

Giant Retail Complex Individual Position Paper

I testify as a 40 year resident of the last house on the left on Ordway St (3622), directly across Wisconsin Ave. from the proposed Giant mixed-use complex. My long term practice as an analytic psychologist is in this home. Our daughter went all through the District public schools and the DC Youth Orchestra, has her doctorate in Musicology, is a classical violinist, and currently works as an Ombudsman in a Philadelphia public school. As former New York City residents, we are committed to an urban way of life. It is not Madison Ave., but it's a good place to be.

This quiet street in this historic neighborhood, with its ease of parking, is one we cherish. The increase in traffic and the need for parking from both commercial and increased restaurant users looms large. Ordway is perhaps the last street in the immediate neighborhood that hasn't yet felt the impact of the restaurant and commercial development already clogging Newark and Macomb Streets. The Giant proposal (particularly in its real estate aims) seems to be about three times larger for the actually small land area it now holds and wishes to overdevelop.

What is their purpose in this overloaded project? That question concerns me greatly. My concern about their judgment and intent comes from my knowledge of the parent Ahold company of Holland. When I taught in Leiden, the company wanted to tear down the church the Mayflower Pilgrims used for the 10 year stay before coming here. It was for the purpose of Ahold extending the outdoor plaza of their Olive Garden restaurant! It was successfully fought by a group of people who cherish history. As disturbing, was the later imprisonment of an Ahold executive for business misdeeds. Greed is universal, especially where money is paramount.

My further concern is that, if all the variances are granted, it will so increase the real estate value of the property itself that they may be tempted to just sell it to the highest bidder. This possibility is greater during our time of many empty and rapidly emptying businesses along the Wisconsin Ave. corridor (even in the supposedly more affluent Bethesda area) as well as many, many newly built but unoccupied offices, apartments and houses. We have already lost our beloved Murphys and other much valued small urban shops due to their business decisions. I should like to see them give us back our neighborhood Giant (and the combined Murphy's and Giant space is large enough for such a neighborhood friendly project) in this unique, non-metro serviced, historic neighborhood. Think honest, and think small. There is more money for our beloved District in this way.

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