

OLD GEORGETOWN BOARD

4 FEBRUARY 2016

WEST HEATING PLANT

1055 29TH STREET, NW

Members of the Board,

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City, Washington's city-wide planning and preservation advocacy organization, is opposed to the application before you today which proposes to demolish the West Heating Plant. In April of 2015, the Committee of 100 testified at the DC Historic Preservation Review Board hearing in support of individual landmark designation for the West Heating Plant. In so doing, the Committee of 100 recognized that the West Heating Plant is not simply a contributing building in the Georgetown Historic District, but a building that is significant in its own right as 1) indicative of the industrial role that Georgetown played in the history of the nation's capital for more than two centuries; 2) an exemplar of late Art Moderne design as applied to an industrial building; 3) a monumental presence in Georgetown that has served as a familiar landmark of the waterfront.

Demolition of the West Heating Plant would not only violate DC Law 2-144, the city's preservation ordinance, but would also violate the historic and cultural preservation easement that conveyed with the property when it was purchased from the US Government Services Administration. That easement stipulates that any plans for the building must meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Those standards, obviously, do not provide for demolition.

Further, the owners of the property are already in violation of the covenant by virtue of having appeared as a party in opposition to landmark designation at the hearing on April 2015, rather than, as required by the covenant "acknowledging that the West Heating Plant is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Sites and the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites." According to the covenant, any violation is subject to suit.

The Committee of 100, therefore, asks that the Old Georgetown Board deny the owners of the West Heating Plant the opportunity to further violate the conditions to which they agreed when they acquired the property. We think there are ample examples of outdated industrial buildings that have been successfully adapted for contemporary use, particularly those in proximity to the waterfront. In many instances, these buildings have been generators of revitalization and economic growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Nancy MacWood, Chair

Committee of 100 on the Federal City