

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
441-4th Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

BZA CASE No. 18991

Appeal of Permit for 1521 Varnum Street, N.W.

By: Charles L. Smith and Patricia J. Lute
4320 15th Street, N.W.

Date: August 30, 2015

This is our supplemental statement supporting the appeal of the zoning permit issued for **Varnum Lofts**, a planned development at 1521 Varnum Street N.W. We are neighbors living at 4320 15th Street N.W. Our back gate is 50 yards from the back yard of the existing single-family home at 1521 Varnum Street. We bought our house in 1987 and have lived in it continuously since then. Like many of our neighbors, we purchased our home because we wanted to live in a quiet neighborhood of single-family homes rather than in an apartment district.

The large new Varnum Lofts apartment building clearly does not belong at 1521 Varnum Street. If, contrary to common-sense understanding of the meaning and intent of R-4 Zoning regulations, the Varnum Lofts scheme is allowed to proceed, it will destabilize our neighborhood of predominantly single-family residences and will have many negative impacts on its nearby neighbors, including our own property and ourselves.

Since at least 1987, and continuing to this day, we know first-hand that the 16th Street Heights neighborhood has never included, nor does it now include, any large apartment buildings with designs dramatically out-of-conformity with our neighborhood's 1920s-era residences. We join our many neighbors in the contention that the Zoning Administrator has erred in permitting Varnum Lofts, because it is a large project that involves the complete excavation of a 3,300-square-foot lot and the construction of a new seven-unit, three-story apartment building comprised of at least six two-bedroom units with dens, outdoor decks and many large windows facing nearby row homes. And, in particular, it would make the alley directly behind our property a busy traffic way for all the construction vehicles and resident vehicles accessing the newly constructed apartment complex.

We strongly contend and believe that, if the destruction of the single-family home at 1521 Varnum Street were allowed, and the Varnum Lofts project were permitted to be built, our neighborhood of quiet rows of single-family row homes on Varnum and Webster Streets would be severely damaged; the quality of our everyday lives would be dramatically reduced; and our own property would be significantly devalued despite our decades of residence and monetary investment in the improvement and upkeep of our home.