

Sophie Bethune
19 Randolph PI NW
Washington DC 20001

12/10/2018

To whom it may concern:

Re: letter of opposition to BZA application no. 19887

My name is Sophie Bethune and I am the owner-occupant of 19 Randolph PI NW, which is within 200 feet of 1724 North Capitol Street NW, the property currently being considered for change of use. I have lived at this address since 2003.

I write in opposition to this application because it does not adequately address parking and traffic issues that already exist on the block due to Ms. Hutchinson's current takeout business Jam Doung which is located next door to the premises in question. If those issues can be addressed I would support the change of use.

Unfortunately many takeout customers of the existing business regularly park illegally at the intersection of Randolph PI NW and North Capitol while they wait for their takeout. My assumption is that they believe that because they are only waiting for 10 or 15 minutes it's okay to park illegally. However, when dozens of customers do this throughout rush hour every day it creates a constant bottle neck. With a vehicle parked too close to the intersection it is not possible for cars to both enter and exit Randolph Place at the same time, meaning vehicles may wait through multiple traffic lights to get in and out of the block and/or block traffic traveling on North Capitol. This traffic bottleneck is directly adjacent to 1724 North Capitol Street NW which is situated on the north west corner of North Capitol and Randolph PI (see annotated satellite image and Google images).

While Jam Doung owners have been sympathetic, they have not been able to prevent their customers from disrupting traffic to date and the problem is much worse today than it has been in the past. DC parking enforcement has made no effort to address this, despite us having raised it with them multiple times. In fact, one regular offender and Jam Doung customer is a DC parking enforcement officer who parks her DC parking enforcement vehicle illegally while she goes to get takeout.

This issue is compounded by the narrowness of Randolph PI NW. If our block were a one-way street, it would not be as much of an issue when customers parked within a few feet of the intersection. In the 15 years I have lived on Randolph Place our car has been sideswiped by other vehicles EIGHT TIMES (see attached list of the most recent incidents). Increased vehicular traffic due to a restaurant at that intersection may make this worse.

In addition, a new sit down restaurant will place even more parking demand on our block. The unit block of Randolph PI NW is already zoned for 2-hour non-residential parking only during day-time hours with parking available without any restriction in the evenings. This is in contrast to the neighboring unit block of R street NW (the next block to the south) which is zoned for Ward 5 residential parking only. This means that patrons of R street businesses (Big Bear and Pub and the People) can not park on R street, so they instead park on our block further limiting the parking available for residents.

In order for this application to move forward, the traffic and parking situation must be adequately addressed. Some measures that could take place include:

- In addition to existing signage indicating where parking is prohibited in the proximity to the intersection, stripes or a box should be painted on the road.

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- A commitment from DC parking enforcement to start ticketing violators and to prohibit their own staff from parking illegally while they get their takeout
- A change in residential parking status to residential parking only (similar to the unit block of R street NW)
- A change to Randolph Place NW to a one-way street going east-bound
- Provision of valet or other parking for restaurant patrons

Finally, the construction at 1724 N Capitol Street has been going on for considerable time, including digging out the basement and other extensive renovations. During this time, construction debris has littered that end of the block, a poorly located dumpster impacted traffic for months, rat activity has increased and for many months a heap of solidified sand and other debris was left in the road. This issue is in addition to the problem of trash from Jam Doung carryout customers who regularly litter our block with styrofoam takeout containers. If this zoning change goes ahead, attention needs to be given to cleaning up debris in the street during constructions, and keeping the site clean and secure as well as addressing litter issues posed by the business.

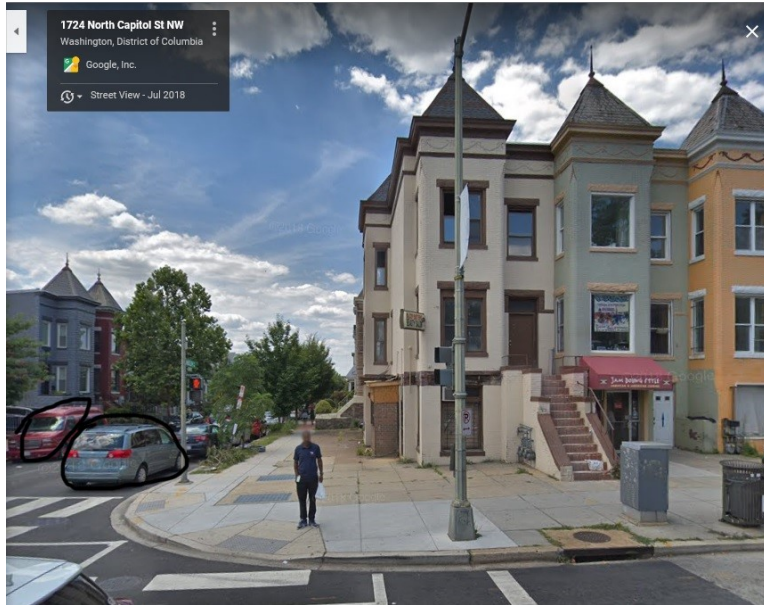
I wish Ms Hutchinson the best in expanding her business. My husband and I were the first people on the scene to help when she was shot last year and it was a very distressing incident. We hope she can make this work, however I'm concerned that she bought a building that was not zoned as a restaurant and has not yet considered traffic and parking issues.

I urge the zoning board to give careful consideration to these comments and to those of other neighbors on the unit block of Randolph PI NW as we will be directly impacted by this proposed zoning change.

Sophie Bethune

Additional attached documents:

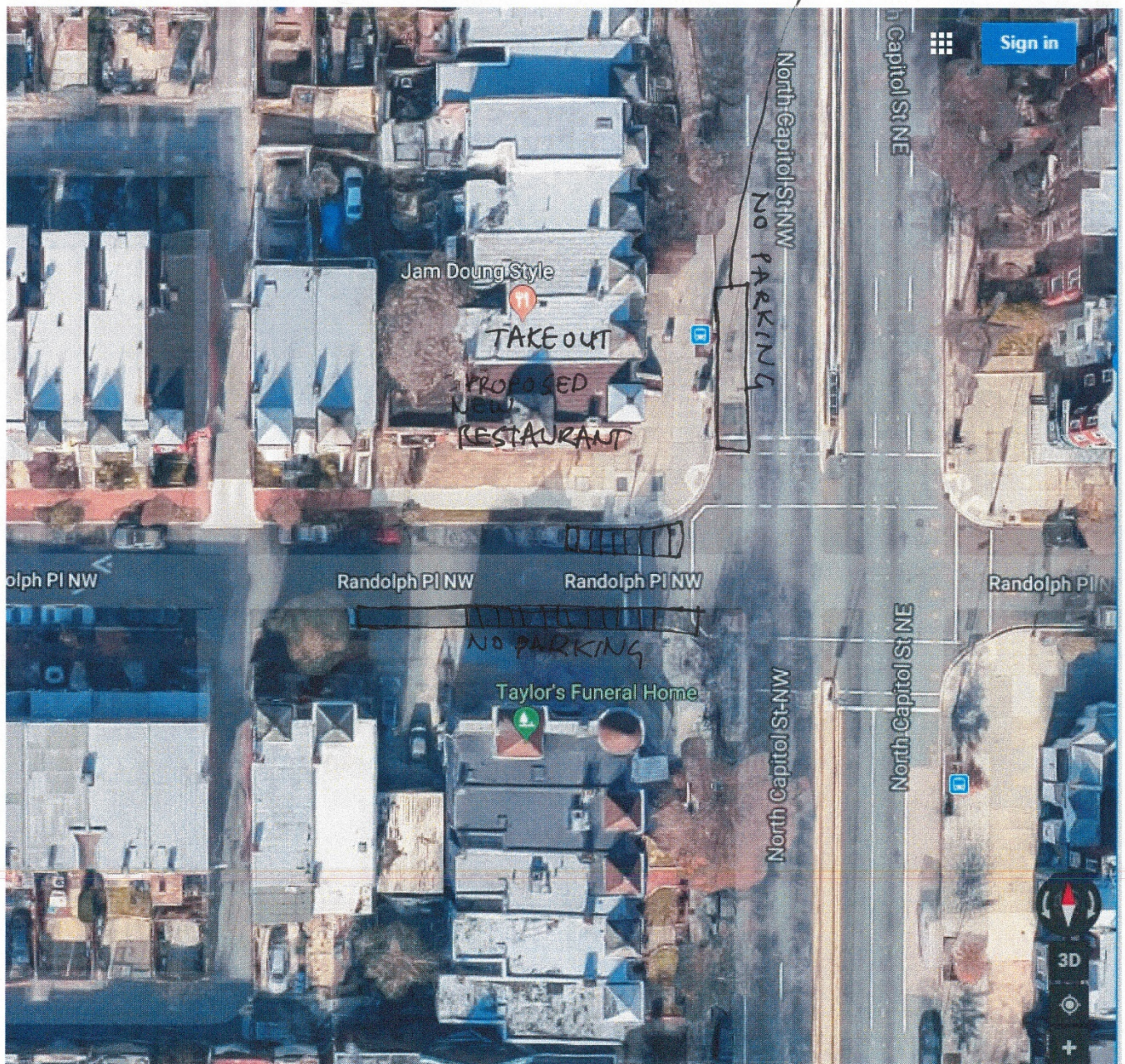
- Google street view images indicating location of parking issues
- Satellite image
- List of times our vehicle has been hit while parked on Randolph Place over the past four years




This July 2018 Google street view image (above) shows the 1724 N Capitol immediately ahead and vehicles parked illegally (circled). The below July 2018 Google street view image shows a vehicle swerving past an illegally parked vehicle (circled). If another car had been waiting to exit Randolph Place NW at the same time there would not have been room for both to pass.



(Occasionally the bus stop on N. Capitol is also blocked by people getting takeout.)



 Indicates areas where parking is prohibited but customers and others regularly park illegally.

List of hit and run or sideswiped incidents since 2014 impacting our personal vehicle while parked at the eastern end of the unit block of Randolph PL NW. There were four other incidents 2003-2014. Other residents of this block have had similar issues.

4/8/2018 – Sideswiped, hit and run

3/2/2016 – Sideswiped by UPS vehicle

5/1/2014 – Sideswiped, hit and run

3/26/2014 – Sideswiped, hit and run