

November 14, 2014

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Government of the District of Columbia

RE: Application # 18790
Jefferson-11th Street LLC
2724 11th Street NW (Square 2859, Lot 89)

Dear Board Members:

I oppose application **18790** for a variance from the lot area requirements [density] and a variance from the off-street parking requirements. My home is around the corner from 2724 11th Street and we share the alley; now more than ever, the residents of 1B need our current density and parking requirements upheld by your board because of the amount of existing and projected conversion condos springing up in our neighborhood which was chiefly comprised of single-family homes. When I bought my home on Fairmont Street sixteen years ago, I chose this block over many others; I was especially impressed by its lack of congestion, the wide setback of the homes, and it was an established neighborhood of mostly long-time home-owners who lovingly cared for their property; I did not anticipate the burst in population caused by the condo-boom.

I am concerned that renovations that will add additional units to the basement of 2724 in violation of the current density zoning and increased parking, foot traffic, and potential for a blocked one-way alley behind my house if these units are completed will bring greater harm to the neighborhood and diminish my enjoyment of my own property.

I support the 2724 Tenants' Association efforts to improve the living conditions and structural safety of 2724 and the neighbors desire to see the building under responsible new ownership. The owners of the apartment building at 2724 who applied for the variances have never been good neighbors. Over the years, everyone on the alley dealt with their burgeoning rat population because of the inadequate amount of trash receptacles and infrequent pick-up employed by their property manager; I am ashamed to say that I did not know what was going on behind the dingy exterior of this building; the residents were living under terrible conditions. I have seen and recorded infestations of bedbugs, roaches, mice, and rats. There are holes in the ceilings, under sinks, and in walls from decades of water damage. On September 1, the owners raised these tenants' rent by 31.5%, a staggering amount for 2724's low-income residents. I cannot stand-by quietly when the owners/applicants come to you with unclean hands for variances because this rent-hike is the result of the owners' claim that they cannot afford to make the needed repairs without the rent increase and to renovate the basement into market-rate units. This is a strategy they have used before to leverage low income tenants out [in the meantime, these tenants contribute to the upgrades never intended for them to enjoy!] The owners of 2724 have deferred maintenance on this building for 40 years while they have enjoyed the benefits of a continual supply of rent, even mortgaging it twice to presumably finance other projects. Now they want to transfer the cost of that deferred maintenance on to the tenants and the neighbors by asking for variances on parking and density for their renovations.

Sincerely,

Henri Lubet
1137 Fairmont ST NW
Washington, DC 20009

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District of Columbia
CASE NO.18790
EXHIBIT NO.31