

To: DC Board of Zoning Adjustment
From: Pablo Espitia
Date: 12/14/15
RE: **Support for Variance in Case #19133**

I am writing to support the request by St. Thomas' Parish for a variance in their proposed building project at 1772 Church Street, NW. I have lived in Washington for the past 9 years, and I grew up in the surrounding area. I have seen many changes in the city. I believe this project to be an example of a good change, and I think it can contribute to the public good of our city.

Churches play an important role in providing community support, both to longtime residents and newcomers. I know several people who attend this church who have found support and ways to connect to others. This is an intangible good, but it helps promote and preserve a sense of community. St. Thomas' has provided visible support for the LGBT community for over 30 years, and I find that a great service.

Dupont Circle is a beautiful, historic, prominent neighborhood. It deserves a beautiful, historic, and prominent church at the corner of 17th & Church. It is unfortunate the church was burned down many years ago. I think a prominent building would enhance the beauty of the neighborhood. I understand the new building would have about the same percentage of lot coverage as the previous one, so this would not be an overpowering building.

This church provides many services to low-income citizens. I know friends who cook meals for the hungry, provide clothes for children during the winter, furnish an apartment for people transitioning out of homelessness, and participate in efforts to reduce gun violence, a major problem in our city. With a larger church they could do even more.

Lastly, as a homeowner, I know the value of having responsible neighbors who contribute to the look and vibrancy of my neighborhood. I believe this project would do that for the Dupont Circle neighborhood by revitalizing the corner of 17th & Church. It would no longer look like a run-down ruin.



Pablo M. Espitia
2123 Third Street, NE
Washington, DC