

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E



Representing the communities of Burleith, Georgetown and Hillandale

3265 S Street, NW • Washington, DC 20007

(202) 724-7098 • anc2e@dc.gov

July 8, 2015

Lloyd Jordan, Chairperson, and Members of the Board
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street N.W., Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: 3324 Dent Place, NW, BZA Application No. 19056

Dear Chairperson Jordan and Members of the Board:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E, at a public meeting held on June 29, 2015, duly noticed, and at which seven commissioners of eight were present constituting a quorum, unanimously adopted the attached resolution.

We trust that you will give this resolution its full weight. Thank you for your consideration of our position in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ron Lewis
Chair, ANC 2E

COMMISSIONERS:

Ed Solomon, District 1 Ron Lewis, District 2 Jeff Jones, District 3 Craig Cassey, Jr., District 4
Bill Starrels, District 5 Tom Birch, District 6 Ellen Steury, District 7 Dennis Quinn, District 8

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
JCS NO.19056
EXHIBIT NO.25

ANC 2E urges the Board of Zoning Adjustment to deny an area variance from the requirements regarding lot width at 3324 Dent Place, NW.

This is a property of special historic importance, with the majority of history not being occupied by anything other than a house built toward the center of the lot, leaving sufficient side yard space on both sides to preserve the open views into the green center of the block.

The property is vacant now because the historic house built in the 1800's toward the center of the lot had to be razed – due in no small part to owner neglect, and in part to damage from a tree that fell on the second story. ANC 2E reluctantly concluded that the historic house could not be saved and took the unfortunate necessary step – very rare in the Georgetown Historic District – of joining in support of the house's demolition. The ANC 2E position on the house's demolition is attached as Attachment 1.

The applicant's proposed lot-width variance, and the two lot-line to lot-line houses the applicant would then want to build on the resulting narrow nonconforming lots, would destroy the historic and open character of the property – and for no good reason. The applicant does not meet any of the three requirements for a variance in this case.

1. **The property is not affected by exceptional size, shape or topography or other extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition.** This is a standard, buildable, rectangular lot with plenty of lot width. There is nothing unique about its size or shape in Georgetown. It is definitely not too small or otherwise un-developable – it is not, in other words, the type of situation for which a variance might be considered. And it is certainly not too large. The applicant's own Statement (page 4) admits that the property's width is not uniquely large in its Square.¹ It backs up to a similar sized lot on Q Street, and two lots across from it on Dent Place are wide lots with one house each. Throughout Georgetown, many lots are as wide or wider than this lot, and are occupied by a single house. Moreover, the applicant's claim has no merit that "a single family detached home on a lot 35 feet in width is likely to result in a building that is out of scale with the neighborhood" (Applicant's Statement, page 5). That description – a single family detached home on this lot – is exactly what was there historically. And design review by the Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts, which will be required for this location, is precisely intended to prevent the size of a replacement building from being out of scale with the neighborhood.²

¹ The applicant says, "at 35' in width, the property is larger than *most* other properties in the square" (emphasis supplied).

² A resolution by ANC 2E on design issues in an earlier submission by the applicant to the Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts is attached as Attachment 2. The Old Georgetown Board has these issues well in hand.

2. **The applicant would not encounter practical difficulties under normal zoning rules.** The applicant's strange assertion that without a zoning variance he would build an "enormous" house and it would be "difficult to market" (Applicant Statement, page 6), is utterly unsupported by the facts. First, the applicant is buying the property under existing zoning and with his eyes open; he will not be compelled to build a house larger than what he thinks he can sell. Second, the Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts will determine the appropriate size of the house that can be built on the property consistent with historic preservation standards; it is unlikely an obtrusively "enormous" house would be approved. And third, even if the applicant were permitted to build a large single house, there is considerable demand for large houses in Georgetown and they sell readily. Attachment 3 has a summary of some sales data for large single-family houses sold in Georgetown.
3. **The applicant's proposed variance would cause substantial detriment to the public good and substantial impairment to the intent, purpose and integrity of the zoning plan.** First, this is a property with extraordinary historic significance, and the applicant's proposal would destroy all visual references to the property's history. In the late 1700's and early 1800's, the property was the home of Yarrow Mamout, whose life illuminates a crucial period in the history of Georgetown – and of the United States. Arriving here enslaved, he became a free man and owned and lived his exemplary life at this property. He was a master of many crafts, an entrepreneur, an initial founder of the first bank in Georgetown, and a highly respected member of the community. He lived modestly in a house he built himself on the property. The openness of the space, so evocative of his life here, would be lost under the applicant's proposal, and that is a substantial detriment to the public good. Attachment 4 is a fuller description from ANC 2E of the historic importance of this property.

Second, the applicant's proposal to crowd two houses into narrow, nonconforming lots would take away the open spaces, light and air on the east and west sides of this property that are important not only to the nearby neighbors, but to the public. The zoning regulations, in section 101.1(a), recognize the importance of light and air in the built environment. The open side areas traditional at this property, with one house in the center of the lot, provide the public a welcome view into the green center of this block and add to the visual variety that is a key component of Georgetown's character and charm. This would be lost under the applicant's proposal, and that is a substantial detriment to the public good.

Third, this is simply not a case for which the lot-width area variance regulations were intended. The lot is clearly buildable as-is. Granting a variance simply because the lot is not wide enough to be subdivided would destroy the integrity of the lot width requirement, because every similarly situated lot could then be considered entitled to the same relief and the minimum lot width would have been altered without amending the regulations.

A variance would be contrary to the integrity of the lot width minimum requirements, would do substantial harm to the public and to the neighbors, and would only serve to enrich the owner and the purchaser.³ This would be a substantial impairment to the intent, purpose and integrity of the zoning plan.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge that the request for an area variance be denied.

We also urge the Board to deny or defer consideration of the application for a variance from the requirement to provide off-street parking. Denying the lot-width variance, above, will result in a single house being planned for the property, for which it may or may not be appropriate to provide parking on site. We suggest that plans be further along, including the possibility of input from the Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts, before considering the parking issue.

³ A further issue would be unjustly enriching an owner who, by years of neglect, contributed to the need to demolish the historic house that occupied this property.

Attachment 1 to ANC 2E Submission – BZA No. 19056, 3324 Dent Place, NW

Resolution by ANC 2E for the Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts adopted unanimously at a public meeting held on October 1, 2012, for which notice was duly given and at which six of seven commissioners were present, constituting a quorum:

With regard to 3324 Dent Place, NW, OG 12-348 (HPA 12-583)

In the extraordinary circumstances pertaining to this property, ANC 2E recommends that approval be granted to raze the existing house. Even before a fallen tree demolished much of the second floor, the house had fallen into neglect for so many years that it would have required significant efforts to restore it. The demolition caused by the tree compounded the demolition-by-neglect in progress at that point, to an extent that we do not believe it would be appropriate to attempt to restore this structure.

At the same time, this has been a building of historic merit in terms of its size and location on the property. We urge the Old Georgetown Board to signal to the owner that as and when plans for a replacement house are presented, the Board anticipates a similarly-sized building with similar rear- and side-yard setbacks and similar height. We would also like to see the replacement house incorporate any exterior historic siding to the fullest extent possible. We do not suggest that the raze permit be conditioned on presentation of plans but rather that the Board articulate its expectation as to an appropriate replacement on this site.

Resolution by ANC 2E for the Old Georgetown Board/Commission of Fine Arts adopted unanimously at a public meeting held on February 2, 2015, for which notice was duly given and at which eight of eight commissioners were present, constituting a quorum:

With Regard to 3324 Dent Pl., NW:

The historic house on this property suffered from neglect as a vacant property for many years. A tree that fell on the second story several years ago delivered the coup-de-grace, sadly, and made razing the house the only feasible option.

Now the property's contract purchaser wants to build two much larger houses on the property.

The original house was a charming, small two-story structure located toward the east side of the property, leaving a green swath to the west and a smaller green space to the east, with a rare verdant view into the center of the block.

We urge that the Board not approve two new houses for this site, and that as a preferred option a new house be limited to the size and location of the footprint of the original house and to the height of the original house. This would be in keeping with the historic use and appearance of the property. It would be a just result as well.

If the Board feels otherwise, however, we urge at least that a single house be considered with a side setback of 8 feet or more required from the property line on the west side and a side setback to the east; that the front façade be no farther forward than the façade of the adjacent house to the east; that lot coverage be no greater than 30%; and that the house have two stories but if three stories are allowed, the third story have dormer windows.

Attachment 3 to ANC 2E Submission – BZA No. 19056, 3324 Dent Place, NW

Below on the next three pages are some sales of houses in Georgetown over the past 2 years in the \$3,000,000 range. The square footage, for example, was 3,778 square feet for a house at 3343 P Street, NW; 4,550 square feet for a house at 3107 Dumbarton Street, NW; 4,473 square feet for a house at 3003 O Street, NW; and 3,654 square feet for a house at 1601 35th Street, NW. All of those houses sold within one month of being listed. There were sales as well of even larger houses in Georgetown.

Residential Gallery - Agent



3268 P ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-2755

List Price: \$3,295,000 Own: Fee Simple, Sale Total Taxes: \$11,815
 Contr Date: 04-Oct-2013 Close Date: 20-Dec-2013 Close Price: \$3,100,000
 Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN ADC Map: 0000
 Type: Semi-Detached Style: Federal
 Model: #Lvs: 3 #Fpls: 3 Area:
 BR: 4 FB: 3 HB: 1 Basement: Yes, Fully Finished Acres: 0.09 Yr Blt: 1
 Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Forced Air/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer
 Park: Garage, Drwy/Off Str # Gar/Cpt/Assgn: 1 / 1
 Const: Wood List Date: 18-Sep-2013
 Showing Information: Call 1st-Lister, Appt Only-Lister, , -
 Showing Contact: Nancy Taylor Bubes H:
 Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP3 O: (202) 333-3320 F: (202)
 List Agent: Nancy Taylor Bubes H: (202) 386-7813 O: (202)

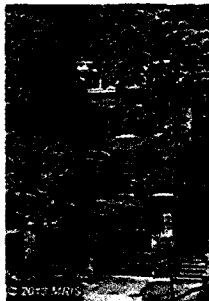
Water Oriented: No
 Body of Water:

Vacation: No

Remarks: Beautiful semi-detached townhouse designed by Thomas Pheasant with high-end, custom finishes, a pool, and a garage. All Waterworks: counters in kitchen and bathrooms. 4 BR/3.5 BA with a gourmet kitchen open to family room and dining room, large living room with two fireplaces, floors and large windows throughout. Exterior with patio, terrace and plunge pool. By appointment.

Directions: ONE WAY block of P Street between Wisconsin and 33rd.

3333 sq



3107 DUMBARTON ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-3309

List Price: \$3,300,000 Own: Fee Simple, Sale Total Taxes: \$14,847
 Contr Date: 04-Oct-2013 Close Date: 17-Oct-2013 Close Price: \$2,900,000
 Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN ADC Map: 999
 Type: Detached Style: Federal
 Model: #Lvs: 4 #Fpls: 4 Area:
 BR: 5 FB: 4 HB: 1 Basement: Yes, Partially Finished, Full
 Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Forced Air/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer
 Park: Garage # Gar/Cpt/Assgn: 2 / 1
 Const: Brick List Date: 20-Sep-2013
 Showing Information: Call 1st-Lister, , -
 Showing Contact: Jamie Peva H: (202) 258-5050
 Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP3 O: (202) 333-3320 F: (202)
 List Agent: Jamie Peva H: (202) 258-5050 O: (202)

Water Oriented: No
 Body of Water:

Vacation: No

Remarks: This large, detached East Village Federal has a commanding presence high above the street. Filled with light from all four sides, 5 bedroom baths, two-car garage. Sold "as is."

Directions: South on Wisconsin, left on Dumbarton, house is on the left.

4550 sq



3003 O ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-3108

List Price: \$2,850,000 Own: Fee Simple, Sale Total Taxes: \$22,145
 Contr Date: 04-Apr-2014 Close Date: 04-Apr-2014 Close Price: \$2,825,000
 Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN ADC Map: 0000
 Type: Attach/Row Hse Style: Federal
 Model: #Lvs: 4 #Fpls: 3 Area:
 BR: 4 FB: 5 HB: 1 Basement: Yes, Fully Finished Acres: 0.04 Yr Blt: 1
 Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Forced Air/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer
 Park: Street # Gar/Cpt/Assgn: / /
 Const: Wood List Date: 11-Mar-2014
 Showing Information: Appt Only-Lister, , -
 Showing Contact: Nancy Taylor Bubes H: (202) 386-7813
 Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP3 O: (202) 333-3320 F: (202)
 List Agent: Nancy Taylor Bubes H: (202) 386-7813 O: (202)

Water Oriented: No
 Body of Water:

Vacation: No

Remarks: Beautifully renovated Civil War era Federal in Georgetown's East Village on one of the most sought after streets. This home is complete hrdwd floors, high ceilings, chef's kitch w/top of the line appliances, gracious main rooms, spacious bedrooms, a beautiful master bath, a lower level room, play room, kitchenette and separate entrance & rear porch & patio.

Directions: O Street between 30th and 31st Streets

4473 sq



1601 35TH ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-2316

List Price: \$3,499,999 Own: Fee Simple, Sale Total Taxes: \$19,070
 Contr Date: 12-Apr-2014 Close Date: 20-May-2014 Close Price: \$3,050,000
 Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN ADC Map: ABC
 Type: Attach/Row Hse Style: Victorian
 Model: #Lvs: 3 #Fpls: 2 Area:
 BR: 4 FB: 4 HB: 2 Basement: No Acres: 0.04 Yr Blt: 1
 Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Central/Electric/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer
 Park: Garage # Gar/Cpt/Assgn: 1 / 1
 Const: Brick List Date: 19-Mar-2014
 Showing Information: Appt Only-Lister, All Days, 9 AM - 8 PM
 Showing Contact: Jennifer Hammond H:



Residential Gallery - Agent



1242 POTOMAC ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-3231

List Price: \$2,950,000

Own: Fee Simple, Sale

Total Taxes: \$14,795

MLS#: DC83

Contr Date: 04-May-2014

Close Date: 04-Jun-2014

Close Price: \$2,850,000

Status: SOL

Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN

Style: Federal

ADC Map: 0000

Subsidy \$0

Type: Townhouse

#Lvls: 3

#Fpls: 3

Area:

Gr Rent:

BR: 3 FB: 4 HB: 1

Basement: Yes, Fully Finished

Acres: 0.07

Yr Blt: 1830

HOA:

Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Forced Air/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer

Park: Drvwy/Off Str

Gar/Cpt/Assign: 1/1

Const: Brick

List Date: 02-May-2014

Upd Date: 0

Showing Information: Call 1st-Lister, -

H:

DOMM/DOM

Showing Contact: Nancy Taylor Bubes

O: (202) 333-3320 F: (202) 333-3361

Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP3

H: (202) 386-7813 O: (202) 386-7813 C:

List Agent: Nancy Taylor Bubes

Water Oriented: No

Vacation: No

Body of Water:

Remarks: This stunning 3BR/4.5 BA semi-detached home with PARKING has been completely renovated with a large back patio and carriage house. The renovation features a gourmet, Eat-in kitchen, hardwood floors, recessed lighting and fully finished lower level with wine coolers, family room, full bathroom and bedroom. The carriage house features a family room, kitchenette and full bath.

Directions: One way Potomac St between O and M streets.

2520 sq. ft.



3343 P ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-2702

List Price: \$2,950,000

Own: Fee Simple, Sale

Total Taxes: \$15,866

MLS#: DC83

Contr Date: 09-May-2014

Close Date: 28-Jul-2014

Close Price: \$3,000,000

Status: SOL

Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN

Style: Federal

ADC Map: 0000

Subsidy \$0

Type: Detached

#Lvls: 3

#Fpls: 2

Area:

Gr Rent:

BR: 3 FB: 3 HB: 1

Basement: Yes, Fully Finished

Acres: 0.04

Yr Blt: 1900

HOA:

Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Forced Air/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer

Park: Garage

Gar/Cpt/Assign: 1/1

Const: Brick

List Date: 09-May-2014

Upd Date: 28

Showing Information: Call 1st-Lister, -

H:

DOMM/DOM

Showing Contact: Nancy Taylor Bubes

O: (202) 333-3320 F: (202) 333-3361

Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP3

H: (202) 386-7813 O: (202) 386-7813 C:

List Agent: Nancy Taylor Bubes

Water Oriented: No

Vacation: No

Body of Water:

Remarks: Beautiful 3BR, 3.5 BA townhome with a detached GARAGE. Situated on one of the cobblestone streets in the West Village, this home has character and charm throughout with high ceilings, large windows and a private upper level deck. The luxurious master suite features a spacious sitting area, master bath and bedroom. LL family room with wet bar, office, laundry and full bath.

Directions: Corner of 34th and P.

3778 sq. ft.



3021 P ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-3054

List Price: \$2,985,000

Own: Fee Simple, Sale

Total Taxes: \$17,359

MLS#: DC84

Contr Date: 24-Sep-2014

Close Date: 04-Feb-2015

Close Price: \$2,925,000

Status: SOL

Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN

Style: Federal

ADC Map: 0000

Subsidy \$0

Type: Semi-Detached

#Lvls: 4

#Fpls: 4

Area:

Gr Rent:

BR: 4 FB: 3 HB: 1

Basement: Yes, Full, Space For Rooms

Acres: 0.08

Yr Blt: 1813

HOA:

Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Forced Air, Radiator/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer

Park: Garage

Gar/Cpt/Assign: 1/1

Const: Brick

List Date: 18-Sep-2014

Upd Date: 04

Showing Information: Call 1st-Lister, Appt Only-Lister, -

H:

DOMM/DOM

Showing Contact: Nancy Taylor Bubes

O: (202) 333-3320 F: (202) 333-3361

Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP3

H: (202) 386-7813 O: (202) 386-7813 C:

List Agent: Nancy Taylor Bubes

Water Oriented: No

Vacation: No

Body of Water:

Remarks: No public opens. BY APPT. AGENT THERE SAT & SUN 9/20 9/21 from 2-4pm. Come show then or send your clients!

Directions: P St between 31st and 30th.

3668 sq. ft.



3310 N ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-2807

List Price: \$3,175,000

Own: Fee Simple, Sale

Total Taxes: \$13,244

MLS#: DC84

Contr Date: 16-Dec-2014

Close Date: 16-Mar-2015

Close Price: \$2,925,000

Status: SOL

Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN

Style: Federal

ADC Map: GPS

Subsidy \$0

Type: Townhouse

#Lvls: 4

#Fpls: 4

Area:

Gr Rent:

BR: 4 FB: 3 HB: 1

Basement: Yes, Fully Finished, Daylight, Full

Acres: 0.05

Yr Blt: 1820

HOA:

Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Forced Air/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer

Park: Drvwy/Off Str

Gar/Cpt/Assign: 1/1

Const: Brick

List Date: 26-Sep-2014

Upd Date: 16

Showing Information: Call 1st-Lister, Email 1st-Lister, Lockbox-SentriLock, Show Anytime, All Days, -

H:

DOMM/DOM

Showing Contact: Jim Kaull

O: (202) 388-0010 F: (202) 944-5021

Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP1

H: (202) 388-0010 O: (202) 388-0010 C:

List Agent: Jim Kaull

Water Oriented: No

Vacation: No

Body of Water:

Remarks: OPEN SUN 12/14 1-4 NEW PRICE REDUCTION Complete whole house period rebuild with best of materials and finishes of four level 1820 Federal by award winning, Glass Construction, . Four Bedrooms, 3.5 baths, 4 fps, 10.4 ft ceilings on floor 1 and 2. parking, and south facing garden.

Directions: South on Wisconsin, Right on N to 3310

2618 sq. ft.

Residential Gallery - Agent



No Photo
Available

3257 O ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-2843

List Price: \$3,200,000

Contr Date: 05-Sep-2014

Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN

Type: Townhouse

Model:

BR: 4 FB: 3 HB: 1

Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Forced Air/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer

Park: Garage

Const: Brick

Showing Information: Appt Only-Lister, , -

Showing Contact: Nancy Taylor Bubes

Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP3

List Agent: Nancy Taylor Bubes

Own: Fee Simple, Sale

Close Date: 16-Jan-2015

Style: Federal

#Lvs: 3

#Fpls: 3

Basement: Yes, Fully Finished

Total Taxes: \$21,039

Close Price: \$3,150,000

ADC Map: 0000

Area:

Acres: 0.06

Yr Blt: 1810

Gar/Cpt/Assign: 1 / 1

List Date: 05-Sep-2014

MLS#: DC84

Status: SOL

Subsidy \$0

Gr Rent:

HOA:

Tax Living A

Upd Date: 11

Water Oriented: No

Vacation: No

Body of Water:

Remarks: FOR COMP ONLY. Stunning renovation with HWs, gourmet kitchen open to family room. Large patio and detached garage.
Directions: O Street between 33rd and Wisconsin Ave.

3216 SC



3106 P ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20007-3078

List Price: \$2,995,000

Contr Date: 23-Apr-2015

Adv. Sub: GEORGETOWN

Type: Townhouse

Model:

BR: 4 FB: 4 HB: 1

Heat/Cool/Wtr/Swr: Radiator/Natural Gas/Central A/C/Electric/Public/Public Sewer

Park: Other

Const: Brick

Showing Information: Call 1st-Lister, , -

Showing Contact: Nancy Taylor Bubes

Company: Washington Fine Properties, LLC, WFP3

List Agent: Nancy Taylor Bubes

Own: Fee Simple, Sale

Close Date: 29-May-2015

Style: Victorian

#Lvs: 4

#Fpls: 3

Basement: No

Total Taxes: \$11,226

Close Price: \$2,900,000

ADC Map: 0000

Area:

Acres: 0.04

Yr Blt: 1900

Gar/Cpt/Assign: 1 / 1

List Date: 03-Apr-2015

MLS#: DC85

Status: SOL

Subsidy \$0

Gr Rent:

HOA:

Tax Living A

Upd Date: 29

Water Oriented: No

Vacation: No

Body of Water:

Remarks: Beautifully renovated 4BR/4BA w/ 3,500 sq. ft. complete with custom finishes throughout, spacious and light-filled LR, newly renovated Kitchen opening to the elegant patio and garden, fully finished LL with separate entrance. RENTAL spot available a block away- first year paid by owner. Renovated in 2014 including copper roof.
Directions: 31st and P.

2728 SC

Attachment 4 to ANC 2E Submission – BZA No. 19056, 3324 Dent Place, NW

Resolution by ANC 2E for the DC Historic Preservation Office adopted unanimously at a public meeting held on March 2, 2015, for which notice was duly given and at which eight of eight commissioners were present, constituting a quorum:

ANC 2E resolution re an archeological survey of 3324 Dent Place NW:

We urge the D.C. Historic Preservation Office to request that the Historic Preservation Review Board recognize the property at 3324 Dent Place NW as property likely to possess archeological significance and determine that a thorough archeological survey, including excavation as appropriate, be conducted before any building permit is issued at this location.

This site was the home of Yarrow Mamout, a Georgetown resident of extraordinary talent and character. Enslaved in West Africa and brought to America as a young man, he was later freed and lived for many years, from 1796 until around 1832, in a house he built in Georgetown at what is now 3324 Dent Place NW. A master brick maker, jack-of-all-trades, businessman and investor, he was widely respected for his character, capabilities and personality.

When the painter Charles Willson Peale came to Washington, D.C. in 1819 to paint portraits of distinguished Americans, he included Yarrow Mamout (a copy of this portrait is attached). Another portrait of Yarrow Mamout, this one by James Alexander Simpson, is on display in the Georgetown Branch Library.

Further underscoring the importance of Yarrow Mamout's life and times are the attached materials from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Mount Zion United Methodist Church in Georgetown and the Washington Post.

We understand the Historic Preservation Office considers that this property has significant archeological potential, both for important artifacts illustrating the life and times of Yarrow Mamout and for the possibility that Yarrow Mamout was buried on this property. We acknowledge HPO's work on this with appreciation and thanks.

We understand further that while current resources would permit some test excavations, a more comprehensive archeological survey, including the use of technology such as ground-penetrating radar, might not be possible without additional financial support.

We believe the Historic Preservation Review Board has the authority to require that the ground not be disturbed on a site of potential archeological importance – that is, to deny issuance of a building permit – until a thorough archeological evaluation is conducted. Such an action by the Historic Preservation Review Board would assure that the archeological potential is preserved and could possibly be a stimulus for necessary funding to do a comprehensive survey.

Under the applicable rules, the Historic Preservation Office may request such action from the Historic Preservation Board. While the rules provide that this “shall not normally be expected of homeowners or small businesses,” we believe this is a highly unusual and other than a “normal” situation – with the potential of finding archeological material that has extraordinary importance. This qualifies in our view for the exception in the applicable rules for exceptional circumstances.

We therefore respectfully request that the Historic Preservation Office request the Historic Preservation Review Board to recognize the status of this property as having very significant archeological potential and to determine that archeological testing, and excavation if appropriate, be conducted before ground disturbance or issuance of a building permit.