

**Statement to Board of Zoning Adjustment, Government of the District of Columbia
June 24, 2014**

Submitted by
Alice Tetelman/Martin Wenick
3919 Watson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Application Numbers 18784 and 18765
3915 and 3919 Fulton Streets, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views at this hearing. We live within 200 feet of each of these properties and will be directly affected by this development. From the rear of our home for over 35 years we face both of the Fulton Street houses, their back gardens and parking spaces, as well as the alley behind Fulton Street. ***We are strongly opposed to this proposed development.***

Incompatible with the Neighborhood: on the outskirts of our neighborhood, there are multifamily dwellings. But the core of this 8 square block neighborhood (between Watson Place and 38th Street, from the Russian embassy on the south to Cathedral on the north) is a tranquil, tree-lined area of single family, traditionally built brick houses with white trim, paned windows, and dormer roofs. The developer's two proposed buildings are totally incompatible with the established design in our neighborhood, both in style and architectural details. The design of the façade bears no relevance to any of the houses in the neighborhood. If they are constructed as proposed, their jarring appearance will irretrievably alter the character of our traditional neighborhood in a negative way.

The developer is proposing to use large flat panels of a colored composite material made by a company called Nichiha, for the exterior of the buildings. This company's materials, according to the developer's architect, are most often used in the West and the South, not in a climate such as ours. This is most troubling, to say the least.

Transportation Safety a Concern: The developer has plans to build two apartment buildings with 6 units in each building, and two bedrooms in each unit. This means a minimum potential total of 12 persons for each building, or 24 in total. There will be 12 parking spaces, one for each unit. Our neighborhood is not near a Metro, and many individuals have their own cars. This means a minimum of 12 more cars will be added to our neighborhood streets, which already suffer from overcrowded parking. This figure does not include the guests who will visit.

The developer's parking spaces will have direct access to the narrow alley behind Fulton Street. In addition to these proposed 12 parking spaces, two other structures that have access to the alley will have a total of 9 more parking spaces. The result is that 21 cars will be parked off of a narrow alley that is also used by other neighbors from Fulton, Garfield and 39th Streets, as well as truck and garbage vehicles. This is an accident waiting to happen. There is also the potential for property destruction as the garden walls of Watson Place houses line this alley.

In his June 12th presentation to the BZA, the developer included a private "Parking Study" that he commissioned to determine if there was adequate parking in the neighborhood. The study was conducted on one night in June when students—the source of many parking difficulties in the

neighborhood—were not present. The names of the streets in our neighborhood were incorrectly listed in the report (Watson “Street” instead of Watson Place, Garfield “Road” in place of Garfield Street). If these basic details were wrong, how can the rest of the study be considered as accurate?

Condominiums versus Rentals? Our neighborhood lies between American University and Georgetown University. We are a prime target for student rentals, which can bring attendant noise, overcrowding, parking issues and housing/grounds maintenance concerns that affect the quality of life in the neighborhood. We and our neighbors have been consistently concerned that this project would lead to an increase in rental units in the neighborhood and increase population density. The developer has given verbal assurances that these projects will be condominiums. However, up to now he has refused to create initial condominium documents that for a specified period of time would insure that these units do not become rental units. If these units turn into rentals, particularly student rentals, they will have a negative effect on our home values and quality of life.

Noise from Roof Decks: Four of the proposed apartments (two in each building) will have large roof decks, potentially 700 square feet. Part of the deck includes a large room which could serve as a “party room” off the outside deck. There are no plans that we are aware of for noise mitigation, so we and our neighbors will be subject to obnoxious and annoying noise from these decks. We believe that the developer should include some kind of barriers to minimize the inevitable noise that will emanate from these roof decks. A four foot parapet, now in the plans, will not be enough.

No Time to Consider Developer’s Proposals: After a meeting of the ANC3b on June 12, a group of neighbors, including one of us (Alice Tetelman) participated in an effort to work with the developer to address these and other concerns to everyone’s mutual satisfaction. We did not succeed, which is why we are here today. Only yesterday, June 23rd, in the early afternoon, were we made aware of the final plans by the developer. This is not enough time for us to fully analyze these plans. It also puts you, the members of the BZA, in the position of making a decision based on totally new information.

Last night, the ANC3b voted two to two on a motion to approve the request for an exception, thereby defeating the motion. As a result, the ANC will not forward a recommendation to you. We feel this is significant, and reflects on the passion which our neighbors feel about the incompatibility of this project to our neighborhood.

Given all the issues that we have raised, along with others of our neighbors who agree with us about the incompatibility of the buildings to the neighborhood, we respectfully request that you vote to deny this exception at this time.

Alice Tetelman
6/24/14

Martha A. Daniel