

Dupont East Civic Action Association

January 3, 2020

To DC Board of Zoning Adjustment
Re: 1832 15th Street variances BZA Case 20144

Dupont East Civic Action Association (DECAA) is an incorporated association in the District of Columbia with boundaries that include the property at 1832 15th Street. On November 18 at a public membership meeting duly noticed and with a quorum present, DECAA approved a resolution to challenge proposed development at 1832 15th St NW. Although DECAA invited the applicant residing at 1832 15th St. to the public meeting to present and explain the proposed development, the applicant did not attend our meeting and DECAA's resolution passed without opposition. Members of DECAA visited the site to see firsthand how the development would affect the neighbors and the alley.

We understand that this project, BZA Case 20144, is on the agenda of the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) January 15, 2020.

We join both abutting neighbors at 1830 and 1834 15th Street NW who oppose the planned addition as it will drastically change the character, historic nature and low-scale footprint of our beautiful and unique neighborhood. We understand the applicants for the development have not reached out to neighboring properties to find some compromise, contrary to ANC2B guidance. The success of community depends on the willingness to cooperate with neighbors. In this case we are impressed that 30 letters of opposition to the development have been received from neighbors.

In this case, the development will have a significant impact on the neighborhood. The plan calls for lot occupancy far beyond the 60% lot occupancy standard. The proposed bump out of the rear wall 13.25 feet will have significant impact on neighbors abutting the property and establish an unfortunate precedent that others will be tempted to follow. The objectionable bump out occurs in mid-block in a row of three similar homes. The bump out does not incorporate a dog leg with an open space between the buildings allowing for light, air and privacy. The effect will not be *de minimis*. The shadow cast by the new development will cast a shadow on the neighbors at 1834 and significantly impact a vegetable garden the owners now enjoy. Such a vegetable garden will not thrive in the shade. It was one of the aspects of the property that attracted the homeowners at 1834 originally when they decided to purchase the property. include a rear deck, and a 4.3 ft. deck on the second story, plus a two-story garage.

The addition on the back of 1832 will be approximately 24 ft high, rising from cellar to roof – making solid walls facing both adjoining neighbors' properties. Such an addition will block the sunlight, and air flow to the two adjoining neighbors' homes, in addition to negatively affecting their privacy.

We understand this cannot be built as a “matter of right” and is in clear violation to the intentions of the RF-2 Dupont Circle zoning regulations.

DECAA is dedicated to historic preservation the preservation of the character of the neighborhoods in DC, particularly in its established historic districts. Our concern is not just for the front of the residences but for the allies, the views of the residences from the alley, the amount of open space in the alley and in the yards on the alley, all of which contribute to the character of the neighborhood. The purchase of a row home should not mean the owner can build on it without limitations.

We urge BZA to deny the request for four variances.

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