

3266 Worthington St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20015
September 1, 2015

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth Street, NW
Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Members of the BZA:

Re: BZA Case No. 18991 –
Support for the Appeal of Permit for 1521 Varnum Street, NW

The proposed plans for 1521 Varnum Street, NW, will produce a structure that goes far beyond the type of blight that has become known derisively as “pop-ups.” The plans for 1521 Varnum do not modify a single-family home with an out-of-scale addition but propose to insert, in an intact, harmonious R-4 rowhouse block, an outsized, overbearing apartment building.

While I recognize that enforcement of regulations turns on a close reading of technical details, there is no way that the plans for a seven-unit apartment house in this R-4 neighborhood could be interpreted as supportive of the intent of the zoning law, as spelled out in 330, R-4 Districts: General Provisions.

330 R-4 DISTRICTS: GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 330.1 The R-4 District is designed to include those areas now developed primarily with row dwellings, but within which there have been a substantial number of conversions of the dwellings into dwellings for two (2) or more families.
- 330.2 Very little vacant land shall be included within the R-4 District, **since its primary purpose shall be the stabilization of remaining one-family dwellings.**

The capacity and age of the infrastructure of R-4 neighborhoods does not support the demands of a seven-unit apartment building, with its many toilets, sinks, tubs, showers, and laundry facilities. Residents on all sides of the apartment building will be deprived of their enjoyment of space, air, and light--amenities which they legitimately could have expected to continue to enjoy, given the characteristics of R-4 neighborhoods—by the erection of this apartment building. The same potential for loss applies to the financial investments made by neighbors in landscaping and solar panels. Adjacent residences

often sustain structural damage from the demolition and excavation involved in the insertion of such buildings into the fabric of the row. Traffic, noise, and parking problems will be exacerbated.

I do not live in close proximity to 1521 Varnum Street, so the destruction of the character of this block will not impact me financially nor will it directly reduce my quality of life. But as a D.C. native and longtime resident, I strongly object to our governmental agencies—personified, in this case, by Zoning Administrator Matthew LeGrant—administering the zoning regulations in such a distorted, slap-dash fashion. I object to the well-being of Washington residents, *whose interests are meant to be protected by the Zoning Code*, being sacrificed to the interests of developers. The stability of our neighborhoods and by extension, our city, depends on homeowners, not on those who come to the District to make a quick million dollars from flipping property and in so doing, disfiguring the neighborhoods that give D.C. its character and distinction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea E. Rosen". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Andrea E. Rosen
Ward 4, Chevy Chase