

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ORDER

Before the Mayor's Agent for the D. C. Law 2-144, the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978.

HPA No. 83-187, Application to raze portions of 1627 Eye Street, N.W., Square 185, Lot 803.

HEARING DATE: April 15, 1983.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. With the consent of the owner of record, the Army-Navy Club, the Applicant Farragut Corporation, contract purchaser of the above-referenced site, has applied for permits under Sections 5, and 8 of the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978 (hereinafter the "Act"), D.C. Law 2-144, to allow for demolition, of an existing structure and addition of new construction on a site owned by them in the District of Columbia, Lot 803 in Square 185, known as "the Army-Navy Club" at premises 1627 Eye Street, N.W.

2. 1627 Eye Street, N.W., "the Army-Navy Club" is a Category III landmark on the District of Columbia inventory of historic places, lying in the C-4 zoning district.

3. On March 21, 1983, in accord with Section 5(a) of D.C. Law 2-144, the demolition permit application was referred to the Mayor's Agent for D.C. Law 2-144 along with a request pursuant to paragraph 1.7 of the Rules of Procedure to permit scheduling of a public hearing with waiver of the requirement of 30 day notice pursuant to paragraph 3.2 of the Rules of Procedure. The asserted good cause for such waiver was the pending expiration of Applicant's option to buy the property on April 22, 1983. At time of filing, Applicant furnished the Mayor's Agent with a prehearing submission setting forth the facts and arguments in support of the application and containing all information required to be filed under paragraph 3.3 of the Rules of Procedure.

4. Notification from the effected Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B and the abutting property owners indicated that they had no objection to the waiving of the 30 day notice requirement. Accordingly, the Mayor's Agent determined that good cause for the waiver had been demonstrated and that it could be

granted without public detriment. The case was set for hearing on April 15, 1983 in accordance with the applicable notice requirements of the Act.

5. On Friday, April 15, 1983, the Mayor's Agent conducted a public hearing on said application. During the course of the hearing 4 witnesses were heard.

6. The subject site was nominated for inclusion in the District of Columbia inventory of historic sites by members of the Army-Navy Club and was designated as a Category III Landmark in 1974.

7. At its meeting of March 16, the Joint Committee recommended issuance of the new construction permit stating that "preliminary plans conform to approved concept. The Committee looks forward to receiving final working drawings when design is developed." However, the Joint Committee recommended that the presented demolition permit not be issued.

8. Without waiver of its contention that referral to the Mayor's Agent is not required by the Act for the subject application pursuant to Section 5(c) of the Act, Applicant agreed to limit its presentation at the subject hearing on the basis that issuance of a demolition permit would be consistent with the purposes of the Act. Applicant specifically reserved its right to put forward additional bases for requesting permit issuances without prejudice.

9. The evidence of record shows that the current improvement on the subject site was completed by the Club for Club use in 1912, and then it was specifically designed to serve the Club's use exclusively and has so served as the Clubhouse continuously since that date. A number of alterations or additions have been made in later years.

10. The uncontested testimony of the representative of the Army-Navy Club is that, over the years there has been a decline in membership and the Club has suffered serious deterioration and continuing escalating operational deficits.

11. Between 1981 and the present, the Club has explored renovation possibilities for the building with more than two dozen persons or corporations. A 1981 design scheme for an addition to the building which was accepted by the Joint Committee on Landmarks was not able to go forward because it was determined to be economically unfeasible.

12. Subsequently the Farragut Corporation and the architectural firm of Shalom Baranes and Associates proposed a

redevelopment program that would allow the Club to remain on its historic site, provided needed new facilities to allow for increasing its membership and to provide for office development of the presently under utilized zoning envelop for the C-4 zone in which it is located. The Farragut Corporation proposal is the one presently pending before the Mayor's Agent as to demolition and was the one approved by the Joint Committee on Landmarks as to new construction on March 16, 1983.

13. Applicant submits that its proposal for demolition will effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of improvements in landscape features of the landmarks and districts which are distinctive elements of the City's cultural, economic, political and architectural history as set forth in Section 2(a)(1) of the Act.

14. Applicant's expert architectural historian, Emily Eig, testified that the original structure was not fact designed by the principles of the architectural firm of Hornblower & Marshall, as research subsequent to the time of the Joint Committtee designation action of 1974 revealed. Applicant's expert architectural witness stated that the proposed demolition will remove the unsuccessful additions made to the building in recent years and will retain the only exterior features of architectural merit to the bulding.

15. The Applicant submits that the proposed demolition would allow for "safeguarding the City's historic, aesthetic-and cultural heritages embodied in such landmarks and districts in accordance with Section 2(a)2 of the Act in that the original ornamental facades of the structure will be retained and repaired and given new life by virtue of the proposed redevelopment of the site on an economically sound basis.

16. The Applicant submits that pursuant to Sections 2(a)(4) and 2(a)(5) of the Act, the demolition proposed will:

protect and enhance the City's attraction to visitors and the support and stimulus to the economy thereby provided and will 'promote the use of landmarks and historic districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the District of Columbia,

on the basis that the proposed design and the necessary demolition to effectuate it will result in the protection and enhancement of the landmark as well as the economic adaptive reuse of a property now in decline and effectuate the continued presence of the historic Army-Navy Club functions on the site.

17. Applicant submits that pursuant to section 2(b) (2) (a) of the Act its proposed demolition would in fact:

Retain and enhance historic landmarks in the District of Columbia and encourage their adaptation for current use.

on the basis that, although the proposal requires the demolition of the floors, interior structure and rear walls of the building, it provides for the dismantling and rebuilding of the interior end two principle social rooms fronting on the Square and a fine circular square in addition to retaining and restoring the original design elements of the 1912 facade facing on Eye and 17th Street, N.W.

18. The Applicant contends that pursuant to Section 2(b) of the Act, the demolition proposed would encourage the restoration of historic landmarks in that it will retain and enhance the aesthetic appearance of the only significant portions of the exterior of the structure and will remove the incompatible past accretions that do not contribute to the historic landmark and in some cases detract from it.

19. There was no position stated by the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission on the merits of the application.

20. There was no opposition to the proposed application for demolition.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

Pursuant to Sections 5(e) of D.C. Law 2-144, no demolition or alteration permit may be issued unless the Mayor or his designated agent finds that issuance of the permit is necessary in the public interest. Section 3(j) of the Act defines "necessary in the public interest" as "consistent with the purposes of this Act as set forth in Section 2(b) or necessary to allow the construction of project of special merit." The Mayor's Agent is of the opinion that the Findings of Fact show that Applicant's proposal to preserve the original portions of the 17th and Eye Street facades of the Army-Navy Club is consistent with the purposes of the Act.

Based on the evidence of record, the Mayor's Agent finds that the Applicant's proposal will retain and enhance the aesthetic appearance of significant portions of the exterior of the structure and will remove incompatible past additions that detract from the existing landmark quality. The evidence of record demonstrates that demolition of the structure is a viable

way in which to effectuate adaptive reuse of the structure and allow the continued historical presence of the Army-Navy Club on the site: Accordingly, demolition of all portions of the building other than the original 1912 facades facing 17th and Eye Streets, N.W., is consistent with the purposes of D.C. Law 2-144 and in the public interest as defined by Sections 2(a)(1), 2(a)(2), 2(a)(4), 2(a)(5), 2(a) and 2(b)(2)(b) of the Act.

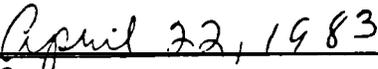
The Mayor's Agent therefore finds that the Applicant's application for demolition for is consistent with the purposes of the Act and necessary in the public interest and that the permit should issue as requested.

ORDERED

Issue demolition permits. Application HPA No. 83-143 is necessary in the public interest.



Artis G. Hampshire, Esq.
Mayor's Agent for D.C. Law 2-144


Date