

Frederick Haggard
1839 Monroe ST NW
Washington, DC 20010
202-328-9675
fredhaggard@yahoo.com

November 28, 2017

BZA Application No. 19614
Letter in Opposition

Dear BZA,

I write in opposition to the request for a zoning exception in BZA Application No. 19614. The applicant has failed to make a remotely convincing argument as why they should be granted an **exception** to zoning rules. The applicant's statement in support of a variance is also filled with inaccuracies that they are trying to use to make their argument. Some of the specific inaccuracies contained in their statement (exhibit 5):

1. "The situation is so unique that of the two proposed buildings (1842 and 1844), only the building at 1844 must seek side yard relief. Further, had the semi -detached building at 1850 Monroe been built to the lot line..."(pg. 3)

It is not unique to have a detached or semi-detached house in the middle of a block in Mt. Pleasant. 1850 Monroe is a detached home. The fact that the applicant does not even bother to get this correct throughout their case is appalling.

2. In this case, the Application meets the practical difficulty standard with regard to the side yard, because in order to comply with regulations, the Applicant would have to build a twenty-foot semi-detached dwelling. As discussed in the staff report, quoted above, HPRB required the Applicant to re-create the double house that was once on the lot. Accordingly, HPRB would likely not approve a dwelling that does not match the proposed building at 1842 Monroe Street. A side yard would require a substantial change in the proportions at 1844 and weaken the rowhouse repetition. The rowhouse repetition also strengthens the proposed design's relationship to the neighborhood context as it is similar to the many rowhouses on the street. Two

twenty-foot (20 ft.) wide semi-detached dwellings, or one twenty-five-foot wide (25 ft.) flat next to a twenty-foot (20 ft.) wide semi-detached dwelling would be a completely unique design that is rarely – if ever – seen in the district.” (pg. 6)

The structure that occupied these lots before it was destroyed (in a fire I believe) was, in fact two semi-detached dwellings that did not run to the lot line on either side, so the claim that HPRB has required this design is inaccurate.

Given the applicant is constructing both structures, the argument that having them be different sizes is the doing of anyone other than the applicant is ridiculous.

What is unique about this project is the proposed construction of 25 ft. wide attached dwellings. There are none of these on Monroe Street currently, and the number of them in the neighborhood is miniscule.

3. “The additional five feet (5 ft.) will not have much impact – if any at all – on the adjacent property at 1850 Monroe. The neighboring semi-detached residence has an existing side yard on its property, which would alleviate any concerns about light and air.” (pg. 6)

I believe the owners of 1850 Monroe are firmly in opposition to the proposed variance, so it seems that they think it will have an impact on them. Again, 1850 is a detached home.

4. “The property has remained idle while almost every other property on this block has been developed. According to *Palmer*, the purpose of variance relief is to prevent otherwise usable land from remaining idle, which is likely what would happen if the zoning regulations were strictly applied.”

This is a totally false claim. The property had been owned for years by the owners of 1843 Park Road. They chose to leave the land undeveloped, even though they had numerous offers over the years from people looking to buy the land and construct a home. The land was developed (two semi-detached dwellings) from the original development of the neighborhood until they were destroyed in the 50’s or 60’s. Now that one of them has passed away and the other is elderly the applicant seems to think they can just make things up. If this variance is not granted there are plenty of people who would develop the property.

One thing that does not appear anywhere in the applicant's request for variance, is the most likely reason they are requesting it. They are looking to maximize their own profits. If they had applied to recreate the original 2 semi-detached dwellings, this request would not be necessary, and they would create much less disruption. Why have they not done that? Why do their plans show no construction of a basement or cellar that would increase livable area inside the structures? I would guess it might have to do with the cost of construction.

As a neighbor located directly across the street from these properties I urge you not to grant this variance. There is no **valid** argument for doing so.

Sincerely,

Frederick Haggard