

From: Berhane Adal and Adal Family
To: Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA)
Subject: Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), Washington DC
400 K Street NE Washington DC 20002

To whom it may concern:

My name is Berhane Adal and I am the 6th child of Adal family. I am compelled to write this brief note today to give you a picture of how we ended up in USA, Washington DC area, owning the property at 400 K street NE Washington DC 20002, and in particular the problems we faced owning this very old property (once condemned property) with zero experience and little finance of trying to bring the property to life.

We the Adal family are originally from Eritrea, North East Africa. It is the 2nd newest country in the world. All my older siblings came to the United States of American as refugees, fleeing the war torn Eritrea (fighting for its independence from Ethiopia) on foot, walking to Sudan at night to avoid aerial bombardment and after few years flying to Europe and eventually to the Promised Land, the United States of America.

As is customary in Eritrean culture, where the older sibling financially supports the family, we managed to survive the harsh living conditions in Eritrea during the 70s and 80s war of independence from Ethiopia, by the remittance sent to Eritrea from our older siblings who were working 2 -3 minimum paying jobs in Washington DC areas. With the grace of God, my older siblings collectively brought their younger siblings to the Promised Land, one-by-one, sponsoring each sibling. I truly believe we, the younger siblings owe to our older siblings more so than to our biological parents. I say this, because I am the first younger sibling beneficiary, who have graduated from college, paid by the combined financial effort of all my older siblings.

It was I believe in 1989, where my sister Tiblez Adal who was living in Falls Church Virginia, had the opportunity to co-own a 1/3 of a property located in 400 K Street Washington DC, 20002 with a friend. The other owner of the property, although had initially good investment instinct, lost hope and wanted to sell the property in 2002.

My sister Tiblez was not interested to sell the property but had no choice as the other co-owner wanted to sell. Knowing that she could not come up with the 2/3 value of the property, she came to her younger siblings to rescue her property. We told our older sister, we will do our best to make sure we keep the property within our family. God is great, we did not disappoint our sister Tiblez who has sacrificed all her life on our behalf. The easiest task was over, as we realize owning a very old property became an uphill battle to rebuild. We basically had no idea where to start!

The younger siblings did not have the money (since most of us were studying in colleges) or enough credit for loan to be able to rebuild the house. We had no choice, but to wait for the

right time, while paying property tax for the building. It was a difficult wait, as the city of Washington was understandably pressuring us to either fix the property or else it will be condemned. The property built in 1880s was in the worst shape anyone could imagine (see Figure 1). No one has lived in the property since 1969! (According to neighbors familiar with area). Everything inside the building was either stolen or broken, except the miraculously standing walls that were made of very old bricks no one maintained for over 50 years.

We were desperate, eager, but still determined and hopeful to complete the construction of the property. Every member of the family pledged to make a continuous financial contribution from start to end. With zero experience in fixing older homes, we were trapped with all sorts of problems, like finding a good and honest architect, finding good, honest and inexpensive building contractors, etc. The architects and contractors immediately knew we had no experience and as a result ended up paying a lot more than we should have, and only to find out many things were not getting done correctly. It took thousands of dollars, years of wasted time and back and forth between two architects before we had a workable building drawing.

Building permits were issued in 2009 and construction finally started in May 2010. Everyone's little saving was being used going for the rebuilding of the house. Hard work and perseverance seem to have paid. Finally we started to see "the light at the end of the tunnel", until suddenly we again hit with a road block, in which we were told (3/25/2014) by the inspector from the office of DCRA that we are NOT allowed to continue the construction of the building!!

We came to realize that the same Architect who took thousands of dollars (and his sweet time before we were able to get a building permit) had presented the Carriage House (see Figure 1) having as having NO Roof, when submitting his building drawings to the office in DCRA of Washington DC. It was devastating news to my family, and to this day, we have no knowledge and still have no idea how he was able to take pictures of the Carriage house without it having a roof and why he chose to submit incorrect picture of the Carriage House without showing the roof that existed since the day we purchased the property. In hindsight, it was our fault to have assumed that Mr. James Killette is a professional, and not to think of checking his technical work.

It seems like a never ending nightmare, where we have to waste more time and spend our hard earned money on lawyers for the damages caused by an architect we trusted and expected a professional service.

Today, we are begging your office, as you have been with us from the beginning (1989), we are almost at the finish line (see Figure 2), we need your help and cooperation more now than ever.

Sincerely

Berhane Adal, 9/5/2015

Appendix

The following list includes an outline of the most important events in chronological order to the best of my memory in regards to the property at 400 K Street NE Washington DC 20002,

1. 1989 Property bought by Tiblez and her friend owning 2/3 of the property.
2. 2002 Property owned completely by Adal family.
3. 06/11/2003, Building permit (B452114) for 2 family flat-R-2 issued, based on design by Agent: Mr. James Killette.
4. 09/12/2005, Building permit approved for 2 family flat-R-2 issued, based on design by a different Agent.
5. 10/15/2007, Building permit for 2 family flat-R-2 issued, based on a re-design by Agent: Mr. James Killette.
6. 02/21/2008 Building property was either condemned or condemnation hearing was given
7. Dec 2008 condemnation was lifted for 45 days and advised to start building immediately.
8. 12/15/2009, Building permit (B0901881) for 2 family flat-R-3 issued; Agent: Mr. James Killette.
9. 12/15/2009, Building permit (B0901881) for issued for underpinning; Agent: Mr. Clifford Dixon.
10. 10/27/2010, Condemnation Hearing Date set.
11. 03/ 25/2014 stopped construction due to issues with the Carriage House.
12. 03/18/2015 allowed to continue the construction of the Main House.
- 13. 2015 Waiting to get approval on Carriage House so we may finally bring our building to Life.**



Figure 1. 400 K Street NE Washington DC 20009 (OLD PICTURES)



Figure 2. 400 K Street NE Washington DC 20009 (Picture from 2014)