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21 November 2011

3516 30th Street NW
Washington DC 20008

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW
Suite 200/210-S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Application Number 18294 -- Paul and Emily Thornell

Dear Board Members:

In response to the notice sent to us by Richard S. Nero, Acting Director, Office of Zoning, dated 17 October 2011, we are writing to you regarding the application of Paul and Emily Thornell for a special exception to allow a rear addition to an existing one-family semi-detached dwelling not meeting the lot occupancy and rear yard requirements for the premises at 3011 Ordway Street NW. We live down the hill and across the alley from the Thornell's house.

We have reviewed the architectural drawings of the proposed addition that would double the size of the Thornell's house. If the Board imposes a few conditions to its approval, we have no objection to the granting of the application based upon the drawings we reviewed.

We are very worried about possible damage to the existing alley during the construction. The present alley is composed of a

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bitumen surface over a gravel base. There is no concrete underlayment beneath the bitumen. We are concerned that the weight and use of construction equipment will damage the alley. We suggest that the Board investigate the size and use of the equipment that will be used in the construction, and ensure that the alley will not be damaged. If approval is granted, we also suggest that the Board have someone examine the alley before and after construction to assess whether any damage occurs. The contractors and homeowners should accept responsibility to repair any damage to the alley. It took many years before the city paved this alley, and it would be a terrible act for a private contractor to destroy the alley and not be responsible for repairs.

We are also concerned about the staging of the construction. Where will the contractors store their machinery and materials? We, and other neighbors, use the alley every day. Our garage opens onto the alley. The City uses the alley for trash collection for our property and for our neighbors. We cannot support an approval that would close the alley for any significant period of time during any day. We therefore suggest that any approval specify that public use of the alley will not be inhibited.

After reviewing the architectural drawings, we determined that a number of large trees would be removed to accommodate the addition. These trees help to shade our neighborhood and absorb sound in the summertime. The trees also help to screen the existing Thornell house from its neighbors down the hill. The drawings indicate that the Thornells propose to plant replacement trees and bushes to screen the new addition from its neighbors. We would recommend that any approval require plantings to screen the addition from its downhill neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns as you ponder the application of the Thornells.

Regards,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Lawrence Raz', written in a cursive style with a large 'L' and 'R'. The second signature on the right is 'Patricia Hahn Raz', also in cursive, with 'Pat' and 'Hahn' being more legible than 'Raz'.

Lawrence Raz & Patricia Hahn Raz