

February 27, 2015

John A. Stokes
1519 Varnum Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011
(202)288-7275
Stokesdc@hotmail.com

Re: Appeal for 1521 Varnum Street, NW

Appeal by: John Stokes, owner and resident of 1519 Varnum Street, NW

FORM 125 – APPEAL OF THE ISSUANCE BY DCRA OF BUILDING PERMIT #B1503050

Introduction

On December 31, 2015, DCRA issued a building permit, Permit #B1503050 (See Attachment 1).

This permit describes a project located at 1521 Varnum Street, NW, allowing the construction of a four story, seven unit, two bedroom, den with closet, 2.5 bath (21 toilets, 28 sinks, 14 baths) apartment building with balconies, double roof top decks, rear parking lot for at least four cars.

The existing single-family home structure would be converted while a wholly new additional building would be constructed and added onto the converted structure.

Work has yet to begin on site, and in fact a Stop Work Order has been recently been issued at the site (See Attachment 2).

DCRA's final decision to approve, sign, and then issue Permit #B1503050 demonstrates that fundamental DC Municipal Regulations, including the DC Zoning Regulations were ignored and are being flouted in error and adversely affecting me and surrounding neighbors.

The DC Zoning Regulations offer appeal rights to residents, like me to ask the BZA to review the final decision by DCRA to approve, sign and issue building permits, in this case Permit #B1503050.

Standing

My name is John Stokes. I am the owner and resident of the single family attached row house dwelling located at 1519 Varnum Street, NW, in the neighborhood of 16th Street Heights, an R-4 Residential District, and located just adjacent to the subject site.

Besides negative impacts on our light, air and privacy, the way the subject project will crowd surrounding properties and tower over surrounding yards, will immediately affect the value of our

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properties and destabilize surrounding land values and neighborhood overall. Noise and pollution impacts to me and my neighbors are also not specious. The privacy and use of my back yard, sunlight and deck will be lost with crime lighting, roof top decks, and windows facing my property coming from *a huge new wall that covers the whole length of my backyard*. The proposed parking lot serving four cars in a narrow service alley with an exit to the parking lot will directly affect surrounding residential properties with unacceptable noise by both people and vehicles and increased danger from speeding vehicles, possible property damage from vehicles attempting to back in and out of the spaces on a narrow alley, and street lighting. And, the approved size of the subject project permanently impacts future development of our entire block. Further, DCRA's decision to issue Permit #B1503050, does not take into account how the subject project, and additional density and residents, will further stress an aging infrastructure and current public utility services, like that of provision of water and other utility delivery to surrounding homes.

My personal and property interests, as well as those of the surrounding ANC-SMD 4C neighbors, will be directly and concretely affected by the final decision by DCRA to issue a permit for this proposed project on December 31, 2014.

Locale

The 16th Street Heights neighborhood is a quiet, established residential row house neighborhood with mature trees, well maintained front and back yards and quiet neighbors who have lived in the neighborhood for many years. Properties in the immediate vicinity of the subject property are small lots with improved two-story one-family attached dwellings. There is a consistent design and size to each of the houses that fit in with the character of the neighborhood.

The neighborhood has above-ground communication and utility lines, running along the streets and the alley between Varnum and Webster Streets, NW.

The project in question is in a R-4 Zone. The primary purpose of the R-4 District shall be the stabilization of remaining one-family dwellings.

Claims

I received the construction documents for the subject project on January 16, 2015, after Permit #B1503050 was issued on December 31, 2014.

After reviewing the plans for the permitted project, it has been determined that several chapters of the DC Zoning Regulations as they pertain to Residential R-4 District rules that conflict with this project.

The proposed height and density of the subject project, lack of required yards, overcrowding of the lot, inclusion of a non-conforming parking lot in the rear, and non-conforming roof structures, all together contravene the rules governing development of the subject property.

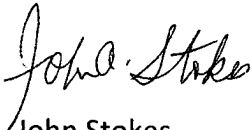
As such, I am asking the BZA Commissioners to review the project against the following provisions, among others which set the intent of the zoning regulations and the DC Comprehensive Plan, as

follows:

11-330	R-4 DISTRICTS: GENERAL PROVISIONS;
11-333	STORAGE AND PARKING ON ALLEY LOTS (R-4);
11-400	HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS OR STRUCTURES (R);
11-401	MINIMUM LOT DIMENSIONS (R);
11-402	FLOOR AREA RATIO (R);
11-403	PERCENTAGE OF LOT OCCUPANCY (R);
11-404	REAR YARDS (R);
11-405	SIDE YARDS (R);
11-411	ROOF STRUCTURES (R);
11-412	PERVIOUS SURFACE;
11-413	RETAINING WALLS;
11-408	GROSS FLOOR AREA (R)

In closing, I would like the Board to consider my appeal and apply any appropriate relief.

Thank you,



John Stokes
1519 Varnum Street, NW

Attachments:

Permit #B1503050 #1

Stop Work Order #2

