the National Register specifically
6 opines on artificially created groupings.

7 As stated in the bulletin, an
8 artificially created grouping of buildings,
9 structures or objects in -- is not eligible
10 unless it has achieved significance since the
11 time of its assemblage. It cannot be considered
12 as a reflection of the time period when the
13 individual buildings were constructed.

14 For example, a group of moved historic
15 buildings whose creation marked the beginning of
16 a major concern with past lifestyles can qualify
17 as an illustration of that generation's values
18 such as Williamsburg.

19 However, a rural district composed of
20 a farmhouse on its original site and a grouping
21 of historic barns recently moved onto the
22 property is not eligible.

1 Let me reiterate. The idea behind
2 this criteria consideration, artificial groupings
3 are not eligible unless the grouping has achieved
4 significance at the time of the assemblage -- in
5 this case, 2016 to 2020 -- not the period of
6 their original construction.

7 In such a case as we have now, it
8 would be significant as an assemblage, but not as
9 contributing resources to the Mount Vernon
10 Triangle Historic District.

11 I am not going to go into the
12 inappropriateness of the proposed change to the
13 period of significance, but it clearly relates
14 directly to this criteria consideration.

15 Next slide, please. The three
16 buildings now located on the northern part of 484
17 were relocated to the current sites over the
18 course of the last five years, give or take, from
19 three separate sites around the city, two of
20 which were located within the Mount Vernon
21 Triangle multiple property document boundary, but
22 not the Historic District, and one from the

1 downtown historic district.

2 The two buildings within the larger
3 Mount Vernon Triangle multiple property document
4 boundary were moved to make room for a large new
5 construction project.

6 The Waffle Shop, which was located
7 within downtown historic district, was also moved
8 to allow for new construction. These three
9 historically associated buildings are now linked
10 together using a contemporary structure as
11 nonassociated buildings.

12 When the Mount Vernon Triangle was
13 designated in 2005, the decision was made to
14 restrict the boundary of this historic district
15 to a small concentration of buildings along 5th
16 and K Street, 4th and I.

17 This boundary was drawn to include the
18 largest and most cohesive cluster of historic
19 resources within the larger Mount Vernon Triangle
20 area.

21 These resources were found to all
22 relate to one another historically and physically

1 and through their juxtaposition to illustrate the
2 multi-layered, mixed-use residential, commercial,
3 industrial history of Mount Vernon Triangle area.

4 The resources now considered for
5 inclusion within the boundaries were actively
6 excluded from the Historic District boundaries.
7 The reasons for this exclusion remain valid.

8 It is important to mention that in
9 2018 in order to make room for these buildings, a
10 1928 gas station building was demolished. Yes,
11 it had replaced buildings from the 19th Century
12 just as the Lord Baltimore Station had.

13 The Lord Baltimore Station was
14 excluded in 2005 from the boundaries and the 1928
15 gas station building was removed. It was not a
16 vacant lot. It was a portion of a building that
17 had -- parts of it had been removed similar to
18 the Lord Baltimore Gas Station.

19 The staff report, if I could change
20 the slide now, also encourages the Board to
21 revise the nomination to address Criteria
22 Consideration E, reconstructed buildings.

1 In explaining how resources can be
2 eligible under Criteria Consideration E, the
3 National Register states that, quote, a
4 reconstructed property is eligible when it is
5 accurately executed in a suitable environment and
6 presented in a dignified manner and when no other
7 building structures with the same association has
8 survived. All must be true for designation, end
9 quote. They define "suitable environment" as
10 that the reconstructed property must be located
11 on the same site as the original building.

12 Next slide, please. This criteria
13 consideration relates directly to both the Lord
14 Baltimore Gasoline Station and the Waffle Shop.
15 The reconstruction of neither building was
16 presented to HPRB for review, nor was it
17 required. They were both outside when they were
18 moved to this site outside the Historic District.

19 The history of the Waffle Shop makes
20 this point most vividly. It was individually
21 designated in 2008 and, as noted in the staff
22 report, delisted due to loss of integrity in

1 2013.

2 As the amendment nomination recounts,
3 the owner of the Waffle Shop relocated and
4 reconstructed the building to Square 44 as part
5 of negotiations between preservation groups and
6 the DC HPO.

7 This effort made to preserve these
8 buildings through relocation and reconstruction
9 is to be commended, but not be judged for what it
10 is, an artificial grouping that has been
11 connected to the three townhouses along 6th
12 Street via a new construction.

13 Next slide. I urge you to take a
14 close look at this corner and the buildings which
15 are proposed for inclusion in the Historic
16 District.

17 The issue is not that these buildings
18 have been moved, nor that they were
19 reconstructed. The issue is that they're being
20 touted as contributing to an understanding of the
21 significance of the Mount Vernon Triangle
22 Historic District when, in fact, they represent a

1 false historic association, one that, as the
2 staff states, may baffle the public.

3 Their significance as an assemblage,
4 according to a restoration master plan, the
5 National Register would recommend as a period of
6 significance relating to the date of that
7 assemblage circa 2016 to 2020.

8 Let me repeat that. That the
9 restoration master plan dates are what are
10 important in the designation, not the dates of
11 the individual buildings.

12 Further, they are -- these buildings
13 are being used to create an artificial connection
14 between the designated Historic District to three
15 extant 19th-Century houses on 6th Street.

16 The relationship and the association
17 established by the relocation is in conflict with
18 the standards as laid out by the National
19 Register.

20 This is important because although the
21 D.C. criteria is independent of the National
22 Register, designation of D.C. historic districts,

1 unlike landmarks, is tied closely to the
2 standards of the National Register.

3 Mount Vernon Triangle is known to be
4 one, if not the least cohesive, historic
5 districts in our city. This was the case in 2005
6 when it was designated. Nothing proposed today
7 will correct that. In fact, to expand this
8 proposal only diminishes the District's integrity
9 still further.

10 To conclude, this effort is well-
11 meaning and we appreciate, even applaud, saving
12 these buildings, and we consider that they be
13 considered as an assemblage with a date relating
14 to that assemblage, but determining them to be
15 contributing resources to the Mount Vernon
16 Triangle Historic District is not only
17 unnecessary, but is inappropriate and should not
18 be supported. I urge you to vote against the
19 expansion. Thank you.

20 CHAIR HEATH: Thank you. Does the
21 applicant have anybody else who is going to
22 present or does that conclude your presentations?

1 MS. BATTIES: We have our structural
2 engineer here --

3 CHAIR HEATH: Okay.

4 MS. BATTIES: -- to speak to the
5 landmark application.

6 CHAIR HEATH: Okay.

7 MS. BATTIES: I don't know if you want
8 to hear him now or you want to take that up --

9 CHAIR HEATH: Sure. We can hear from
10 him now.

11 MS. BATTIES: Is staff going to do a
12 separate presentation on the designation or -- I
13 mean or the applicant. I'm sorry.

14 CHAIR HEATH: I believe staff intends
15 to -- has, you know, similar to what the
16 applicant and you have done, they're sort of
17 combining their report. Staff will come back
18 afterwards with a conclusion to their report.

19 MS. BATTIES: Okay. So, what we'll do
20 now is the way the applicant has done, Emily is
21 going to speak to -- specifically to the landmark
22 application or designation, and then Adam Rush

1 will also provide some testimony on this
2 specifically related to the landmark case.

3 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Thank you.

4 MS. EIG: Thank you. Emily Eig again.
5 We agree with the staff's recommendation that the
6 dwellings at 917, -19 and 921 6th Street should
7 not be designated as a landmark neither as a
8 group nor individually.

9 The historical narrative that has been
10 augmented, we appreciate, of course, that the
11 applicant provided such a rich and thorough
12 history of the occupants for each of the
13 rowhouses.

14 While the story is more detailed than
15 it was before, there has not been substantially
16 new information presented that would warrant
17 designation at this time.

18 Next slide, please. The applicant
19 argues that these buildings are significant under
20 National Register Criteria A, which addresses
21 significance related to broad patterns of
22 history.

1 On a local level, the associated D.C.
2 Criterion D recognizes significance for, quote,
3 an association with historical periods, social
4 movements and patterns of growth that contribute
5 to historic development -- heritage and
6 development of the District, the key word being
7 "significant."

8 These patterns of growth include the
9 development of 19th-Century middle to lower
10 middle-class neighborhoods with both white and
11 African American householders.

12 Next slide, please. The applicant is
13 correct. The three townhouses -- rowhouses as
14 they were individually built -- are examples of a
15 development pattern; however, they are in no way
16 unique and instead are examples of 19th-Century
17 residential patterns of the larger Mount Vernon
18 Triangle neighborhood.

19 Perhaps the only new finding is that
20 based on the 1855 tax records 919 is documented
21 as having been owned by a freed family. The
22 extant structure, however, does not tell the

1 story of the important pre-Civil War history, but
2 what is expressed is the result of an alteration
3 made in 1886, more than 30 years later.

4 There is information to be derived,
5 but that information can be derived through
6 documentation rather than designation.

7 Further, the Somerville-Thomas House
8 is not the only example of African American
9 ownership in the neighborhood, albeit it might be
10 the earliest, but by 1900 at least a dozen
11 African Americans owned property in the
12 neighborhood.

13 Next slide, please. Designation under
14 National Register Criterion C and D.C. Criterion
15 D, E and F, because they, quote, embody the
16 distinctive characteristics of types, periods,
17 style and method of construction, are being
18 discussed here.

19 The buildings' architectural character
20 has not substantially changed since 2005 and,
21 thus, the rationale presented against designation
22 remains true.

1 As stated in the 2005 report, quote,
2 all three of the buildings, 917, 919, 921,
3 reflect a vernacular Queen Anne style of
4 architecture that is representative of dwelling
5 forms of the period and within Mount Vernon
6 Triangle. The buildings all share character-
7 defining features of the style, including
8 projecting bays, elaborately corbeled cornices.
9 In addition, the houses were all built
10 individually rather than as part of a long row, a
11 defining element of the residential building
12 forms of the working-class Mount Vernon Triangle.

13 However, according to the National
14 Register Bulletin, How to Apply National Register
15 Criteria, a property is not eligible if it does
16 not express aesthetic ideals or design concepts
17 more fully than other properties of its type.

18 This coincides with the current intent
19 of the D.C. law, which is to recognize and
20 protect particular examples of styles and types
21 rather than any or all examples.

22 Washington, D.C., is characterized by

1 its rowhouse neighborhoods, many of which are
2 more fully and elaborately decorative and
3 illustrate the vernacular Queen Anne style of
4 architecture.

5 This group of three dwellings,
6 although no longer so common in Mount Vernon
7 Triangle area, is not exceptional from a citywide
8 perspective.

9 Next slide. The staff report
10 specifically opines on the significance of 919
11 6th Street. I quote, 919 6th Street's importance
12 as a framed structure come brick one staff again
13 was guided by the National Register Bulletin, How
14 to Apply National Register Criteria, that states
15 -- and I quote from the Register from the staff
16 report: A structure is eligible as a specimen of
17 its type or period of construction if it is an
18 important example within its context of building
19 practices of a particular time in history, end
20 quote, but continuing the staff report, the
21 bulletin further notes that it, quote the
22 Register, a property is not eligible simply

1 because it is identified as the only such
2 property ever fabricated. It must be
3 demonstrated to be significant as well, end
4 quote.

5 Continuing the report: In the case of
6 919 6th Street, it is indeed the only known
7 surviving example in Mount Vernon Triangle of an
8 antebellum frame house being converted into a
9 Victorian brick one; however, the character-
10 defining features of the frame house, that is the
11 steeply pitched gable roof, were removed and
12 little evidence of the frame structure remains
13 visible. The house reads as an 1880s vernacular
14 Victorian house and is, thus, not a particularly
15 illustrative example of this transition from
16 frame to brick. And that is the end of the staff
17 report quote.

18 I will go on. It's also important to
19 note that as part of the 1886 alteration that
20 transformed the house from a two-story frame to a
21 three-story brick house, the building was raised
22 from two to three stories and was placed on a

1 brick foundation.

2 Other change that took place over the
3 course of the 20th Century are not fully
4 documented; however, most of the interior
5 historic fabric has been stripped to accommodate
6 its most recent use as offices.

7 Next slide. Architecture of these
8 houses is reflected of a broader trend in
9 residential development in the Mount Vernon
10 Triangle area and throughout the city as large.
11 These specific buildings are not the sites of
12 important events that contribute to our
13 understanding of the history of D.C. or the
14 nation.

15 Although 917, 919 and 921 6th Street
16 were designed and built/rebuilt during the late
17 19th Century as typical single-family rowhouses
18 with minimal detailing, they are not necessarily
19 earlier notable examples of Queen Anne or
20 Romanesque revival styles and, thus, do not
21 appear to rise to the level of significance
22 necessary to be eligible for individual listing.

1 Additionally, the buildings are not
2 eligible under Criterion C as works of a master.
3 917 6th Street was designed by John Henderson,
4 Jr., with minimal Queen Anne and Romanesque
5 stylistic elements. Though Henderson designed
6 various residences and buildings in the city,
7 some of which were highly designed for notable
8 Washingtonians, he was not particularly prominent
9 either nationally or locally.

10 Further, 917 6th Street does not rise
11 to the same level of architectural significance
12 as the mansions he designed.

13 921 6th Street was designed by John G.
14 Meyers as a relatively simple Queen Anne-style
15 rowhouse. Although Meyers was an architect of
16 note and designed many attached and freestanding
17 residents throughout the district, some of which
18 are landmarks, 921 6th Street is not a
19 significant example of his work.

20 Next slide. Beyond significance and
21 historic integrity of design, materials,
22 workmanship, we must also acknowledge the other

1 aspects of integrity, location, setting, feeling
2 and association. The setting has been
3 diminished, as we have seen in many slides today.

4 The next slide. While these buildings
5 retain sufficient historic integrity, they are
6 all suffering from the loss of structural
7 integrity. Adam Rush, structural engineer with
8 SGH, will discuss condition of the buildings in
9 more detail.

10 We will see that the reality of the
11 condition of all three buildings is so poor as to
12 make it impossible to retain the buildings
13 without historic -- losing their historic
14 integrity. The work needed to stabilize and
15 repair them is so great that it would result in
16 the loss of that historic integrity.

17 Last slide, please. In conclusion, we
18 agree with the staff report and are opposed to
19 individual designation. Now, I will hand the
20 screen over to Adam.

21 MR. RUSH: Good morning, everyone.

22 Next slide. My name is Adam Rush. I'm a

1 structural engineer with Simpson, Gumpertz &
2 Heger.

3 I've been in the D.C. area for the
4 past nine years and I have extensive experience
5 with historic preservation and renovations of
6 existing structures. Particularly relevant are
7 renovations of existing rowhouses.

8 I have also given testimony to this
9 board in the past. So, this is my second time.
10 And thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

11 Next slide, please. So, before
12 getting into the conditions of the existing
13 structures, I want to talk about what the
14 existing structures are and how they are very
15 common compared with other rowhouses in the area.

16 So, the typical framing layout
17 consists of wood joists and decking, framing
18 between party walls. We'll call the north and
19 south walls "party walls" even though they are
20 each individual buildings. I think for common
21 rowhouse nomenclature it works pretty well to
22 discuss the orientation of the framing.

1 So, the party walls and existing walls
2 are brick walls, load-bearing down to spread-
3 footing foundations, presumably. And these
4 buildings also contain an interior wood load-
5 bearing stud wall along the interior hallways to
6 help support the joist that's framed from
7 exterior wall to exterior wall.

8 These interior wood stud walls vary
9 slightly as they continue the load-bearing line
10 into the basement.

11 In building 921, the wood wall
12 continues into the basement and is supported on
13 the existing slab on grade.

14 In 919, the wall is supported by an
15 existing wood transfer girder that's supported by
16 steel-showing posts. In 917, that wall is
17 supported by brick piers and a wood transfer
18 girder as well.

19 Next slide, please. So, I visited
20 these properties Monday and Tuesday of this week,
21 the 21st and 22nd, and the following photos will
22 help illustrate the existing conditions observed.

1 And I will offer my opinion based on these
2 observations and my experience with similar
3 buildings as to the condition and what we think -
4 - what I think would need to occur to -- for
5 these buildings.

6 So, starting with 917, in the basement
7 we see clear signs of water infiltration and
8 deterioration of existing floor framing, as you
9 can see in the photos in the upper right and
10 lower right.

11 We also see the brick piers and the
12 original transfer girder that I discussed just a
13 second ago in the photo in the lower left-hand
14 corner, and that transfer girder, as you can see,
15 has signs of mold growth on it as well.

16 Next slide. As we go up the building,
17 a lot of the interior partition walls and load-
18 bearing walls also have evidence of mold growth
19 or substantial mold growth on them and signs of
20 continued water infiltration.

21 And if you look at the upper -- the
22 photo in the upper left, you can see water

1 staining of the floor decking. And when walking
2 across that area, that floor is very soft, which
3 is a pretty common condition throughout all these
4 buildings.

5 You can also see in various areas
6 where the existing ceiling finishes have
7 collapsed and have fallen, the underside of the
8 upper floor and roof framing and signs of
9 deterioration there as well.

10 I'd like to direct your attention to
11 a unique condition at this building where there
12 is a transfer girder, a steel beam aligned with
13 the third-floor framing to support a brick wall
14 that extends up to the roof.

15 And if you look at the upper right-
16 hand photo, it's kind of difficult to see. Space
17 is limited, so it's hard to get a good photo.

18 The beam in question has signs of
19 rusting and deterioration and the brick that this
20 beam supports is covered with ivy. So, we could
21 not really look at it.

22 However, given that it has continued

1 exposure to moisture and water infiltration, my
2 experience with these conditions lead me to
3 believe that removing or strengthening this beam
4 would be required to continue to stabilize the
5 structure.

6 Next slide. So, moving on to 919,
7 this building is really in the worst condition of
8 the three on site. We're going to talk about the
9 facade first and the conditions we observed
10 there.

11 At the western facade, the front along
12 6th Street, we see a crack at the bay window and
13 there are also signs of continuous repairs at
14 that corner that lead me to believe that there's
15 been a continued problem for this building for a
16 long time and that this building is going to
17 continue to deteriorate at that location.
18 There's more intervention needed to stabilize
19 that facade than simply enclosing the building.

20 The rear facade at this structure is
21 wood construction, as had been discussed
22 previously. It is the only building of the three

1 with exterior wood stud walls. And these wood
2 stud walls have had prolonged exposure to
3 moisture and the environment.

4 And where there are studs exposed, we
5 can see severe loss of section at some of those
6 studs and severe deterioration of the sill
7 plates.

8 Now, I'd also like to draw your
9 attention to what I call the "south party wall."
10 It's the brick wall between 919 and 917. This
11 wall is eight inches thick -- so it's about two
12 thick -- and extends three stories above grade.
13 The little things for a load-bearing wall
14 extending that high. And it has signs of
15 continued distress and it is currently leaning
16 out away from the building.

17 There are star anchors to tie the wall
18 back to the floor framing. In a few locations
19 those anchors have become loose and are no longer
20 restraining that wall to the floor frame.

21 Next slide. Moving on to the interior
22 of the building, again we see signs of

1 significant water infiltration throughout the
2 building and we also, in this building
3 particularly, we see significant floor
4 deflections.

5 If you look at the door opening in the
6 upper right-hand photo, you can see the extent
7 that the trim has been modified to kind of -- to
8 level, so to speak, the opening and make it look
9 nice.

10 Looking into the basement we see that
11 wood transfer girder supported by the shoring
12 post, as shown in the photo on the left, bottom
13 left-hand corner, and this girder appears to be
14 failing and crushing at these posts as evident
15 with the top of the post pushing up into the
16 girder itself.

17 This is not a stable condition. It
18 would need to be modified in order to -- yeah, it
19 needs to be addressed.

20 Next slide. Again, moving on
21 throughout the building and to the upper floors,
22 we see signs of water infiltration again and mold

1 growth and deterioration. The floor decking is
2 soft pretty much everywhere where you walk and I
3 actually -- I actually did not feel comfortable
4 walking on -- up to the third floor.

5 As we know from the previous statement
6 -- from the previous discussions of the
7 structure, the -- a floor was added when the
8 building was lifted and the brick facade was put
9 on, and the stairs leading up to that third floor
10 were too precarious, for my taste, to walk up.

11 Now, I did observe the roof framing
12 from the ground floor. It is exposed and there
13 between the decking --

14 (Simultaneous speaking.)

15 CHAIR HEATH: Adam, if I could just
16 stop you for one second, this is the Chair. I
17 just want to point out that if we do designate
18 these buildings, we're not talking about
19 designating the interior.

20 So, in the interest of time, it
21 probably doesn't make sense for you to get into a
22 whole lot of detail about the interior condition.

1 MR. RUSH: Okay. Fair enough. So,
2 there's a lot of effort needed to keep these
3 buildings stable.

4 So, moving on to the next slide, same
5 conditions we see at 6th Street. We see a lot of
6 deterioration of the floor framing and a lot of
7 water infiltration.

8 Next slide. Next slide, please. And
9 pretty much the same story throughout this
10 building as well.

11 And so, moving on to the last slide of
12 my presentation -- next slide. So, based on my
13 observations and experience with these kinds of
14 structures, I believe that the following is --
15 would be required in order to stabilize these
16 buildings.

17 And that is, likely complete
18 replacement of all the roof decking, roof
19 framing, 100 percent replacement of floor
20 decking. There are a few floor framing joists
21 that were observed that may be salvageable. The
22 exterior walls need to be completely rebuilt and

1 then the basement girders in 917 and 919 need to
2 be stabilized as well.

3 And then for likely repairs to
4 exterior walls, the south wall, that party wall
5 for 919, we recommend a full reconstruction due
6 to its current lateral movement. We don't want
7 it to remain in its precarious location for
8 stability concerns.

9 And then repointing of the majority of
10 the brick exterior walls, back repairs and a few
11 lintel and arch reconstructions would be needed
12 for those exterior walls as well.

13 And then on the back of 917, again I
14 noted the steel transfer girder at the third
15 floor would need to be strengthened or replaced.

16 And so, you know, my thought on this
17 when looking at it is that the amount of work
18 required to stabilize and restore these buildings
19 would constitute a demolition as defined by
20 Chapter 3 of the D.C. Historic Preservation
21 regulations.

22 And I believe Emily -- next slide,

1 please. Emily or Alyssa, I don't know if you
2 wanted to speak more towards these regulations.

3 MS. BATTIES: Madam Chair, so on the
4 slide is the regulations, but that concludes the
5 presentation of the owner at this time.

6 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Great. Thank you
7 all for your presentation. We'll turn back to
8 Kim to conclude the staff report.

9 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you. So to
10 circle back to the landmark application and
11 Historic District recommendation, HPO finds that
12 the three dwellings and their histories on 6th
13 Street are closely associated with the
14 development of Mount Vernon Triangle and they
15 would contribute to an expanded Historic
16 District.

17 HPO does not believe that the three
18 properties together meet the designation criteria
19 for listing as a historic landmark.

20 Under National Register Criterion A
21 and D.C. Designation Criterion B, the three
22 buildings are associated with 19th-Century

1 residential development patterns and the
2 socioeconomic history of Mount Vernon Triangle;
3 however, the properties are not associated with
4 any particular pivotal event, activity or person
5 that characterizes that development.

6 The dwellings at 917 and 919 6th
7 Street served as residences to members of the
8 German-American community who worked, lived and
9 built their houses there and, thus, contributed
10 to the growth of Mount Vernon Triangle, but the
11 houses were not the scenes of a particular event
12 or significant activity marking important
13 associations with the German-American or merchant
14 community.

15 The early pre-Civil War freed black
16 ownership of the house at 919 6th Street is more
17 notable. No complete study of houses built or
18 owned by freed blacks before the Civil War has
19 been compiled in D.C., but is most assuredly one
20 of a small collection and even smaller surviving
21 collection in -- citywide and tells an important
22 story.

1 The 1887 upgrade of the house from a
2 frame to a brick one illustrates the family's
3 growing prosperity and contributes to our
4 understanding of the racial character of the
5 neighborhood throughout the 19th Century.

6 The story is part of the broader
7 history of Mount Vernon Triangle and it
8 contributes more to the neighborhood history than
9 to the story of this smaller grouping. The
10 significance of the building is independent from
11 the two houses on either side of it.

12 In terms of National Register
13 Criterion C and D.C. Designation Criteria D, E
14 and F, all three of the buildings, 917, 919 and
15 921, reflect the vernacular Queen Anne style of
16 architecture that's representative of the
17 dwelling forms of the period and within the Mount
18 Vernon Triangle area.

19 The buildings all share character-
20 defining features of the style, including
21 projecting bays and decorative brickwork and, as
22 noted in the nomination, embody distinctive

1 characteristics of the type, period or method of
2 construction.

3 In the case where properties represent
4 a significant and distinguishable entity whose
5 confidence may lack individual distinction,
6 however, the properties are not individually
7 eligible, but more appropriately part of the
8 District.

9 In terms of 919 6th Street's
10 importance to the frame structure come brick one,
11 HPO believes that the character-defining features
12 of the frame house, namely its steeply pitched
13 roof, were removed and little valuable evidence
14 of the frame structure remains visible except at
15 the rear.

16 The house essentially reads as an
17 1880s vernacular Victorian House and so is not
18 particularly illustrative of this transition from
19 frame to brick.

20 So, HPO does not recommend the
21 dwellings for landmark designation as a
22 collection; however, the buildings do contribute

1 to the history and architecture of Mount Vernon
2 Triangle and HPO believes that they should be
3 considered within that broader context as
4 contributing buildings within that expanded
5 historic district.

6 And I do have some comments on the
7 Historic District and the period of significance,
8 but I think, you know, if you have questions
9 about it, I can answer them.

10 So, I'll just pass it back to you at
11 this point. I'm sure you all have many
12 questions.

13 CHAIR HEATH: Yes. Yes. I'm sure.
14 I'm going to start with one that, you know,
15 really sort of speaks to what Emily Eig argued in
16 her statement and the fact that these buildings
17 that are now contributing to the three rowhouses
18 being contiguous to the Historic -- the existing
19 Historic District were relocated, some from areas
20 outside of this neighborhood, all from areas
21 outside of the Historic District, but that this
22 is, you know, what she called an artificially

1 created grouping is now changing the argument
2 that the previous board made for not -- that is
3 not including these three buildings within the
4 Historic District.

5 The Board previously found that the
6 story of the Historic District was complete
7 without those three buildings, so how do you --
8 what would be your rebuttal or commentary on the
9 idea of these -- this artificial grouping as now
10 creating a different circumstance?

11 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I mean, obviously
12 it's not an ideal situation. This was, you know,
13 a not vacant lot, but open lot, more or less.
14 And the reason that the 6th Street buildings were
15 not included in the original Historic District
16 boundaries is because there was that separation
17 from the tighter collection of 24 buildings.

18 It was a visual separation. There was
19 never any doubt that those three buildings
20 contributed to the social history of Mount Vernon
21 Triangle.

22 And so, it was really that

1 consideration and, yes, we do believe that that
2 situation has changed because the moved buildings
3 were located in Mount Vernon Triangle minus the
4 Waffle Shop, obviously, but Hodges and Lord
5 Baltimore were only moved a block or so away from
6 their original sites.

7 We did this as part of a larger
8 planning effort to preserve as many historic
9 buildings as possible in this redeveloping area
10 and they retain their same orientation and -- as
11 much as possible, their same orientation as they
12 did on their original sites.

13 And so, it was -- it's an effort to
14 retain as many historic buildings in the Mount
15 Vernon Triangle area, which was recognized under
16 the multiple property document as having
17 significance in its entirety, but that, you know,
18 the designation of properties was limited to
19 those -- to that historic district and those
20 individual landmarks.

21 So, it is sort of an artificial
22 grouping, for sure, but a lot of time and effort

1 and attention by the SHPO and HPO went into the
2 preservation of these buildings and, I think,
3 ultimately they do provide the connection
4 visually from the existing historic district to
5 the 6th Street buildings.

6 And I would just -- this is not a
7 National Register or a D.C. Criteria
8 consideration, but just walking down to Mount
9 Vernon Triangle it is those historic buildings
10 that give this new development a soul and give it
11 character, human scale and a vibrancy that would
12 be lacking if these buildings were not preserved
13 -- not these three, I'm saying all historic
14 buildings were preserved either as part of the
15 Historic District or as landmarks.

16 And we have worked hard to save these
17 buildings and we would like to see their
18 protection in the future. And that can be done
19 through this expansion of the Historic District,
20 which, you know, it may not meet Criteria B and E
21 -- Criteria Considerations B and E.

22 I don't think the application did a

1 great job of showing how it does meet B and E.
2 It -- and that's why I recommend in the staff
3 report that we revise the nomination to really
4 examine that, but we're going to give it a shot,
5 you know.

6 We will look at the National Register
7 guidelines. They are guidelines and we will look
8 at them, we will use them, and we will give it a
9 shot and we'll send it -- our intention is to
10 forward it to the National Register. If the
11 National Register doesn't list it, it's still a
12 Historic District locally.

13 So, I think, you know, we do our best
14 to follow the National Register guidelines. We
15 want to be consistent with the National Register
16 guidelines, but we also see them as guidelines
17 and we, you know, it's not going to prevent us to
18 try and -- from saving buildings that we believe
19 are deserving of preservation. So, that would be
20 my response.

21 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Thank you, Kim.

22 Any other questions from the Board for staff, the

1 applicant or owner?

2 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: This is Board
3 Member Jowers-Barber. Some of my questions have
4 been answered and concerns about 919 and the
5 significance of it as a representation of African
6 American ownership.

7 And it touches and crosses several
8 other areas that -- of significance of that time
9 of an African American, formerly enslaved, freed
10 family upward mobility integrated the first
11 community and I'm just -- and I heard the owner
12 acknowledge (audio interference), but I'm just --
13 but I guess my -- my concern is that being lost
14 and I think it's significant enough that it
15 should not be lost.

16 And I believe the owner said something
17 -- not something, recognizing, acknowledging it,
18 but was there something that was going to be
19 done? Was there something mentioned about
20 research or something about that particular
21 building, because I think that one stands alone
22 and is significant enough that there should be a

1 way that is just not lost in all of this. So,
2 could the owner speak to that?

3 MS. BATTIES: Can you hear me okay?

4 CHAIR HEATH: Yes.

5 MS. BATTIES: So, the owner has agreed
6 to do -- commission an exhaustive archaeological
7 study and historical study on the property
8 specifically to kind of acknowledge and celebrate
9 the history of the Somerville-Thomas House.

10 MEMBER JONES: Hi. This is Alexandra
11 Jones. So, I have a question about that. If I'm
12 understanding correctly, this home was relocated
13 to this property, correct?

14 MS. WILLIAMS: That is not correct.

15 MEMBER JONES: So, this is --

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, it exists in its
17 original location built -- originally it was a
18 two-story frame building in 1855.

19 MEMBER JONES: Okay. Okay.

20 MS. WILLIAMS: All three of the
21 dwellings on 6th Street are in their original
22 condition, original site.

1 MEMBER HORSEY: And a portion of the
2 original frame building still exists; is that
3 correct?

4 MS. WILLIAMS: That's correct.

5 MEMBER HORSEY: Okay.

6 MS. WILLIAMS: You saw photos at the
7 rear of the house and it's the rear L of the
8 frame structure.

9 MEMBER HORSEY: Great. Have you been
10 inside that portion --

11 MS. WILLIAMS: I have not been inside,
12 no.

13 MEMBER HORSEY: Okay. I don't know,
14 Madam Chair, whether this is pertinent, but seems
15 the -- especially the engineer's report, a lot of
16 this speaks to the structural condition of the
17 buildings in question and, you know, we just had
18 a case a few months ago where we postponed so
19 that we could view.

20 I'm not suggesting we postpone, but
21 I'm not ruling it out for a site visit if that's
22 -- if anybody else thinks that's relevant. Thank

1 you.

2 MEMBER BELL: This is Matt Bell. Can
3 I ask a question of Ms. Williams?

4 MS. WILLIAMS: Sure.

5 MEMBER BELL: So, in a scenario where
6 those buildings were not relocated to that site
7 and someone came in with a building proposed
8 there, would -- I guess they would have been able
9 to build a very tall building there, I suppose,
10 because it's outside the historic boundary as it
11 currently stands, right?

12 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. I mean, they could
13 build a building according to the zoning --

14 MEMBER BELL: Right.

15 MS. WILLIAMS: Right. Yeah.

16 MEMBER BELL: Right. And if the
17 boundary had been moved and those buildings were
18 still not relocated there and it was an open
19 site, then the preservation staff would have
20 weighed in on compatibility with the District,
21 correct?

22 MS. WILLIAMS: Well -- so, to back up,

1 first of all, I want to emphasize that the Lord
2 Baltimore Filling Station was considered eligible
3 by our office and we worked really hard to keep
4 it in situ, but, as you say, they could build a
5 big building on that site and it just wasn't --
6 it was doing a disservice to the building.

7 There is an 11-story building that
8 made this diminutive --

9 MEMBER BELL: Yes.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: -- filling station look
11 tiny. And so, that was, you know, part of our
12 negotiations for moving it, but -- yeah, so I'm -
13 - but we would be reviewing -- in the Historic
14 Preservation Office we only, obviously, review
15 projects that are involving historic buildings.

16 MEMBER BELL: Of course.

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. So --

18 MEMBER BELL: Yeah, but my question --
19 let me see if I can phrase this a little better.

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

21 MEMBER BELL: 50 years ago the boundary
22 had been moved to where it is currently being

1 proposed, right? And the Lord Baltimore and the
2 restaurant had not been relocated there.

3 And the three townhouses,
4 hypothetically, had been in that district, you
5 know, years ago and someone came along and
6 proposed a building in that location, right,
7 where the gas -- I understand all the --

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, yes.

9 MEMBER BELL: -- difficulties of
10 relocating it and things and certainly, you know,
11 one admires the effort to achieve those things.
12 We know how difficult that sort of stuff is.

13 But my question is, if the boundary
14 had been relocated years ago to include the three
15 townhouses and someone came in with a building
16 there ignoring the fact that, you know, buildings
17 had not been relocated there, one sees that it
18 would have been a building between the building
19 to the east that fronts onto 5th and K and the
20 three townhouses.

21 And is it reasonable to say that you
22 all would have been looking for something to

1 mitigate the scale between those three townhouses
2 and that building?

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, we definitely
4 would have reviewed that new construction on that
5 site had it been within the boundaries. And I
6 think, you know, as board members, you have been
7 doing just that within the Historic District
8 boundaries in terms of striving for the
9 preservation of the modest-scale buildings and
10 accommodating some pretty dense, sizeable new
11 buildings.

12 MEMBER BELL: Right.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: So, that's the same
14 approach we would have taken had these three
15 buildings and the corner site been included in
16 the Historic District to begin with.

17 MEMBER BELL: So, would it be fair to
18 say that height would have been -- would not have
19 been a sole criteria for height and scale or
20 would it have been, in your mind?

21 MS. WILLIAMS: I mean, yeah, I think
22 that height and scale would have been a

1 consideration in our review of a new building on
2 the site, but if, you know, the main goal,
3 obviously, is to retain the historic character of
4 the historic buildings in the Historic District.

5 So, it's really a difficult
6 hypothetical for me to consider, but --

7 MEMBER BELL: I understand.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: -- you know, would want
9 to --

10 MEMBER BELL: I'm sorry, go ahead.
11 Finish your thought.

12 MS. WILLIAMS: -- we would just want
13 to make sure that the contributing buildings,
14 that the character of those buildings wasn't
15 compromised by any new construction.

16 So, you know, if there's height behind
17 them, but there is full building -- preservation
18 of those buildings, then it's still considered
19 compatible, but we still consider height and
20 scale. We don't, you know, disregard it at all.
21 It just depends on the relationship to the
22 contributing buildings in the Historic District.

1 But, as you can see, there's a lot of
2 that already happening in the Mount Vernon
3 Triangle Historic District. You've got a lot of
4 height and density and, you know, along with the
5 lower-scale historic buildings.

6 In some cases, it's set completely
7 back to the rear of the historic buildings. In
8 some cases, we've allowed some height on top of a
9 portion -- the rear portion of the historic
10 building. So, it's all, you know, it's very much
11 case-by-case depending on the proposed addition
12 or alteration or new construction and the
13 relationship to the historic buildings.

14 MEMBER BELL: Well, the only reason I
15 bring it up is that what is striking is that
16 there is a line of fabric that extends east and
17 west on either side of, I guess, 5th Street, a
18 building similarly scaled, is what I'm saying.

19 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Yeah, yeah.

20 MEMBER BELL: That figures into your
21 consideration for this?

22 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

1 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Well, should it? I
2 mean, we're talking about a historic district,
3 we're not talking about a development project,
4 right?

5 MS. WILLIAMS: Correct.

6 MEMBER BELL: Yeah. I mean, I guess
7 that's what I'm asking.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Right now, my
9 consideration has to do with whether these
10 buildings meet the criteria for inclusion in an
11 expanded historic district.

12 And obviously, ultimately, our goal
13 and mission is preservation. And, you know, as I
14 said before, we have worked for years and worked
15 really hard at saving these buildings that have
16 been moved to the site and now it's in our best
17 interest to preserve those buildings and not have
18 them be demolished in the future.

19 And if they're included in a historic
20 district, then that gives them the official
21 protection that we believe they deserve as
22 contributing elements, you know, sort of to the

1 history and architecture of the Historic
2 District.

3 So, yeah, I'm not sure exactly, you
4 know, what it is you're getting at, but we are
5 evaluating these under the criteria for
6 designation, but of course our goal is to protect
7 them for the future.

8 MEMBER BELL: Yeah. I'm just trying to
9 understand a little bit more of the context and
10 how it figures into the thinking the specifics of
11 the context around it, but you've addressed it.
12 Thank you.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Sure.

14 MEMBER HORSEY: So, the gas station was
15 originally on a corner site; is that correct?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Correct. So, it was
17 immediately diagonal. It was on the northwest
18 corner of 6th and K. It's now on the southeast
19 corner.

20 MEMBER HORSEY: And the little building
21 directly south of it between the row of three and
22 the gas station building, is that -- that's a

1 modern intervention that was built at the same
2 time?

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Correct. So, when the
4 Lord Baltimore Filling Station was moved to the
5 site, obviously one of the goals of historic
6 preservation is to make historic buildings viable
7 and is very small interior. And so, the way to
8 make it viable was to increase interior space.

9 And so, this building -- this addition
10 was put on -- or not addition, but this sort of
11 infill connecting the rowhouse to the filling
12 station was built to allow for greater retail
13 opportunities.

14 And also, there's a really wide public
15 space there and, you know, had they pushed the
16 Lord Baltimore Filling Station up against the
17 side wall of the rowhouse, it would have been a
18 really awkward, wide corner space. So, this just
19 -- I think it made more sense in terms of
20 orientation and location, but it also made good
21 future economic sense for the owner to be able to
22 have viable retail space.

1 MEMBER HORSEY: Got it. Thank you.
2 And not that this is a critical issue, but was
3 the design of that building reviewed as part of
4 the whole moving of the buildings and was that
5 reviewed by HPO or did that just happen
6 incidentally?

7 MS. WILLIAMS: That, I actually don't
8 know. I don't know if our office looked at it at
9 all. Steve may have an answer to that.
10 Certainly DCPL probably reviewed it, but our role
11 was mostly involved in overseeing the moving of
12 the buildings and making sure that they were
13 renovated according to the Secretary of Interior
14 standards.

15 But in terms of design review over
16 that building, I don't believe we had a role. I
17 don't know if we had a role, but Steve probably
18 knows.

19 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Outerbridge, it was
20 part of a private PUD for a larger project.
21 These buildings were all contained within that.
22 It wasn't part of HPRB review. It could be that

1 staff had some participation, but it's not a
2 Preservation Review Board reviewed aspect of the
3 development because it was --

4 MS. WILLIAMS: That's correct. Yes.

5 MEMBER HORSEY: Thank you, Gretchen.

6 Does Steve have anything else to add to that?

7 MR. MALONEY: This is David Maloney.

8 If I can add rather than Steve, because I was a
9 little bit more directly involved in it, we
10 didn't review the design of that addition, per
11 se. We only reviewed the general concept and the
12 massing of the addition in very general terms.

13 In fact, we didn't have any statutory
14 authority to review the design. We just -- it
15 was a very general cursory review.

16 MEMBER HORSEY: Right. Well, it seems
17 to work pretty well, so -- okay. Thank you.

18 MR. MALONEY: You're welcome.

19 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Kim and David, I have
20 a question. I know one of you asked me to
21 facilitate, so I'll take the opportunity to ask a
22 question.

1 Can you remind me -- and I was looking
2 back and rereading the staff report and the
3 discussion that we have from the original
4 nomination and the boundaries of the Historic
5 District, why these three buildings, -17, -19 and
6 -21, were not included in the boundary at the
7 time?

8 I know it was a used car lot where the
9 located buildings -- relocated buildings are, but
10 could you remind me why we didn't do that?

11 Sometimes I know we have discontinuous
12 boundaries or we have, you know, small pockets of
13 areas, but specifically these were not included
14 and I can't find why they weren't.

15 MS. WILLIAMS: Sure. They were not
16 included because it was felt, at the time, that
17 the very tight collection of 24 buildings between
18 I and K at 4th and 5th Streets were really a nice
19 tight clustering and these were visually
20 separated from that cluster by that open used car
21 lot.

22 And they also oriented slightly

1 differently and we just -- we felt that they --
2 that the Historic District was tighter and more
3 defensible drawn with those buildings out.

4 Now, DCPL probably would have
5 preferred to include them at that time, but
6 instead they agreed to do a landmark application
7 on them then, which was then not approved by the
8 Board.

9 So, yeah, I mean, in hindsight we
10 probably should have included the three
11 buildings, but it was a visual connection thing.
12 A physical and a visual connection. They were
13 discontiguous to that really tight clustering of
14 24 buildings.

15 MR. MALONEY: I was just going to add
16 that in addition to what Kim said, we also
17 considered the fact that if we did recommend
18 including these and we did go into sort of a
19 different sort of approach to the drawing of the
20 boundaries of the Historic District that was a
21 little bit more accommodating of interventions
22 and vacant lots in between, then it would raise

1 the question, well, why wouldn't we then go
2 further and include the filling station and then
3 go down K Street to include the buildings in the
4 600 block of K Street.

5 It could have gone a boundary that
6 also included Hodges within retrospect, but it
7 raised too much the problem that Kim just cited
8 that if we included these, it implied including
9 even more and then it sort of watered down the
10 District as a whole and this notion of this sort
11 of tight collection of milking.

12 MEMBER PFAEHLER: And then my second
13 sort of follow-on question to you is, do you
14 think -- would there be a condition or a
15 situation where there would be merit for these
16 three buildings to be a designated, sort of,
17 assembly of their own rather as a -- like a
18 little mini historic district or some other kind
19 of landmark not related to the Mount Vernon
20 Triangle Historic District or within that context
21 that makes the expansion of the boundary and
22 their listing important to the addition based on

1 your opinion in the report?

2 Does that make sense?

3 MS. WILLIAMS: I'm not entirely certain
4 what the question is, but let me take a stab at
5 it.

6 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Could they stand --

7 MS. WILLIAMS: Could they stand alone.

8 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Not individual
9 landmarks, but could they stand alone.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. So, I mean, I
11 guess in my staff report I kind of point this out
12 that really the three as a collection contribute
13 more to the whole.

14 I do think 919 6th Street stands a bit
15 alone. Its history is quite significant probably
16 on a broader citywide perspective and maybe
17 should be interpreted in that context of having
18 been owned and built by freed blacks before the
19 Civil War.

20 And the fact that it, you know, that
21 home ownership helped to propel the family who
22 owned the property until 1916 into the middle

1 class in a way that is significant.

2 And I do think an argument for that
3 house individually could be made that is stronger
4 than it being one of three where the other two
5 houses really contribute more to the story of
6 Mount Vernon Triangle than they stand alone.

7 So, I don't know if that helped you at
8 all, but I do believe that 919 6th Street, based
9 on the research that was conducted, does stand
10 out, you know, for its history and freed black --
11 the socioeconomic history of the city in a way
12 that is notable and significant.

13 So, you know, the nomination is for
14 three buildings and, you know, if it were for
15 one, I may have had a different staff report.

16 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Thanks.

17 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: This is Barbara.
18 That's kind of where -- that's exactly where I
19 was going.

20 I was just wondering why that building
21 -- why that -- the significance of that history
22 was not addressed as for that building

1 individually.

2 Was it that -- and I'll just let the
3 applicant respond -- or whoever respond about why
4 it was grouped and why it was not selected as
5 being submitted on its own because of the history
6 and strong argument can certainly be made for
7 that.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: I think I will let the
9 applicants respond to that, you know. That was a
10 decision they made.

11 MR. SEFTON: Yes. This is Peter
12 Sefton. You know, we didn't exactly -- we didn't
13 go quite a bit into the individual documentation
14 of that building.

15 I know that Ms. Eig felt we didn't do
16 very much new research between 2007 and 2021. We
17 actually did a great deal and most of the detail
18 that's contained in the nomination of 919 is
19 recent. Most of that was unknown and not
20 accessible in 2007. So, it's a very different
21 nomination.

22 I think one reason we tried to treat

1 the three buildings as an ensemble and each was a
2 unique element within that ensemble, we didn't,
3 you know, generalize about them, is it told also
4 a story in addition to the Somerville-Thomas
5 family's, you know, own individual story of
6 advance -- struggle in advancement, which is very
7 powerful and, I agree, more powerful than the
8 story of the other two families, was that it
9 showed the context of how a neighborhood like
10 Mount Vernon Triangle was a lot more diverse in a
11 way, and stable in its diversity, than is usually
12 recognized that the, you know, the Somerville
13 family, as well as the Killians and Kreys, lived
14 on the block for quite a long time, you know, it
15 wasn't just a succession or transition story.

16 And also, that the block maintained a
17 fairly stable proportion of both white and
18 African American families over a very long period
19 of time.

20 Those are kind of trends that you
21 really, if you read about historic nominations
22 about downtown Washington histories, is something

1 that is not brought out.

2 So often blocks are seen as sort of in
3 the throes of a transformation from being of one
4 race to another and we felt that this stability
5 story was an important part of the Somerville-
6 Thomas story as well. And so, we felt that that
7 contributed to the story of 919. We always
8 recognize 919 as the strongest story on the
9 block, though.

10 I don't know if that answers the
11 question or not, but that does illustrate our
12 thinking, I think.

13 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: Thank you.

14 MEMBER GREENE: This is Linda Greene.

15 The Somerville story is compelling, however,
16 historically in Washington, D.C., African
17 Americans did maintain their properties for a
18 long time, they were entrepreneurs and they were
19 generational.

20 And so, I'm having an issue why this
21 particular house -- if we go up and down U
22 Street, 7th Street, there are farms all over the

1 city. There are properties that were demolished
2 and the history of the African American in
3 Washington, D.C., is totally different from other
4 parts of the country.

5 So, I'm just trying to get my head
6 around -- because Washington, D.C., did have a
7 middle and upper-class population of African
8 American success stories and entrepreneurs.

9 So, I'm just trying to see -- I can't
10 wrap my head around why this particular house.
11 So, maybe somebody can help --

12 MS. WILLIAMS: So, this is Kim Williams
13 with HPO. I think that obviously that is true
14 there was a growing African American middle-class
15 post-Civil War and in the late 19th and early
16 20th Century.

17 What is most notable and significant
18 about this house is that it was built in 1855
19 before the Civil War by a freed black family, a
20 laborer and his wife. And the fact that it was
21 owned before the Civil War and that it was
22 retained in the family for many years until 1916,

1 was improved by the daughter of that family, and
2 illustrates really the trajectory of that family
3 from laboring class before the Civil War, but who
4 had amassed enough money to buy a house, to the
5 middle class after, you know, in the later 19th
6 Century.

7 I think it's a really indicative story
8 of success and how you gain success. And a lot
9 of what we're learning in D.C. now is that it was
10 really hard for African Americans to buy into
11 real estate.

12 Even when they had the money, there
13 were restrictions against them and that
14 ultimately held them back from accumulating
15 wealth that allowed them to gain, you know,
16 investment opportunities or, you know,
17 accumulating wealth to send their children to
18 college or whatever.

19 And that is what, you know, sort of is
20 -- troubles our society today and is part of
21 systemic racism when you see that before the
22 Civil War here we have an example that

1 illustrates how home ownership propelled an
2 African American family into the middle class.
3 It's a powerful story and I believe it's one that
4 stands out.

5 I haven't done a study of all, you
6 know, African American-owned houses in D.C. -- of
7 course not -- I haven't looked at all the pre-
8 Civil War ones, but I do believe this house's
9 story is important. I just feel that it's a bit
10 lost between the other two.

11 My staff report evaluated the
12 nomination that came to us, which includes all
13 three buildings. The Board is not required
14 necessarily to designate the application as it is
15 presented. You can reduce the boundaries.

16 So, you know, there is the
17 possibility, if board members feel that this
18 individual building is significant in its own
19 right, can reduce the boundaries to that building
20 alone as a landmark.

21 So, anyway, I hope that answers your
22 question, Linda. I do believe it stands out

1 amongst other African American-owned residences
2 and does tell an important story.

3 CHAIR HEATH: As follow-up to that,
4 Emily Eig did mention in her testimony that at
5 least -- I think this is what you said, Emily --
6 at least a dozen freed blacks owned property in
7 the neighborhood.

8 Can you elaborate on that?

9 MS. EIG: We did initial research --

10 CHAIR HEATH: Sounds like you all have
11 two mics on possibly.

12 MS. EIG: We did research of the area
13 to determine what we could find quickly and, yes,
14 we did find, through census records, more than a
15 dozen families that were living -- I think the
16 issue here is that we don't have enough context
17 to know what we're looking at and that's the
18 research that needs to be done in order to
19 understand.

20 MR. SEFTON: This is Peter Sefton. I
21 would just like to comment. In our research we
22 did a similar search. We did not find in the

1 Mount Vernon Triangle area any African American
2 homeowners whose houses are still existing, you
3 know.

4 We, in our nomination, did recount a
5 few that we found in the 1900 census, but none of
6 those houses still exist and 919, thus, becomes a
7 very rare and unique survivor.

8 MS. MILLER: And this is Rebecca. One
9 of the things that there's been a big focus on
10 over the last 20 years is the diversification of
11 the D.C. Inventory in the National Register.

12 HPO and DCPL are all working on lots
13 of different documentation because the D.C.
14 Inventory is so heavily focused on, you know,
15 these higher styles developed by white architect
16 males.

17 And one of the things that -- there's
18 lots of studies that are going on right now and a
19 lot of presentations at conferences where it
20 talks about, with historic preservation,
21 inherently, in the past, African American history
22 and other underrepresented communities have been

1 lost because of, you know, everybody was so
2 focused on more of these high-style buildings.

3 And so, when you're talking about
4 social history, this is a really important aspect
5 for our city as it moves forward and having, you
6 know, this aspect of the history told for the
7 city to have remembered.

8 MS. EIG: This is Emily Eig. I think
9 that the issue here is that we have a situation
10 where there is a lot of unknown.

11 The documentation of -- we have a
12 permit that says what was at that site. We have
13 some remnants of things.

14 I do not believe, based on my own
15 having gone into this house and the work that
16 Adam has done, that this can survive so that it
17 actually could be something that could be
18 restored with any integrity, but the history and
19 the archaeology that could come out of it would
20 be very significant and could -- with the greater
21 research into the question of black -- freed
22 black ownership of property in D.C. could make a

1 very significant story, but we don't know that
2 story yet.

3 We have one example and there were a
4 number of houses that were in Mount Vernon
5 Triangle, but that they were removed. They were
6 taken down. The dates when they were taken down
7 I am not aware of if that was before or after the
8 designation of this historic district, but the
9 vernacular history was being removed in the
10 1960s.

11 And here we have the 1880's example,
12 which is different from the vernacular history of
13 the 1850s.

14 So, it's interesting, it's a good
15 story and we should understand it better, but we
16 need to research and document it.

17 I mean, I would suggest that this
18 documentation could be made available through the
19 Washingtoniana Division, the People's Archives,
20 the -- and through the Historical Society
21 Publication stories.

22 There's a big story to be told, but

1 this is -- this building, I do not believe, will
2 survive designation to tell it.

3 MS. MILLER: This is Rebecca, I'm
4 sorry, is that while -- as part of what I was
5 saying before about how African American history
6 is lost, is that it can't just be in
7 Washingtoniana or put on a sign.

8 Sometimes you need to have physical
9 fabric in order for the public to understand the
10 history that is right in front of them. Thank
11 you.

12 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: I agree and
13 that's exactly the challenge that comes with this
14 because once it's gone, you're right, it's very
15 hard for there to be any acknowledgment of it
16 unless there is a very -- someone is very
17 intentional or some organization is very
18 intentional about documenting it and making some
19 kind of memorialization of it so people will be
20 aware. And that becomes the struggle.

21 MEMBER HORSEY: Right. And this gets
22 back to the comparisons we've had in other cases

1 of removing a building that really doesn't meet
2 the criteria, whether it's a landmark or an
3 extension of the Historic District, and replacing
4 it with a plaque; and I think we all agree that
5 the physical presence of fabric is a much better
6 end.

7 So, I think this is a very interesting
8 conversation, but I'm trying to focus on what it
9 is we're being asked to decide and it seems to me
10 it's two things; whether the three buildings that
11 are historic are contributing buildings and;
12 secondly, whether the three buildings that were
13 moved offer a compelling enough case to be able
14 to extend the Historic District.

15 We're not being asked to gauge the
16 importance of any of the buildings -- it seems
17 like one is more important than the other two --
18 but we're at a lower level than that. We're not
19 doing the landmark thing or --

20 CHAIR HEATH: We are.

21 MEMBER HORSEY: Well, we are. Okay.

22 Fair enough. We are.

1 (Simultaneous speaking.)

2 MEMBER HORSEY: I think we should try
3 to focus it on; one, should we just decide and
4 deliberate on one and then go to the other or --

5 CHAIR HEATH: Well, we weren't at a
6 deliberation point yet. I just wanted to make
7 sure there weren't any questions, but I do agree
8 that once we get to deliberation we will take
9 them each separately and deliberate on each and
10 make a decision separately.

11 MEMBER HORSEY: Right. So, should we
12 discuss whether -- or ask questions whether they
13 are contributing buildings, just so we're clear
14 on that?

15 Does anybody disagree, regardless of
16 their condition, as to whether they are
17 contributing buildings, the three historic
18 buildings?

19 CHAIR HEATH: I mean, the application
20 for expanding the boundary recommends that these
21 be considered contributing buildings.

22 Are you asking if -- I mean, I think

1 as a part of our deliberation the Board would
2 need to address that, but are you asking another
3 question about that?

4 MEMBER HORSEY: Well, no, I'm just
5 saying most of the discussion, I think, has been
6 focused on whether, you know, what the importance
7 -- relative importance of these buildings is and
8 maybe whether that's in the context of whether
9 they reached a landmark status, but we haven't
10 really -- I guess there's no disagreement that
11 everybody agrees that they are -- even the
12 applicant -- I mean, even the owner that they are
13 contributing buildings.

14 MS. WILLIAMS: So, this is Kim Williams
15 again. The expansion to the Historic District
16 proposes a period of significance and those
17 buildings fall within the period of significance,
18 and the historic building's original dates of
19 construction fall within the period of
20 significance.

21 So, all of the buildings would be
22 considered contributing to an expanded historic

1 district.

2 MEMBER HORSEY: And does the owner
3 disagree with that or --

4 MS. WILLIAMS: I believe the owners
5 testified in opposition to the expansion of the
6 Historic District.

7 MEMBER HORSEY: But do they disagree
8 that the buildings are contributing or fall
9 within the -- or could be contributing?

10 I know why they disagree for other
11 reasons about the expansion basically on the
12 merits of the three buildings that were moved.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: I mean, I think that
14 they would be hard pressed, if the District were
15 expanded, to argue that the buildings are not
16 contributing because they are within the period
17 of significance and they retain their integrity.

18 MEMBER HORSEY: Great. Alright. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIR HEATH: I do think, Outerbridge,
21 the owner was trying to answer your question.
22 You sounded really faint in the background, so it

1 sounded like just --

2 MS. BATTIES: Oh, I'm sorry.

3 CHAIR HEATH: Yeah, there you go.

4 MS. BATTIES: Is this better? Can you
5 guys hear me?

6 CHAIR HEATH: Yes, we can now.

7 MS. BATTIES: Okay. So, again, I just
8 want to emphasize that the owner does not agree
9 that the structures are contributing structures.
10 We are opposing the expansion of the Historic
11 District.

12 The only thing that the owner has
13 agreed to is -- acknowledges is the history of
14 919 and has agreed to document -- or commission a
15 study to document the history of that particular
16 structure.

17 And I know we have an opportunity to
18 provide a response later in the order of the
19 proceedings, but I just want to also take this
20 moment to emphasize that kind of the physical
21 aspects that would happen that were significant
22 to 919 at the time it was owned by the Somerville

1 family, those defining elements, as acknowledged
2 by staff, have been removed.

3 They were removed in the 1880s and the
4 structure, as it stands now, is not
5 representative of the ownership -- the Somerville
6 family ownership of that structure.

7 CHAIR HEATH: Are there any follow-up
8 questions to that?

9 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, I mean, as staff,
10 I guess I would just comment on the period of
11 significance in the criterion or evaluation of
12 the 919 dwelling as a landmark, or part of a
13 landmark, that under Criterion A the building
14 would have significance to its original period of
15 construction, which is 1855.

16 Despite the fact that it is not
17 architecturally illustrative of that transition
18 from frame to brick, it still has important
19 associations.

20 And so, under Criterion A I do believe
21 that early date of 1855 is still valid and
22 relevant.

1 MEMBER GREENE: So, this is Linda. I
2 need a little help here. Linda Greene. Why did
3 the HPRB board -- what was the main decision that
4 in 2005 they declined it for designation,
5 extending that boundary?

6 MS. WILLIAMS: So, the decision was
7 that under Criterion A, that the buildings, even
8 though they were emblematic of a larger trend in
9 terms of the residents who lived there, the
10 people who built the community, none of the
11 buildings individually had any specific event or
12 activity or associations with a specific person
13 that was in and of itself significant enough or
14 important enough in the history of Mount Vernon
15 Triangle or the city to warrant listing under
16 Criterion A.

17 And under Criterion C, again it said
18 this was a collection of buildings that represent
19 a vernacular Victorian Queen Anne style building,
20 but that individually they lack distinction and,
21 as such, are more contributing to a historic
22 district and do not stand alone as landmarks.

1 So, that was what the Board stated in 2005.

2 You know, since then there has been
3 this additional research under Criterion A that
4 propelled DCPL to write another nomination to
5 emphasize that important social history, but the
6 decision by HPRB in 2005 did say it did not meet
7 the criterion under either Criterion A --
8 National Register Criterion A or National Register
9 Criterion C.

10 MEMBER GREENE: One more question,
11 please. When did DCPL start pulling together
12 this new criteria/new information? There's been
13 a long gap here.

14 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I mean, I think
15 DCPL could and should answer that question.

16 MR. SEFTON: Yes. We've always -- this
17 is Peter Sefton again. We've always been quite
18 interested. We never abandoned hope that one day
19 these buildings could be preserved. So, over the
20 years we've done quite a bit.

21 It's in the last couple of years we've
22 really started digging in because so many early

1 records have become digitized and online these
2 days. It's, you know, so much more, you know,
3 newspaper information can be cross-referenced and
4 digitally searched now. We kind of took
5 advantage of those technological trends.

6 We've never lost interest in these
7 buildings. I mean, they've always been on our
8 radar, if that helps.

9 MS. WILLIAMS: I also -- this is Kim
10 Williams again. I believe there was also an
11 understanding that once the buildings were moved,
12 the three buildings that were moved when it was
13 reconstructed, obviously, the Waffle Shop, were
14 moved to the site, then an expansion to the
15 Historic District would have been accomplished
16 with the owner's involvement and that ultimately,
17 obviously, the goal, as I have said, is to
18 preserve these buildings.

19 And so, I think there was always the
20 hope on DCPL's part that there would be an
21 expanded historic district that would include
22 those three buildings with owner consent.

1 CHAIR HEATH: Alright. Any other
2 questions from the Board?

3 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: Yes. This is
4 Board Member Jowers-Barber. Just to comment on
5 Linda Greene's question and (audio interference),
6 but a lot of this information was available. I
7 mean, we have (audio interference) I mean, there
8 have been ways to get the information.

9 And so, I do understand her question
10 about the timing and I understand this statement
11 of the owner of the timing. It, you know, the
12 building has been -- looking at the pictures and
13 listening to my fellow architects and just
14 looking at the deterioration that's been sitting
15 there, I understand that you may have not had
16 resources. But the fact that a lot of the
17 information just became available, that -- I
18 think that's not quite accurate. That's my only
19 comment.

20 MS. MILLER: And this is Rebecca from
21 DCPL just to give a little bit more context on
22 this, is that -- so, when I went over the time

1 period for the different agreements that were
2 taking place, most of the wait time was waiting
3 for these buildings to be placed for Hodges and
4 the gas station. And so, they were just
5 completed in the last 10 months or so.

6 I mean, the roof of the gas station
7 was just painted two months ago. And so, we
8 weren't able to file anything. Although the
9 Landmarks Committee had been working on these, we
10 were not able to file them until they were -- the
11 facades were complete.

12 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Does that answer
13 your question or address your comment, Sandra?
14 Any follow-up to that?

15 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: Yes. I'm sorry,
16 I had some trouble with the mute button. Yes.

17 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Does anyone else
18 have any questions? Alright. Then if there are
19 no other questions, then I will allow the
20 applicant and owner -- I'm not sure procedurally
21 if the owner or applicant needs to provide a
22 closing first or second.

1 MS. MILLER: Per the procedure,
2 generally, you actually set the pace of it.

3 CHAIR HEATH: Alright. Perfect. Okay.

4 MS. MILLER: We are fine with the owner
5 having the last word. That's fine.

6 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Perfect. Then
7 we'll --

8 MS. MILLER: I'm happy to -- I just
9 want to follow up with one thing. Okay, sorry, I
10 will let you finish your statement.

11 CHAIR HEATH: That completes my
12 statement and you can make your closing.

13 MS. MILLER: Okay. Great. Thank you.
14 So, one thing I just did not address before and
15 I'll -- part of our original statement was about
16 the community outreach and counsel had mentioned
17 that we had not reached out.

18 DCPL did send notification of the
19 nominations on April 21st to both the two
20 addresses listed at the ownership LLC. They have
21 never been signed for, however.

22 We did send notification also to the

1 owner of the car lot, which is the gas station,
2 Hodges and Waffle Shop, Douglas Development.
3 They had received their letter and signed for it
4 on April 23rd.

5 We also sent email notification of the
6 filing to the ANC and the Mount Vernon Triangle
7 community groups, and then had a phone meeting
8 with the ANC commissioner, Patrick Parlej, to
9 discuss the nomination on May 12th.

10 And then May 17th we also had a
11 meeting with the Hampton Inn Management Company,
12 which is also the other abutting neighbor. So, I
13 just wanted to clarify that. I skipped that in
14 my slide presentation.

15 One other thing I just wanted to
16 comment on, and Peter may have something to add
17 at the end, is there was a lot of discussion
18 about the National Register guidelines.

19 And as Ms. Williams stated, you know,
20 they try and abide by them wherever possible, but
21 your law -- or the preservation law, which, of
22 course, was written in 1978, does say that the

1 Historic Preservation Review Board may apply the
2 standards.

3 And if you look around town and if
4 this board was looking at things to be preserved
5 in amber and whatnot, the city would look very
6 different. It's pretty allowable for what it
7 allows to be developed in this town. So, the
8 Board may apply the standard.

9 So, while this may not meet certain
10 standards under the National Register, D.C.'s
11 program is different than the National Register
12 just based on the way we handle preservation in
13 this town. So, I hope that you'll take that into
14 account when you're looking at this.

15 And then, Peter, do you have anything
16 else to add based on any questions that you
17 heard?

18 MR. SEFTON: No, not really. I think
19 that's a very apt summary.

20 CHAIR HEATH: Rebecca, if I could just
21 ask you one question regarding your engagement
22 with the ANC, they would typically submit a

1 letter or something acknowledging their
2 engagement and possibly position on this
3 application, but they didn't in this case.

4 Can you just speak to your
5 conversations with them and any outcome?

6 MS. MILLER: Certainly. Commissioner
7 Parlej just expressed that he was new and that he
8 was unfamiliar with the preservation process.

9 I explained the hearing process and
10 how we would be more than happy to come and
11 testify before the ANC in order for a vote and
12 reached out again when this was scheduled and
13 reached out, I guess, 10 days ago or so to see if
14 he had any additional questions and received no
15 response.

16 So, there has been no action taken by
17 the ANC. It was not on their agenda on their
18 last meeting. So, that is -- that's where that
19 currently stands.

20 CHAIR HEATH: Understood. Thank you.
21 Alright. So, I think that concludes your
22 closing. And so, with that, I'll allow the owner

1 to make your closing.

2 MS. BATTIES: Alright. Thank you,
3 Madam Chair. I just have a couple little points
4 I just want to make in closing.

5 First, the applicant has stated that
6 they were waiting for the completion of the
7 assemblage on K Street before filing an
8 application to extend the Historic District.

9 Assuming that that's true, this seems
10 to be an illegitimate way to connect the 6th
11 Street buildings to the greater Historic
12 District.

13 The truth of the matter is that the
14 application was triggered by the filing of the
15 demolition permit by the property owner, the
16 owners of the property on 6th Street.

17 So, there are a couple of things I
18 want to note that the preservation and relocation
19 of the buildings along K Street does not mean
20 that this artificial cluster of structures meets
21 the criteria for Historic District.

22 Staff says it makes it a vibrant

1 corner, a social corner, but acknowledges --
2 staff acknowledges that doesn't necessarily mean
3 that they meet the guidelines, the Historic
4 Preservation guidelines.

5 If the primary concern is the
6 protection of the buildings along K Street, that
7 can be achieved through covenants or agreements
8 without compromising the guidelines for the
9 expansion of the Historic District. There is
10 nothing about the 6th Street structures that
11 preclude the preservation of those buildings.

12 Finally, I'd just like to note that,
13 again, as it relates to kind of having a physical
14 presence of the Somerville family at 919 6th
15 Street, the structural engineer has testified
16 that the level of work required for that building
17 would qualify as demolition under the Historic
18 Preservation law.

19 And so, ultimately the condition of
20 the building and structural integrity of that
21 building would not be consistent with maintaining
22 the physical presence at this location.

1 And so, documenting the history would
2 be an appropriate way to celebrate and
3 acknowledge this history in Mount Vernon
4 Triangle.

5 And so, with that, I'm going to close
6 the opening -- close my remarks on the
7 presentation of the owner. We, again,
8 respectfully request that the Board deny the
9 expansion of the Historic District for the
10 reasons that have been stated, as well as support
11 the staff report in denying the landmark
12 application. Thank you.

13 CHAIR HEATH: Thank you. Is the Board
14 ready to deliberate?

15 MEMBER GREENE: This is Linda. We
16 don't have any testimony from any --

17 CHAIR HEATH: You don't have any
18 testimony.

19 MEMBER GREENE: No. The only letters
20 were from -- actually, I will acknowledge one
21 letter, which was from the owner of the Hampton
22 Inn next door to these properties. The other

1 letter was from Holland & Knight, who is
2 representing the owner.

3 And so, they, along with other members
4 of the owner's team, were the only people who
5 registered in advance to speak. So, there's no
6 one else registered to speak.

7 MS. BATTIES: Madam Chair?

8 CHAIR HEATH: Yes.

9 MS. BATTIES: This is Leila Batties
10 again. I just want to note in response to the
11 owner -- response to the letter from the Hampton
12 Inn, in 2005 the staff report -- one of the
13 reasons articulated in the 2005 report was that
14 for the denial of the landmark designation on the
15 6th Street buildings, was that the immediate
16 context of the three buildings was compromised by
17 the abutting and adjacent large-scale, high-rise
18 buildings.

19 And so, that would actually be the Hampton
20 Inn and convention center next door at 901 6th.
21 So, I just want to note that for the record.

22 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Thank you. Is the

1 Board ready to deliberate? Is there anybody who
2 wants to start?

3 I think we should take this -- let's
4 -- again, as I said earlier, let's take our
5 deliberation in two pieces.

6 So, the first would be on the
7 application for the expanded boundary, and I
8 think we should talk about that and take a vote
9 on whether we think that should be approved or
10 not, and then we can deliberate and vote on the
11 landmark designations for the three buildings.

12 I'll start with just a -- one of my
13 thoughts on the expanded boundary applies
14 generally to cases that have come before the
15 Board in the past and I just feel that the Board
16 should be very cautious in reconsideration of
17 applications that come back to us.

18 It's always difficult for us to know
19 exactly what a previous board had in mind when
20 they made the decisions that they did and I
21 always struggle when applications come back to us
22 where we are potentially questioning previous

1 Board's decisions.

2 It's not to say that I don't think
3 that's ever appropriate, but I think we should
4 just be very cautious in doing so.

5 I'll continue with one more thought,
6 and that is that, you know, understanding at
7 least part of the reason why the Historic
8 District wasn't expanded to this part of the
9 neighborhood previously was this lot that was
10 previously a car dealership and would have
11 represented a gap in the Historic District.

12 I find it difficult to think that
13 relocating buildings to create the infill,
14 understanding one of them was not located within
15 this neighborhood and came from somewhere else in
16 the city, I find that hard to justify as a
17 rationale for now feeling that this is a better
18 justification for expanding the Historic District
19 and a more -- and something that tells a more
20 complete story.

21 I'm not sure if other board members
22 have arguments that might be more compelling than

1 what we've heard today for why this -- these
2 relocated buildings should change the previous
3 opinion of the Board, but I'm having a hard time
4 with it.

5 I think that the work that was done
6 here to relocate these buildings was done so --
7 was done incredibly well and I recognize how
8 difficult of a task that was, I think it does add
9 to the vibrancy and character of this corner,
10 but, to me, it doesn't paint a complete picture
11 of the Historic District in that these buildings
12 were relocated to infill this corner.

13 So, I'm curious to hear from my other
14 colleagues to understand your views on this.

15 MEMBER HORSEY: I'll take a stab, and
16 that is that I understand what you're saying,
17 Marnique. Appreciate it. I sort of -- I come to
18 another conclusion which is that, you know, these
19 three buildings -- the three contributing
20 buildings, quote/unquote, were kind of too far
21 away from the Historic District and were kind of
22 left out.

1 And -- which is too bad, because
2 otherwise we probably wouldn't be here today, but
3 there wasn't enough in between and -- but they
4 are -- the three of them are compelling to me.

5 What also is compelling to me is the
6 gas station building on the corner, which is very
7 close to where it was originally diagonally
8 across the street and still occupies the corner.

9 And then the other two buildings
10 lesser so, but, you know, within the areas in the
11 period of significance.

12 And the fact that this assemblage
13 really goes back, you know, three buildings on
14 each street and really anchors this corner and
15 anchors the Historic District itself, I do find
16 that compelling.

17 And notwithstanding that moved
18 buildings are sort of -- kind of have to be
19 weighed carefully, I think there's enough
20 critical mass in this corner going down both
21 streets to connect it back to the rest of the
22 Historic District and I like the way that it

1 creates that corner.

2 It's a real corner of this district
3 now. So, that's sort of my view. I'm happy to
4 talk further and obviously hear others.

5 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: I am somewhat
6 different on that. I -- Marnique, I agree with
7 your statement and appreciate that as well and
8 think there's some things sort of artificial
9 about moving the buildings to this location.

10 I have an issue with moving the
11 buildings to that location. They were historic
12 where they were. I would have preferred that
13 there had been a designation for the buildings
14 before moving them.

15 The history did not change because
16 they were moved. They were significant -- I
17 mean, those buildings are significant on their
18 own and I just -- I think there should be a way
19 that they are identified without being sort of
20 swallowed up here.

21 It's really kind of tough for me
22 because I think there's something just kind of

1 artificial about trying to put something in the
2 district and make it historic; you know what I'm
3 saying? It was established and now we're just --
4 you're trying to add something.

5 I know we should keep these separate,
6 but, for me, the -- losing the significance of
7 those three buildings, especially the one in the
8 middle -- and a case can be made, quite frankly,
9 for all three of them, but certainly the one in
10 the middle, I just see that, to me, as being the
11 greater offense.

12 But I do understand, Marnique, and a
13 good part of me agrees with you that changing
14 this, there's something about that that's just
15 not right either. So, I'm listening -- waiting
16 to listen to more colleagues on this matter.

17 CHAIR HEATH: Okay.

18 MEMBER BELL: Yeah, this is Matt Bell,
19 if I could weigh in here.

20 MEMBER JONES: This is Alexandra Jones.

21 MEMBER BELL: Go ahead. Go ahead.

22 MEMBER JONES: Okay. So, what I have

1 --

2 CHAIR HEATH: You're breaking up,
3 Alexandra. I don't know if others can hear you,
4 but you sound choppy.

5 (Pause.)

6 CHAIR HEATH: Do you want to try again?

7 (Pause.)

8 CHAIR HEATH: Alright. We'll come
9 back to you in just a moment.

10 MEMBER JONES: I'm looking --

11 CHAIR HEATH: I think I can hear you
12 now. Can you try again? You were breaking up.

13 MEMBER JONES: Can you hear me now?

14 CHAIR HEATH: Yes.

15 MEMBER JONES: Can you hear me now?

16 CHAIR HEATH: Yes.

17 MEMBER JONES: Great. I'm concerned
18 with the fact that we're taking properties that
19 weren't actually affiliated with the historic
20 zone and now trying to give it that status. I
21 think, for me, that's something that's troubling
22 that something that was located on 10th and F

1 Street has been relocated and, because of its
2 style, we're now trying to add it to this larger
3 historical -- the other issue is, I have to kind
4 of defer back to what Marnique started with is
5 that if this didn't have -- we didn't have the
6 original board make the same decision.

7 Now, that we have now created an
8 extension, I definitely have an issue with that
9 and that's notwithstanding the conversation about
10 the buildings that are located on 6th Street.
11 It's just looking at the other properties that I
12 find very troubling.

13 CHAIR HEATH: Okay.

14 MEMBER BELL: So, this is Matt Bell.
15 A couple of thoughts occurred to me. I'm
16 sympathetic with Outerbridge's position on this
17 and if I could add a couple of other things, you
18 know.

19 Almost none of us were there when this
20 decision came up years ago with the Board and we
21 have the written documentation of that, but the
22 deliberation is certainly something that is very

1 important to all these things. So, it's very
2 difficult to go back and understand that
3 completely.

4 I do think, though, decisions need to
5 be made in their own time and in their own
6 context and, to me, it's less significant about
7 exactly what the Board decided then rather than
8 what we're deciding today.

9 I do think cities change and context
10 change and arguments change because of that and
11 what might have been a different context years
12 ago is now something quite different, you know.
13 It was one thing years ago, it's something
14 different today.

15 And even though these buildings were
16 moved here, I find the characterization of them
17 as artificial to be really not -- a little bit
18 wrongheaded because they exist, they're there,
19 there was a decision to put them there and one
20 has to take them into consideration with
21 everything that we're looking at in terms of
22 this.

1 And I'm sympathetic with HP staff's
2 understanding of this that it's -- you know, it's
3 their understanding that it's not a hard line in
4 the sand, it either is or isn't, but it's one
5 thing you take into consideration when you're
6 looking at the overall case that's to be made.

7 And I think that's probably the proper
8 way to do it, that these are guidelines and it
9 does require professional interpretation and
10 insights to be able to deal with them.

11 So, I think the three townhouses in
12 and of themselves do contribute to the District.
13 So, I think, in general, I'm in favor of
14 expanding it.

15 I do think -- I recognize all the work
16 that went into relocating these buildings here.
17 It seems like it was a lot of creative thinking,
18 a lot of important, sort of, resources were
19 marshaled to be able to have that happen. And
20 while we may say that these buildings are not in
21 their original context, they are part of a
22 context.

1 And I do think -- and I think
2 Outerbridge made the point that the gas station
3 is in a similar position to where it was,
4 opposite corner. Maybe not ideal that it was
5 moved, but it was moved and there was some
6 creativity and intelligence put towards putting
7 it in a place where it could have an approximate
8 relationship to the street to what it enjoyed
9 before.

10 And I think the fact that these things
11 are there is a consideration. And I think that
12 the way in which it is orchestrated to pick up
13 these -- in a sense, pick up these three
14 contributing townhouses is, I think, a valid
15 reason to expand the District and say that these
16 townhouses are like other kinds of buildings we
17 find in this district and, therefore, compatible
18 and, therefore, a good reason to be able to make
19 that slight adjustment in the line. Amen. I
20 have to say that at the end of the sermon here.

21 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Any other --

22 MEMBER GREENE: Yes. This is Linda

1 Greene.

2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 MEMBER GREENE: Oh, I'm sorry Gretchen.

4 MEMBER PFAEHLER: No, no. Go ahead.

5 I'll go after you.

6 MEMBER GREENE: Okay. I appreciate
7 it. Thank you. I just -- I am like Marnique, I
8 mean, ever since I read the reports, I have a
9 serious problem with undermining the decision of
10 our colleagues before us.

11 And I agree it is a major specimen for
12 us to do as well as the timing of this is very
13 suspect, to me.

14 And, you know, this is -- there has
15 been plenty of opportunity before if this was
16 going to be designated if we were going to extend
17 the boundaries. And so, I'm, you know, I'm not
18 in support of extending the boundaries. I'm just
19 not there. I Just can't get it.

20 And the history of 919 is important
21 and I think the owner has stated that they would
22 do some type of research, archaeological studies

1 in some type of way to protect that and that
2 could be done without it being designated --
3 without the extension of the historical district.
4 So, this has been great conversation and that's
5 just where I am.

6 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Thanks, Linda.
7 Gretchen, are you ready to weigh in?

8 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Yeah.

9 CHAIR HEATH: Okay.

10 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Yeah. I'm in
11 alignment with you, Alexandra and Linda. I --
12 relative to the expansion of the boundary, I
13 don't see, or haven't heard, a significant reason
14 why the boundary should change from the rationale
15 and the materials that were presented before.

16 We do have access to that material
17 that was provided to us and the designation of
18 the boundary and the documentation for the
19 nomination of the Historic District. So, I'm not
20 seeing it.

21 I also think that the history at 919
22 is very important. I would really like to see

1 the archaeology take place and the documentation
2 of this building and I would hope that the owner
3 would find a way to have this assemblage of
4 buildings maintain its presence within the
5 community so people could understand what was
6 there; however, I don't think it merits the
7 expansion of the Historic District border for the
8 project.

9 I also have an issue with the three
10 buildings on 7th Street. I think that I am very
11 grateful that in the PUD the team who negotiated
12 with the owner had the foresight to maintain and
13 look for opportunities for these three buildings
14 to have a relationship within the Historic
15 District and be maintained for the benefit of the
16 development of the city.

17 And I think that as it relates to the
18 sandwich shop, I don't think that there is
19 anything significant related to Criterion C,
20 which is often -- or the criterion that would be
21 strongest for a relocated building under
22 consideration. There's nothing so unique about

1 the style of architecture or the architect
2 himself, or herself, that designed it that, I
3 think, gives it merit.

4 And the Waffle House -- the Waffle
5 House is almost completely reconstructed and
6 recreated and thank you to everybody for your
7 effort on both of those buildings, especially the
8 Waffle House.

9 I know you came before the HPRB in
10 2013. The condition was horrible. Water had
11 leaked through. Many of the components that were
12 to have been boxed, weren't. Some of the things
13 were missing.

14 There's some great articles in the
15 newspaper about the copying of the Waffle House
16 sign, the cornice line, the recreation. I
17 appreciate the masonry banding that mimics what
18 was there originally. You got as close as you
19 could for the glazing.

20 I think the intent and the feel of
21 what's there -- or was there is still very strong
22 and evocative of the original building, but it is

1 not the original building. Even the shell in the
2 structure is a new, modern CMU structure.

3 For the gas station, for me, it's a
4 matter of changing setting. Different than some
5 of the gas stations like the Shell Station on P
6 Street in northwest -- I think it's at 2200 P
7 Street -- the setting and relationship of the
8 curb cuts and the landscape and the use of the
9 station is different.

10 Although, I think the context of
11 leaving the areas open helps people understand
12 what was there, I think some of the integrity is
13 diminished because of some of the site changes
14 and access point changes and curb cuts that would
15 be required for it to be a functioning gas
16 station should be there.

17 So, for that reason, I am not in
18 support of expansion of the border in
19 relationship to the three buildings at 917 to 921
20 and the relocated buildings. I don't think
21 either merits the expansion of the Historic
22 District border.

1 I'm also not in favor of the
2 landmarking of the three buildings, 917 to 921.
3 I think that they -- the history should be
4 documented, but I don't know that it rises to the
5 level of a landmark.

6 I think if they had been more closely
7 situated and woven into the context of a historic
8 district, I could see them as contributing
9 buildings; but as standalone landmarks I don't
10 see them appropriate in that situation either.

11 I do want to reiterate that I think
12 that there has been a lot of work done in the
13 retention of these buildings and I agree with the
14 comments that people said about the scale and the
15 soul and the vibrancy.

16 I think that the relocated buildings
17 certainly do that and the context relationship
18 with those three buildings and the rowhouses is
19 unique and creates the tall building/low building
20 condition that is very common now in the Historic
21 District.

22 I do think that this is one of the

1 historic districts that has sort of the weakest
2 continuation or similarity or ability for
3 somebody walking around in it to understand what
4 is the context of the Historic District because
5 of some of the range of diversity of buildings.

6 I don't think that the application of
7 the preservation standards or the National
8 Register guidelines or the Secretary of the
9 Interior standards is something that creates
10 Colonial Williamsburg or preserves the city in
11 amber.

12 And I would hope certainly that
13 whoever was involved in the PUD for the work that
14 was done, had the foresight also to think about
15 covenants or other legal means to protect those
16 buildings that were relocated and so
17 painstakingly either restored or rebuilt. Those
18 are my comments.

19 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Thank you,
20 Gretchen. So, any other comments on the expanded
21 boundary?

22 If not, then I will make a motion that

1 we deny the application for the boundary
2 expansion of the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic
3 District.

4 MEMBER GREENE: I will second that,
5 yes.

6 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. So, Board Member
7 Linda Greene has seconded. Is there any further
8 discussion on that?

9 MEMBER HORSEY: I just want to say with
10 respect to what Linda said earlier that I don't
11 think it's a dangerous -- I think the word
12 "dangerous" or whatever word it was, say, in
13 precedent, I don't accept that.

14 I think this is a serious matter
15 expanding the boundaries, however, we take these
16 on -- I think we all realize we take these on a
17 case-by-case basis. And whether we do it in one
18 place doesn't mean that every time an expansion -
19 - a boundary expansion case comes up we have to
20 go along with it.

21 And as Matt said, you know, a lot of
22 water has gone over the dam since 2005 when this

1 was last heard by the Board and sensibilities
2 change. So, I don't accept -- I know we're not
3 going to all vote the same way, or at least I
4 don't think we are, but I don't accept that
5 changing -- I mean, we've changed the boundary
6 twice on Kingman Park. So, we've already done
7 that.

8 So -- but -- so, I don't think it's a
9 sense of a dangerous precedent to really weigh
10 into our decision. Thank you.

11 MEMBER BELL: I agree.

12 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: Well, one of the
13 things that I would say, Outerbridge, is that
14 there -- and I was certainly not on the Board at
15 that time, but for Kingman Park I was there for
16 the second one, was that it was a more
17 contemporary change. It certainly -- at least I
18 don't believe it was 16 years.

19 And it wasn't about moving buildings.
20 It was expanding it to buildings that had already
21 been there, if I am correct.

22 I do understand what you're saying.

1 I just don't think -- and I understand what Linda
2 is saying. There's something -- we have to be
3 very cautious and I don't think that Linda was
4 making the statement that it was -- we were doing
5 this willy-nilly, but there is something about
6 changing a ruling or a --

7 CHAIR HEATH: A decision.

8 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: The decision.

9 Thank you -- a decision that has to be done very
10 carefully. And I don't think she was saying that
11 we wouldn't do it carefully or it wouldn't be on
12 an individual case.

13 So, I just -- I just don't think that
14 was the way she was saying it. Maybe that's what
15 you heard. I heard it a little differently and I
16 didn't want you to think that that was what she
17 was saying about this because I agree.

18 As much as I am concerned about those
19 historical -- those houses, there -- I am in
20 agreement with the motion, so I'll stop right
21 there. I'll stop right there, but I just didn't
22 want you to think that that was what she was

1 saying because that's certainly not what I heard.

2 CHAIR HEATH: Yeah. I mean, I started
3 by saying I think we just need to be cautious
4 when we're potentially changing a previous
5 board's decision.

6 And, again, I said that doesn't mean
7 it's not appropriate to do so in some cases, but
8 I think just being cautious and very thoughtful
9 is necessary.

10 So, with that, then all those in favor
11 of the motion signify by saying "aye."

12 (Chorus of aye.)

13 CHAIR HEATH: I will -- actually --

14 (Simultaneous speaking.)

15 CHAIR HEATH: Yeah, I think so because
16 it sounds like we're not all going to vote the
17 same way. So, I'll call a roll call for votes.

18 MEMBER HORSEY: Could you state the
19 motion one more time, please.

20 CHAIR HEATH: Sure. The motion was to
21 deny the expanded boundary application.

22 MEMBER HORSEY: Thank you.

1 CHAIR HEATH: Fairly simple. So,
2 Sandra Jowers-Barber?

3 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: Aye.

4 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Alexandra Jones?

5 MEMBER JONES: Aye.

6 CHAIR HEATH: Linda Greene?

7 MEMBER GREENE: Aye.

8 CHAIR HEATH: Gretchen Pfaehler?

9 MEMBER PFAEHLER: Aye.

10 CHAIR HEATH: Andrew Aurbach?

11 MEMBER AURBACH: Aye.

12 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Matt Bell?

13 MEMBER BELL: No.

14 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Outerbridge
15 Horsey?

16 MEMBER HORSEY: No.

17 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. And the chair,
18 Marnique Heath's vote is aye. So, with that, the
19 motion carries with 6 in favor and 2 opposed.

20 We need to do a second vote on the
21 designation of the three buildings and I'm not
22 sure if everybody has had an opportunity to

1 deliberate on that. I know Gretchen provided her
2 comments.

3 Is there anyone else who wanted to
4 provide commentary on the designation of these
5 three buildings?

6 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: I would. this
7 is Sandra Jowers-Barber. I heard the owner talk
8 about the archaeology and what would be done for
9 that building.

10 I hope that that is the case. I saw
11 the deterioration of the building. I would just
12 hate for it -- the history to be lost. So, if it
13 can be documented, the archaeology done, the
14 report made, some type of -- and I know that
15 there is a committee within the District
16 government that looks at historical recognition
17 on D.C. public land.

18 This should be, in my opinion, one of
19 those designations made. So, I'm hoping that
20 there is actually work done to preserve this
21 because I think the comment -- it may have been
22 Gretchen making this -- that when you just walk

1 down there, there's no way of knowing anything
2 about the history of the neighborhood.

3 So, I'm hopeful that that house and
4 that history will not just be lost when it -- the
5 house is torn down, that there's a way that it
6 can be preserved.

7 I know we can't make anyone do that,
8 but I'm encouraged by the owner's awareness of
9 the significance of the history. So, that's my
10 concern that it is preserved. That's where I am
11 with that.

12 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Any other thoughts
13 from anybody? Alright. Then --

14 MEMBER JONES: Sorry.

15 CHAIR HEATH: Oh, go ahead.

16 MEMBER JONES: This is Alexandra Jones.
17 I had a problem unmuting. Yeah. I'm (audio
18 interference).

19 CHAIR HEATH: If you're speaking,
20 you're breaking up still. We can't hear you.

21 (Pause.)

22 CHAIR HEATH: Still not hearing you.

1 MEMBER JONES: I'm kind of seconding
2 what Jowers just said. My only concern is that
3 when people think of archaeology, they only think
4 about what happens as far as excavating. And my
5 (audio interference) --

6 CHAIR HEATH: We can't hear you again.
7 We lost you after "excavating."

8 (Pause.)

9 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: While I don't
10 want to speak for Dr. Jones, I think the next
11 part of that may have been what happens after the
12 excavation is done and how that information is
13 made available to the public and the history of
14 what was found with the excavation.

15 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Hopefully that's
16 what she was trying to get at. If we can get her
17 back, we can let her complete the thought.

18 Anybody else want to weigh in? If
19 not, I will -- I'm happy to make a motion at this
20 point and just see where we stand.

21 MEMBER JONES: Can you hear me now?

22 CHAIR HEATH: Now, we can, yes, but

1 you're fading in and out. Yeah, you're fading
2 again.

3 MEMBER HORSEY: I do have a comment, if
4 I may.

5 CHAIR HEATH: Go ahead Outerbridge. Go
6 ahead.

7 MEMBER HORSEY: Sure. I'd be happy to
8 make a motion to adopt the staff report, which
9 does not recommend the dwellings at 917, 919 and
10 921 6th Street for designation as a historic
11 landmark; however, the buildings do contribute to
12 the history and architecture of Mount Vernon
13 Triangle and the HPO believes that they should be
14 considered within that broader context as
15 contributing buildings within the Historic
16 District. So, I vote to support that.

17 CHAIR HEATH: Alright. Denying the
18 designation. I do think I would add to that
19 motion and I think this is in support of the
20 staff, what the staff is getting at, but I think
21 it's important that the history be documented and
22 made publicly available.

1 I think we've heard that from multiple
2 board members today. I think that's incredibly
3 important and should be included in our motion.

4 MEMBER JOWERS-BARBER: Yes, I agree it
5 should be included. I'd love to have that
6 included in the motion.

7 CHAIR HEATH: Okay. Then I'll second
8 your motion, Outerbridge, and ask for any other
9 discussion.

10 (Pause.)

11 CHAIR HEATH: Alright. Hearing none,
12 all those in favor signify by saying "aye."

13 (Chorus of aye.)

14 CHAIR HEATH: Any opposition? Anyone
15 opposed?

16 (Pause.)

17 CHAIR HEATH: So, that motion carries
18 unanimously. So, thank you all for your time and
19 energy on this. This has been a really important
20 discussion today and we really appreciate
21 everybody's input.

22 We are going to need to adjourn for

1 the day. We're not going to be able to hear our
2 last two cases, unfortunately.

3 MS. BATTIES: Madam Chair?

4 CHAIR HEATH: Yes.

5 MS. BATTIES: I'm sorry. Can we get --
6 we just need clarification on the -- what was
7 just approved as it relates to the landmark
8 application.

9 We thought we heard that the landmark
10 application was denied, but we wanted to get
11 clarification --

12 CHAIR HEATH: That's correct.

13 MS. BATTIES: -- on the contributing
14 --

15 CHAIR HEATH: Go ahead.

16 MS. BATTIES: Right. Just I want
17 clarification on the motion that was made.

18 MEMBER HORSEY: So, the motion was made
19 -- I made the motion. The motion was to adopt
20 the staff report, which recommends against the
21 landmark designation.

22 MS. BATTIES: Okay. Period. Thank

1 you.

2 CHAIR HEATH: Yes. Does that clear --

3 MS. BATTIES: Yes.

4 CHAIR HEATH: Okay.

5 MS. BATTIES: Thank you.

6 CHAIR HEATH: Great. Sure. We do have
7 several board members who have reconfirmation
8 hearings today before counsel starting in just a
9 few moments.

10 And so, we are going to need to
11 adjourn for the day and we will adjust our agenda
12 for next week's hearings to include our cases --
13 1632 17th Street, N.W., and 1775 Swann Street,
14 N.W.

15 We'll confer with staff about the
16 adjusted agenda. Alright. Thank you all for
17 your time today.

18 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
19 went off the record at 12:51 p.m.)

20

21

22

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In the matter of: Mount Vernon Triangle

Before: DC HPO

Date: 06-24-21

Place: teleconference

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