

Dear Members of BZA,

I live in the 1700 block of Church Street, NW where the above cited project requesting a lot occupancy variance will be located. I appreciate your consideration of public comments and the time and attention that you devote to your deliberations. I will share a few thoughts below and hope you give great weight to the resolution of ANC2B and to the views of neighbors who oppose the variance.

At the December 9, 2015 ANC hearing, the developer spoke that the proposed design revisions submitted on December 1, 2015 and shown online as Exhibit 25 and 25A show the only way that the design can be changed to accommodate 80% occupancy. He presented it as an impractical solution. It seems to me that there are at least several other possibilities to comply with the 80%, and that the developer astutely chose to submit what is perhaps the absolute most impractical solution possible. In addition, there was continual discussion of the diminished viability and efficiency of the project at 80% lot occupancy, without really defining those terms.

As I understand it, when working within in the context of a historic neighborhood, developers take on certain responsibilities that require designs to be compatible with the character of the neighborhood. Massing has been a problem with this project from the beginning. The increased 6.7% lot occupancy allows the building to be 8.4% larger, effectively contributing to greater mass and changing the character of the street forever. Exchanging the 6.7% of lot occupancy for green space would benefit pedestrians, the environment, and contribute to the public good. In contrast, a larger building and rental functions at the church will cause even more traffic and parking congestion, and erode the free flow of air and light on a small one way residential street.

Thank you for your care in reviewing this and other comments.

Respectfully,
Philomena Ojeda
1730 Church St., NW