

September 20, 2017

Government of the District of Columbia  
Board of Zoning Adjustment  
441 4th St NW Suite 200/210-S  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Applications 19560 and 19576

To the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

We write to you today requesting that you honor Zoning Commission Order No. 14-11B, passed in March of 2017, which limits rear additions to a maximum of 10 feet. All the signatories to this letter, representing a majority of the homes on our block, oppose special exceptions or variances being granted to any and all of the 31 homes on the Harvard Hill (1701-1761 Harvard St NW). We believe such special exceptions would adversely affect the use of neighboring properties as well as the neighborhood at large. We urge you to reject these requests.

Since its construction more than 70 years ago, our row has maintained a bright, sunny, and tree-filled landscape. The large yards are part of what attracted many of us to the neighborhood, with ample space for gardens, dining tables and play areas. These yards serve as an oasis within the city. During the warm months of the year, we use our backyards as though they were part of our homes, spending as much time in them as we do inside. The row's signature large windows are filled with views of the sky, surrounding trees, and sunlight which no doubt improve our quality of life considerably while contributing tremendously to the neighborhood's property values. The open feel also allows for a great deal of airflow in our alley.

The proposed requests for special exceptions would therefore do a great deal of damage to our lives on the Harvard Hill. Sunlight is so often lacking in row houses, and part of what makes our homes so special is the "tree house" feel that comes with the direct light shining on us all year. Even smaller two story additions, capped at 10 feet, would adversely affect the immediate neighbors and those several lots away. Our sun filled gardens, which many of us have been cultivating for years, will no longer get sun. In the winter months the lack of light will make the backyards cold, dark and icy. The views from our homes will also be negatively altered. Rather than seeing sunlight, skies, and trees when we look out back, we will instead see brick walls and shadows looming above. Any two story structure jutting out will adversely impact our quality of life, but allowing these additions to extend beyond the 10 feet maximum would do even greater harm to the homes and neighborhood we so love.

If residents are granted special exceptions now, what is to stop future requests from being denied? We recognize this is likely among the first cases to come before you since your March ruling and we request that you honor the decision you made at that time.

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO.19560  
EXHIBIT NO.35

Therefore, we urge you to deny any and all applications for special exceptions on the Harvard Hill and require that all homeowners comply with the 10 foot maximum, as required by the zoning commission. We are eager to discuss this matter further should you have any questions and we look forward to sharing our concerns at the public hearings currently scheduled for October 4th and 11th, 2017.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Donald Hardy (1705 Harvard)  
Yvonne Dale (1707 Harvard)  
Bodo Stern and Viknesh Sivanathan (1719 Harvard)  
Alison Rousseau (1721 Harvard)  
Nicole Melcher (1723 Harvard)  
Daniel Ingber (1725 Harvard)  
Linda Schakel (1727 Harvard)  
Marisa Silveira and Vincenzo Di Maro (1729 Harvard)  
Steve and Annie Roberts (1731 Harvard)  
Bryan Thompson (1737 Harvard)  
Eric Picard (1741 Harvard)  
Jana and Jeremy Kadden (1743 Harvard)  
Amber Freiwald (1747 Harvard)  
Jen Pace (1749 Harvard)  
Yanir Rubinstein (1753 Harvard)  
Michelle Lackie and Jonathan Manheim (1761 Harvard)