

Frederick L Hill, Chairman  
Board of Zoning Adjustment  
441 4<sup>th</sup> St NW, Ste 200S  
Washington DC, 20001

March 15, 2018

RE:

**BZA Case 19629/Request to considering denying the building of any structure on the parking pad at 1665 Harvard St NW**

Dear Chairman Hill,

I am the owner and resident at 1728 Hobart St NW, Washington DC, we are slightly outside the 200 foot radius from 1665 Harvard Street. **I am writing in strong opposition to the applicant's plans in Case 19629, I have seen several different versions of plans to build a structure on the parking pad at 1665 Harvard Street, NW.** I want to state that I am opposed to all versions of the plans and am concerned that if the owner is granted a zoning variance that he will move forward with building a carriage house which is what he had originally proposed. In attending community meeting with neighbors on Hobart and Harvard Streets, it appears that most neighbors are strongly opposed to the building of any structure on the parking pad that actually is physically located directly behind the house at 1701 Harvard Street, NW.

**On behalf of Concerned Residents of Harvard and Hobart Streets NW, the neighbors strongly oppose the building and plans for the proposed building (and any previous or new versions of plans) on the parking pad at 1665 Harvard Street on the following grounds:**

- (i) The current lot at 1665 Harvard Street, NW sits in the alley way across a public walkway from the house at 1665 Harvard Street. The lot is actually directly behind the house at 1701 Harvard Street, which would mean that any new structure would not sit behind 1665 Harvard Street but rather behind the neighbors house at 1701. This is not fair, nor right to the people that live at 1701 Harvard Street. In addition, the neighbors that are opposed to this structure all are residents of the neighborhood, while the owner of 1665 Harvard Street, does not live in the neighborhood but rather lives in Virginia and rents the property and will more than likely rent whatever is built at 1665 Harvard Street.
- (ii) The lot at 1665 Harvard Street, NW is currently a tax lot not a record lot and this status should not be changed. With a tax lot, no building permits should be issued.
- (iii) Residents of Hobart and Harvard Streets routinely utilize the public alley between 1665 and 1701 Harvard St as a short cut between Mount Pleasant and Adams Morgan. The applicants have requested zoning relief in terms of a waiver of the usual setback from the property line. If this relief is granted, it will result in construction of a two-story high wall along the boundary of this public through-fare, where there is currently no wall. The most recent version of the plan calls for a wooden fence rather than a wall. I believe this is still a public safety issue and should be considered. This will permanently block visibility to the entrance of this public through-fare and negatively affect security and safety. Also, the applicants

have not proposed in the plans how access to this public thoroughfare will be maintained during construction. Since use of this public thoroughfare by a broad cross section of Mt Pleasant residents will be impaired if the proposed zoning relief is granted, conferment of Party Status to the Concerned Residents of Hobart and Harvard St would be appropriate in this case.

- (iv) The applicants propose to construct a new one plus-story structure that would extend to the property line on the alley side of 1665 Harvard St. The applicants have requested zoning relief in relation to mandated setbacks to put this into effect. Within the 200ft circle of affected properties, no first or second story structures extend to the alley property line at the rear of Harvard St. This means the requested zoning relief in relation to setbacks would set a precedent, and would in principle allow other property owners to seek similar relief. This could permanently change the nature of the neighborhood in this tight knit historic district. In discussions with over 30 neighbors, we have learned that in no case is this precedent-setting change supported. Since this proposed construction has the potential to impair the public interest, it would be appropriate to grant Party Status to the Concerned Residents of Harvard and Hobart Streets in this case.
- (v) During the winter months, when the stairs and walking path between the two houses is shaded the path is quite treacherous, with the added shade of an abuted tall wooden fence, one or two story building next to the path this walkway will be even more snowy, icy, and not safe.
- (vi) The concern in allowing a variance such as this to allow a structure to be built right up to the property line and right up to the alley is a concern not only for the property surrounding 1701/1665 Harvard Street, but also if this were to be used as a precedent for all Harvard Hill residents to build structures on their parking pads. This would most definitely negatively affect the alley and all those people that live here and use the alley daily. The alley is already quite tight to park behind the houses on Hobart Street and I can't imagine having to navigate around buildings abutting the alley.

I have been a long time resident of Mount Pleasant and have used the "secret stairs" between 1665 and 1701 Harvard Street for years and this has been a great connection between Mount Pleasant and Adams Morgan. I would hate to see the stairs and the surrounding area destroyed by over construction. The space behind 1701 was meant to be a parking pad and should remain a parking pad. Mount Pleasant is a historic district and should maintain the integrity of the neighborhood. There are plenty of other places in the city that have experienced this over building and construction. If the owner of 1665 Harvard is interested in building in the city, I'm sure he could sell his property and find another place in the city to build something like he proposes. What he wants to build doesn't fit the character of the neighborhood and is not welcomed by the neighbors. This might be something that he would be aware of if he actually lived in the neighborhood, but he does not.

Thank you.

Jon Bolduc  
Sarah Hawkins  
1728 Hobart Street, NW