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June 20, 2004

Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Application #17090, Lee C. Bauer

I write in opposition to Application #17090 by Lee C. Bauer requesting a variance from the nonconforming structure provisions and a variance from the accessory garage alley setback requirements to allow a roof deck addition to a free standing accessory garage at 2116 O Street NW (Square 69, Lot 146).

For over 15 years I have shared a common alley with the premises at the subject address and am familiar with conditions in this alley as well as the rental property in question. It is this experience that gives rise to the following objections:

1) Granting this variance would prolong the period during the winter when the alley is made impassable by ice and snow.

There are three reasons for this claim:

a) For the last 15 years there has been no garage at the subject address, just a gravel parking area. Building a new garage and roof deck will decrease the soil area able to absorb rainfall, run-off, and melting snow or ice. Unless the new structure directs its run-off towards the premises in question or directly into the sewer, it will direct more rainfall into the alley. Water draining from existing structures and concrete slabs already causes one or two inches of water to flow down the alley with even the lightest rain. During the winter this water turns to a treacherous sheet of ice.

b) Nearly every winter the run-off water freezes in the alley. It takes significantly longer for this ice to melt in shaded areas. Building a new garage and roof deck will add a new shaded area to the alley and is certain to prolong the time when the alley is impassible to the 29 other vehicles parked off the alley and to emergency vehicles.

c) Allowing structures close to the edge of a ten foot wide alley will leave no place to put snow or ice removed from the roadway.

BZA
Case No. 17090
Exhibit No. 22

Board of Zoning Adjustment
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CASE NO. 17090
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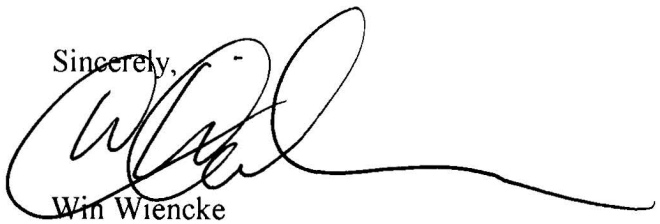
2) Granting this variance would permanently narrow the alley, making the resumption of rear trash pickup even less likely and ultimately aggravating the rodent control problem. All of the houses in this historic district were designed for trash pickup from the rear of the building. Many even had small buildings or hampers for the trash containers. However, citing the narrowness of the alley due to two imprudently permitted fences and budget cuts, the Sanitation Department will no longer pick up trash from the alley.

As the Board knows all too well, folks living in historic districts are strongly discouraged from making small buildings or hampers to store trash cans in front of their homes. Instead they are condemned to drag 30 gallon trash cans through their living quarters twice a week.

Cities with with a vested interest in the appearance of their historic districts, like New Orleans, have adopted innovative trash pickup technologies and are able to pick up trash from alleys in historic districts. Undoubtedly this lets the buildings in those areas operate as they were designed, reduces litter on the sidewalks, and trash can be kept more secure from rodents.

At the moment there are no structures other than fences, telephone poles and disintegrating retaining walls that constrict the width of the alley in question to 13 feet or less. However dim the hope that alley trash pickups will be resumed, I for one fervently cling to it and beg the board to not allow any permanent structure to further narrow the alley.

Sincerely,



Win Wiencke

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