

October 19, 2017

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW Suite 210  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application #19560 (1739 Harvard St. NW)  
And 19576 (1745 Harvard St. NW) request of Special Exception

Dear Board of Zoning Adjustment:

I have been the owner of 1723 Harvard Street NW since 2002. My property abuts 1725 Harvard to the east, which was the first two story bump back construction on our row of houses in 2006. I have a unique perspective having lived through the “before” and “after” of such structures.

Upon learning of the addition plans on 1725, I was very upset because one of the main reasons I bought my house was for the air/sunlight/openness and view out back with the cozy patio and garden area. I consulted some friends who were lawyers about my rights who advised me that the fight could be expensive and futile. I was angry at the idea of such an imposing structure negatively impacting my light and air and the natural view of sky and trees. The owner at that time was politically well connected in DC and the rules regarding additions were much more lax. I reluctantly went along with my neighbor’s plans and concessions. We had many meetings and I spent a lot of my time and attention regarding the construction process due to contractor error (2 story framing over the property line *on my property* that had to be torn down and redone, drainage issues, etc.).

The aftermath has been just as devastating as I had imagined. The imposing wall placed next to my windows and French doors drastically reduces the amount of direct sunlight and ambient light and warmth that I once enjoyed all year. Snow and ice take longer to melt in the winter, and there is a dampness that the lack of light sustains. I now have mold and moss growing across my door threshold and on the patio that appeared and perpetuates after the addition was built. With the two story, 14-foot bump back on one side, it crowds the spacious views of trees and sky from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors just as I had feared. I used to enjoy sitting on my sunny patio, listening to the birds and rustle of wind in the trees. Now, no matter where I look, whether sitting

in my 3<sup>rd</sup> floor home office or in my kitchen and dining room, my view is boxed in and contaminated by a looming brick wall rather than the pristine, light and airy feel that previously existed.

Despite the shadow studies provided on behalf of 1739 and 1745, they DO NOT reflect the reality of living next to, and potentially between, massive two story bump back additions. In the afternoon at this time of year, the shadow casts across my yard and into the neighbor's yard on the other side of my patio. Some plantings in my garden were no longer viable due to lack of light. Airflow is reduced. The small interior footprint of these row houses is only 15 feet wide and 24 feet long, much narrower than a typical Mt. Pleasant row house. If this trend continues, and another 2-story bump out is constructed on the other side of my home, it would result in a tunnel view. This unique row of houses is about the width of an alley cut through in Mt. Pleasant. I urge you to go stand in one of those or come by my house to have a look and you will understand the devastating impact, regardless of what a shadow study shown on paper indicates.

For these reasons, I stand with my neighbors who vehemently oppose such additions on our row and I respectfully request that their special exception be denied.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Melcher', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nicole Melcher  
1723 Harvard Street NW