

The Committee of 100

on the Federal City



October 26, 2023

Chairman Marnique Heath
DC Historic Preservation Review Board
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC

Re: CPHS Design Guidelines for Cleveland Park Historic District Commercial Corridor

Dear Chairman Heath and Members of the Board,

My name is Shelly Repp and I am Chair of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. My testimony pertains to the Cleveland Park Historical Society's Design Guidelines (the CPHS Design Guidelines) for the Cleveland Park Historic District. Preservation of DC's Historic Districts is a major part of our mission. I respectfully urge the HPRB to accept the CPHS Design Guidelines for use in evaluating future building proposals in the Cleveland Park Historic District commercial corridor.

Recently, the HPRB approved the Office of Planning's Development Guidelines for the commercial corridor as "tools" for future project reviews. Those guidelines are development guidelines, not preservation guidelines. For this reason, it is appropriate for the HPRB to balance that tool with a tool that specifically addresses preservation. The CPHS Design Guidelines follow national historic preservation standards and are consistent with DC Preservation Law. The benefit of the CPHS guidelines is that they list the important historic features of the commercial area and discuss how preservation design principles should be observed to maintain contributing buildings and to produce compatible new construction.

While it is important that the HPRB be mindful of DC government policy positions, some of which, such as producing affordable housing, are strongly supported citywide, it is imperative that HPRB primarily serve the mission of historic preservation. However, it is clear that the Office of Planning's overarching goal is not historic preservation, but rather to maximize development. Unlike the OP guidelines, the CPHS guidelines provide a blueprint for the HPRB to follow that will permit new housing within an historic preservation context. It is not in the City's interest for the HPRB to abandon its mission of implementing preservation standards to fulfill OP's mission of maximizing development.

The Committee of 100 finds the CPHS Design Guidelines for new construction in the Historic District, whether it be a new building or an addition to an existing building, to be reasonable and clear. The Council made it clear that its intention was not to support maximum changes in density, but to authorize

a category of density that is defined by a range of densities. The Office of Planning has proposed the most extreme density permitted which may threaten the compatibility standard if HPRB replaces preservation standards and guidelines with OP's Development Guidelines. The CPHS Design Guidelines will offer the HPRB balancing standards that are contextually true to the Cleveland Park Historic District and are consistent with preservation standards and principles.

Thank you.

Shelly Repp
202-494-0948