

1768 Lanier Pl NW
Washington, DC 20009
June 12, 2018

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA Case No. 19771 - 1834 Ontario Pl NW, Washington, DC 20009

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) Case No. 19771 regarding 1834 Ontario Pl NW, Washington, DC 20009.

I live one street over from this rowhouse. I was involved with my neighborhood's fight in 2016, and several years before that, to save the character of the rowhouses from out-of-control Pop-Up construction resulting in numerous heinous monstrosities that now lurk on our streets and blight the beauty of the neighborhood. We won that fight through all of the proper government and administrative channels in this city. The zoning in this neighborhood is now RF-1 (previously R-4). RF-1 zoning still allows property owners to renovate and expand their houses within reason, and three new six-story apartment buildings have been built within one block of my house within the past 3 years; larger lots appropriate for apartment buildings were not affected by the change.

Now people like Malcolm Haith and Lee Wells, who are high-powered commercial developers and realtors, are attempting to trick the BZA and DCRA by filing multiple confusing applications, so they can avoid RF-1 compliance at their large house replacement at 1834 Ontario Pl NW. They came to our neighborhood ANC meeting and pretended to be poor innocent homeowners who just didn't understand the Zoning laws and can't afford to comply with them. Most poor people can't afford to have Sullivan and Barros represent them for months to seek Zoning relief.

They already built most of their house, and received Zoning relief to expand the house back ten feet, and they did that. They want to remove the front porch so they can lower the lot occupancy percentage. Most of the houses on Ontario Pl NW have front porches, and that is one of the wonderful things about Ontario Pl NW. Removing your front porch is not allowed via Special Exception for that reason – it ruins the character, scale, and pattern of the houses.

Mr. Haith and Mr. Wells also want to build a garage that is almost four times the size allowed in their rear yard setback. By doing this they would violate the pervious surface rules as well as lot occupancy rules. In order to do what they want to do, they are supposed to seek a Variance, not a Special Exception. We need more pervious surface, not less – we are losing green space at an alarming rate as each house in this City replaces their green front yard with paved entryway for additional dwelling units.

These people want to benefit from the beauty, light, air, grass, trees, pervious ground, front porches, and amicable environment provided by the neighborhood while detracting from the neighborhood by building on 70% of the lot and removing their front porch.

Please oppose BZA Case 19771.

Sincerely,

Meg Staines
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