

Re: BZA Applications 19560 and 19576

To the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

I write to you today as the homeowner of 1747 Harvard Stree, the property directly adjacent to 1845. I request that you honor Zoning Commission Order No. 14-11B, passed in March of 2017, which limits rear additions to a maximum of 10 feet. I , along with the other signatories to this letter 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.

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,

Marie-Elise Diamond (1747 Harvard St. NW)

Steve and Annie Roberts (1731 Harvard)

Eric Picard (1741 Harvard)

Jana and Jeremy Kadden (1743 Harvard)

Amber Freiwal (1747 Harvard)

Yanir Rubenstein (1753 Harvard)

Michelle Lackie and Jonathan Manheim (1761 Harvard)

Submitted on 10/3/2017 by:

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO.19560  
EXHIBIT NO.51

Marie-Elise Diamond

1969 Biltmore St. NW Homeowner at 1747 Harvard St.