

int

Subject: fax to dcoz

From: JOHN ADAM (adamim2@yahoo.com)

To: jaadam@gmail.com; johnaubreyadam@yahoo.com;

Date: Saturday, October 20, 2012 3:10 PM

TO: Richard Nero, DCOZ, phone: 202-727-6311; fax: 202-727-6072

As per email correspondence, here is that statement faxed with my signature. Thanks for your continued attention and help.

Sincerely,



John Adam

15 15th St SE
Washington, DC 20003

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 18462
EXHIBIT NO. 27

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**UPDATED SUPPLEMENT (of my prior filing for party status in opposition)
to Sayre case 18462 on #13 15th Street SE**

I've lived and worked for 23 years in the row house adjacent to Ms. Sayre's recently purchased property. An accident with my mother in September has called me out of town for weeks at a time. I'm sending this from her home in SC, but will be as cogent as circumstances allow. Please forgive formatting issues. Thank you for hearing this.

What follows supplements my party status opposition filing (already time-stamped at DCOZ before the 14-day deadline). It's especially relevant to BZA members meeting on 23OCT2012. Among other things, it shows the ANC's hurried approval of the Sayre project at #13 was based on poor information.

You may determine by this that the #13 project is more complex than many, if not all, of those before you on the BZA agenda, Oct. 23rd: it's not a detached rear addition, a garage addition, or a rear deck, or trellis. And from the beginning, this Sayre proposal has never had the full support of an adjacent neighbor who shares a party wall. For that reason alone the right to a public hearing should not be waived. (I believe that my neighbor at #17 15th St SE echoed that in an email to Mr. Richard Nero, DCOZ.)

1. My August 4th letter, which Ms. Sayre used to get things rolling at DCRA, was conditional, employing phrases such as "raises some concerns" and "at this moment." It was not an unalloyed letter of support (in contrast to other adjacent neighbor in #11). It also made clear that it was written in haste yet with the optimism inherent upon first meeting a potential new neighbor and wishing to help them. But it became misrepresented to the ANC (e.g. see 08OCT2012 "BZA Case 18462 Supplement," by Tektonics at the ANC). And instead of openly cooperating with me, Ms. Sayre lied to me and deceived others. (My evidence is in emails from her and official documents.) There is other less strong evidence to suggest the Sayre party did not wish me to hear about ANC meeting.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.18421
EXHIBIT NO.27

2. I was not informed of the ANC meeting by Ms. Sayre, even though we were corresponding by emails and it was an important step in a process in which I'd indicated strong interest. I found out days after their vote. ANC Commissioner Neil Glick told me of the surprise of my objection, and that the ANC likely would not have approved it had they known an adjacent neighbor had filed in opposition.
3. Glick was also puzzled why a project so large had been put on waiver for public review. The architect Will Teass eventually told me, if I summarize his email from memory correctly, that it was because the zoning was relatively easy. I find it strange that a project where there was not unconditional letters of support from both adjacent neighbors was put on this accelerated schedule. But in retrospect it could be useful in that it forced the issue to its point sooner rather than later.

This project is also complicated technically, as I've sketched in prior submissions to DCOZ. A third story on a party wall of questionable stability also raises a host of liability issues yet to be addressed by legal documents.

What follows shows part of my evolution to fully oppose the #13 Sayre project.

As a next-door neighbor to #13, I gave one of the two letters required to launch the process. But my letter, unlike that of #11, did NOT give unconditional support. Knowing it was a quick review at a coffee shop and Ms. Sayre anxious to do it fast, I hedged. I was, however, optimistic for the potential of improvement, as I've been with other additions in the neighborhood the past 23 years.

Recently I copied various files on #13 at the ANC (including BZA Supplement of 08OCT). Among the things I learned was that the Sayre team, with whom I'd been exchanging emails, was less than forthcoming with me. Her omissions continued with the ANC Commissioners at their October meetings on the 2d and the 9th. Much of this can be documented.

More important, those plans and views I saw from the ANC Office at Hill Center had many views of the proposal I'd never seen. They showed me more clearly how the #13 addition would adversely impact my home and office use, and threaten library and research materials, many of them rare, unique, or invaluable.

Here it is in brief.

Daily adverse impact: To do my profession requires much quiet solitude. This #13 addition, expanding a duplex to three stories, would raise the noise level in multiple ways: 1. the top unit's new porch—its sole outdoor space—would be just above my office window; 2. While its current bathroom abutts the dogleg, the two bathrooms proposed both would be raised high against the party wall of my office, with the gurgle of two toilets, water pipes, full bath, and deluxe shower; 3. Adding another large bedroom would raise the comfortable occupancy of the upper unit to four people; 4. Adding an additional floor of walking traffic, near my head at my attic level, raises the specter of something perhaps not dissimilar to an echo chamber.

Visually, it would reduce my privacy, allowing occupants in #13 to peer over my shutters into the toilet and shower of my master bathroom. It would likely block the skyview from that window too. I can't tell how it'll effect my office window view. My back rooms would be effected too, but those north blinds are usually drawn.

Mid and Long-term risk: My party wall shared with #13 already indicates minor stress, unlike my other party wall shared with #17, which has been stable except for the earthquake. Now and then certain human activities in #13 will make wall hangings in my bookcase vibrate for as long as those human activities continue. What happens when you add two full bathrooms, a full tub of water, much of the load of a new floor, a roof, etc. directly above this? (Open stairways of both #13 and #15 houses are on the opposite side, on the longer party wall.)

What happens when there is a party, or an open house, for 10, 20, 30, 40 fifty people, walking upon the added third floor?

fior

That this house could not be built under today's code (without steel reinforced concrete footings for one thing) is still of course an acceptable risk. But add the poor condition of the mortar evident on the exterior extension of this wall. Add the existence of vibrations of the interior party wall. Add my side of the load to the equation: office equipment, a full wood file cabinets, a full steel file cabinet, too many books and bookcases, great stacks of dense paper, two desks...with the aforementioned.

And please consider what might be lost:

Out of my little office, in the course of reporting that has won the highest award in the magazine industry, I've amassed a treasure of material. It includes the founding of the Internet, notably Vint Cerf and Robert E. Kahn, and their families and peers, exceeding 100 hours with the principals. (After use in a book of mine, this material will probably be donated to the Library of Congress, along with interviews with the top Air Force generals of the first Gulf War— LTG Chuck Horner and BG Buster Glosson) who gave me the first details of the stealthy surprise attack. Many other Americans of the same caliber in technology are in my private files as well.

My first book is nearing completion after more than ten years of labor. It will tell the story of America through Benjamin Franklin in a vivid nonfiction narrative, utilizing new digital powers and the best scholarship. It makes my magazine work seem like kid's play. Much of this Franklin material is hard won from visits to archives in the U.S. and in Europe since 1998. Likewise, the many notes I've made on printed material are priceless to me right now. It's not just a matter of backing up computer files of chapters, since there is much fact-checking and rewriting let to do.

If you believe that the US founding is one of history's greatest events, if Franklin is one of its most fascinating figures, it is hard to imagine why there is as yet really no epic founding story. Much of my effort goes into striving for that, to make a list of someone's 100 top books, which a Franklin biography has never done. (Originally I set out to do a book spanning from Franklin to the Internet, but then began to turn up so many significant new things on Franklin I never would have believed possible.)

THE ANC VOTE

How do I view the ANC6B Commissioner's October 9th vote, as sent to the attention of Clifford Moy at BZA on Oct 11? Because I didn't know it was on the agenda (or even knew ANC did non-commercial residential matters), it passed unanimously partly on the strength of a google earth image that showed the two neighbors houses "letters of approval." Not only was that a simplistic summary of my Aug. 3 letter, but they failed to let the ANC know that I was interacting with them and had unresolved objections. The Commission was shocked to hear that a next-door neighbor filed as an opposed party. I was out of town due to my elderly mother's fall in South Carolina so I missed the notices in newspaper.

Afterward, in an email, the ANC agreed it would be good policy in the future to notify next-door neighbors directly so an embarrassing incident like this is not repeated.

Commissioner Brian Pate unwittingly voiced one concern I had expressed to the DCRA in my filing of 09OCT2012. He objected to the boxy look from the street with an awning overhang, and got them to sacrifice some interior space and slope it in a semi- mansard style. (The frontage now looks better. I'd probably vote for it too if I was a Commissioner and it wasn't next door to directly impact me.)

THE BZA

On August 20, 2012, Ms. Sayre's architect Will Teass wrote a memo to the ANC, in part:

"We have received notice that our BZA Hearing date is Tuesday, 23 October. As we are seeking a special exception, and we have the support of both adjacent neighbors, we have requested an expedited hearing date."

(Emphasis added.) This is a refrain that was used repeatedly that I would argue misleads one to think it is unalloyed support, rather than conditional support. And as I became more educated about the project, my support began to erode.

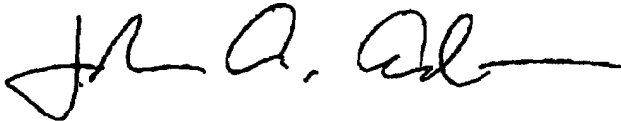
dmt

This house is my home, my office, my livelihood. I bought the property in 1989 due to its location near the Library of Congress— not too close, not too far— knowing I'd want to write books. I research there about every afternoon. If I'd planned to move out, as many neighbors do, I might not be as adamant against this proposal. But I hope to be able to write here for another 30 years or more.

I urge the BZA to vote in a way that will uphold the dignity of their vital profession and due process.

Thanks for your attention.

Sincerely,



JOHN A. ADAM
OWNER/OCCUPANT
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003

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Web site: <http://georgetowncountylibrary.sc.gov>

Georgetown County Public Library

Fax

To: RICHARD NERO, DC OZ From: JOHN ADAM
Fax: (202) 727-6072 Pages: 4
Phone: (202) 727-6311 Date: 20 OCT 2012
Re: SAYRE CASE 18462 cc:

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• Comments:

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Waccamaw Neck Branch
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Pawleys Island, SC 29585
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FAX (843) 545-3624

Carver's Bay Branch
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