



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

Representing the communities of Burleith, Georgetown, and Hillandale

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January 23, 2019

Ms. Marnique Heath
Chair, Historic Preservation Review Board
Office of Planning
1100 4th Street SW, Suite E650
Washington, DC 20024
historic.preservation@dc.gov

RE: Historic Preservation Review Board Landmarking Application for Capital Traction Company Union Station and Part of the 36th Street NW Right-of-Way (HPRB #19-01)

Dear Chairwoman Heath,

On January 2, 2019 ANC 2E held its regularly scheduled public meeting, which was properly noticed and attended by six commissioners, constituting a quorum. At this meeting the Commission adopted the following resolution by a vote of (6-0-0) with regard to the above-referenced matter:

ANC 2E notes that this is the second application for historic landmark designation filed by the applicant. The first application, which was withdrawn by the applicant, sought landmark status only for the stone stairway and retaining wall that are adjacent to the west-facing wall of the Capital Traction Company Union Station (the “car barn”). The earlier application made it clear that the applicant believes that the stairway and retaining wall could be considered separately from the car barn. The current application, however, includes the much larger and arguably more significant car barn but the narrative description of the application once again treats the retaining wall and stairway and the car barn as separate entities.

ANC 2E further notes that the applicant has not identified any immediate threat to either the stone stairway and retaining wall or the car barn. All three structures lie within the Old Georgetown Historic District as designated by the Old Georgetown Act of 1950 and are therefore protected from alteration or destruction by the provisions of the federal statute. Therefore, ANC 2E cannot identify a need for the extra layer of protection sought by the applicant.

ANC 2E expresses no opinion with respect to whether the car barn, separate and apart from the stone stairway and retaining wall, possess qualities that would merit its inclusion in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites under Criteria B, D, and F as advocated by the

COMMISSIONERS:

Kishan Putta, District 1 Joe Gibbons, District 2 Rick Murphy, District 3
Anna Landre, District 4 Lisa Palmer, District 5 Gwendolyn Lohse, District 6
Elizabeth Miller, District 7 Matias Burdman, District 8

applicant, but notes that the car barn has undergone significant alterations in recent years, well after the end of the period of significance. However, ANC 2E is concerned that landmark status could make it more difficult to make changes to the fourth floor of the car barn that would be designed to improve access to the building for persons with disabilities.

ANC 2E is of the opinion that, considered separately, neither the stairs nor the retaining wall meet any of the criteria set forth in Section 201.1, Chapter 2 of Title 10A for designation of historic landmarks to be included in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites. Other than the fact that they are located next to the car barn, the applicant's principle argument in support of designating the stairs and retaining wall as historic landmarks is the fact that they are associated with a 1973 motion picture, *The Exorcist*. ANC 2E does not believe that the fact that the stone stairway made a brief appearance in a 1973 motion picture supports the applicant's apparent assertion that the stone stairway, the retaining wall, and the car barn, which was not visible in the movie, are the "site of events that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture, or development of the District of Columbia or the nation." It cannot plausibly be argued that the filming of one scene of *The Exorcist* on the stone stairway contributed significantly to the heritage or culture of our city or our nation and ANC 2E therefore opposes landmark status for the retaining wall and stone stairway.

Commissioner Rick Murphy (2E03@anc.dc.gov) is the Commission's representative in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard G. Murphy, Jr." in a cursive script.

Rick Murphy
Chair, ANC 2E