

Neil Rhodes
503 11th Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

April 22, 2015

Dear BZA Board Members,

Regarding:
Application Number 18992
1015 E Street SE, Washington, DC 20003

I own and reside at 503 11th Street SE. The rear property line of my lot abuts a portion of the East property line of 1015 E Street SE, for which a zoning variance is being requested. I strongly oppose the granting of any variance or exception for this proposal. The applicant does not meet the requirements.

I am not an expert regarding zoning, but want to show you what will happen to my property, and the property of my immediate neighbor, Mr. Michael Ford, at 505 11th Street SE. I have attached two photographs labeled "Before and After Construction 503 11th St SE" and "Before and After Construction 505 11th St SE". Both of these photos were taken earlier this month from our respective back yards as far away from the rear property lines as possible. As you can clearly see, if you allow the proposed plan to go forward Mr. Ford and I will lose substantially all of our light and air.

In Winter this 23 foot 10 inch high wall will block the warming rays of the sun that partially heats our homes, and in Summer this monolith will absorb the heat of the sun all morning long, radiating enormous amounts of energy and heat throughout the afternoon and evening. Our Winters will be colder, and our Summers will be hotter.

Most importantly, the proposed building extension will block any emergency services from access to the rear of our properties. At present, every building on square 973 is accessible from the rear. If the proposed construction is permitted, three properties -- mine, Mr. Ford's and the dry cleaner at the corner of 11th Street and E Street SE -- will no longer be accessible from the rear. The dry cleaner's building was the site of a serious fire in 2012.

Frager's Hardware, directly across 11th Street from us was totally destroyed two years ago in one of the most serious fires in the history of Capitol Hill. It is not inconceivable that in the event of a future fire or other calamity, if either Mr. Ford or I were unable to escape from the front of our buildings, we would find ourselves trapped in our rear yards. I believe that this is clearly a significant detriment to the public good.

While I am neither a zoning nor a fire safety expert, it is clear to me that the expansion of the building at 1015 E Street SE to five units would result in a very high concentration of residents on a small lot. I believe that two of the proposed units will be entirely underground, with few windows, and, in the event of a fire or other emergency, their

occupants would have difficulty exiting the building. If either of the doors were blocked, exit would be impossible.

The applicant's claim that if this variance is not granted, they will suffer practical difficulty or economic hardship is not true. They paid \$665,000.00 for the property, the District's assessed value is \$736,100.00, or \$71,100.00 above the applicant's purchase price, and the market price would be even higher. They could easily sell the property as it is at a substantial profit.

Finally, that the variance is on the West side of the property is immaterial. It is the *total impact* of granting the variance that must be considered when making your decision. The Variance Test is much stricter than the Special Exemption Test.

Very truly yours,

Neil Rhodes

Submitted to bzasubmissions@dc.gov

Effect on light and air of the wall construction proposed for 1015 E St, SE

