

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

March 19, 2018

RE: BZA Case 19629/Request for Zoning Relief for building at 1665 Harvard St NW  
*Opposition Letter*

Dear Sir,

We are the owners of and residents at 1709 Harvard St NW, Washington DC, less than 200 feet from 1665 Harvard St. **We are writing in opposition to the applicant's (revised) plans in Case 19629.**

**We object to the proposed plans on the following grounds:**

- (i) The applicants propose to construct a new enclosed garage structure and paved area, to also be enclosed by a garage door, that would create a solid wall of significant height and close in the property to the line on the alley side of 1665 Harvard St. While they have continued to make changes to their proposals to reduce the overall size and scope of the project, any building on this lot requires a variance which would set precedent for the rest of the row. This is a tax lot only, not a record lot, so no building is permitted on it without a variance or change in the type of lot. Changing the type of lot will open it up to further construction to add on to this garage structure in the future. We see no reason for an exception to be made in this case, on such a tiny lot that will negatively impact the surrounding neighbors with any construction or walls erected here. Any variance will set a precedence for this alley.
- (ii) 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 preliminary discussions with 20 neighbors, we have learned that in no case is this precedent-setting change supported. We object to the proposed construction as it has the potential to impair the public interest.
- (iii) The requested zoning relief in relation to setbacks from the property line would create a tighter passage in the alley, which is often dangerous for pedestrians navigating cars and any larger vehicles making their way through the alley. The row of modern houses on Harvard street to which this lot is adjacent have no car ports or garage structures behind them in the alley, and setting a precedent for one would start to further enclose the very narrow passage as well as change the feel from within the small yards of these homes, which are downhill from the alley and need this light and sense of space to enjoy their back yard areas.
- (iv) The proposed garage does not meet any possible criteria for providing additional lower cost housing that might be beneficial to city residence. Paving over a dirt and green area simply for the sake of protecting a car and adding storage will have a negative environmental effect. The owners of the property are not DC residents and are looking to add income from rental value but have no stake in protecting the nature of the neighborhood as residents.

Very respectfully,

*Stephane Muszynski*

*Wendy Muszynski*

**Stephane & Wendy Muszynski  
1709 Harvard Street NW  
Washington DC 20009**