

RE: BZA Application for 549 Park Road NW; Square 3037 Lot 48 (the "Property") – Area Variance and Special Exception Application

Dear Members of the Board:

I came across the notice of public hearing on this matter late, and am not able to attend the hearing of this case in person. Upon review of the drawings provided for public viewing, I have deep reservations about this project, and am writing in opposition to the granting of an exception to § 336. I believe that this project perpetuates a trend of interlopers exploiting the economic climate of the city with little regard or consideration for the existing community. I do not necessarily have a problem with developers coming into the neighborhood with the express intent on turning a profit on blighted property. However, when this practice so blatantly disregards the prevailing history of the neighborhood by no less means through design, it is an insult that should not be tolerated. This harm is evident in the building's design. There is a diversity of building types along the 500 and 600 blocks of Park Road. This street, in particular has unconsciously developed a language of its own through the physical changes and developments of the homeowners and residents of each house. The years have bore witness to the growth of the 500 block of Park Road, individual houses breaking the homogeneity of their nativity and collectively evolving into a colorful and physically diverse tapestry. Over time each house assuming a character unique from its neighbor, while adhering to a specific framework in which the collective block was conceived.

This neighborhood was shaped by the stakeholders that live in the neighborhood. I will concede that this aesthetic was not deliberate, and that this block and this neighborhood, developed organically. Further, it can be argued that other houses on the block break from this logic in design, and a handful of blatant examples of this departure in the form of 'pop-ups' are within two blocks of the site.

Oftentimes, in working class neighborhoods like this one, few people if anyone at all are willing to speak out. The failure of the community to mount a serious challenge to the development of 471 Luray Place NW and 454 Park Road marks a shift from careful and thoughtful development. This proposed addition is evidence of that shift. This project may seem mundane relative to the 'pop-ups' two blocks away, but it is an unnecessary shift in the character of this residential block.

Members of the board, I urge you to strongly consider this applicant's proposal. I don't seek to burden this applicant unduly, as I am not protesting the applicant's project in whole. I simply do not believe that the extra floor is necessary. I am opposing the design because of the potential of the precedent it could set. I implore you to reject an exception to § 336 for 549 Park Road.

Sincerely,

Ayo Alao

Submitted on 12/1/2015 by:

Ayo Alao

522 Park Road