



Letter of Opposition to 1832 15th Street NW

1 message

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To: Ed Hanlon <2B09@anc.dc.gov>, 2b04@anc.dc.gov, planning@dc.gov, 2B@anc.dc.gov, 2b02@anc.dc.gov, 2B02.ANC@dc.gov

Cc: Peter Bepler <peterbepler@gmail.com>

Bcc: Taylor Nickel <Taylor.nitech@gmail.com>, Sarah Nickel <srhnckl@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioner Hanlon, Commissioner Landry and Chairperson Warwick,

We are writing to you regarding a project that we share adjoining properties with, and will be reviewed by ANC 2B09 and 2B04 this Wednesday, October 2nd, and next Thursday, October 10th. We want to express vehement opposition to the planned addition at 1832 15th Street NW.

First and foremost, we and 1834 are impacted the most by this proposed addition. It would severely impact the light, airflow, privacy and enjoyment of our property, as well as that of 1834 (it affects their light more egregiously than our's). Both we and 1834 have tried our best to communicate a compromise with the owners of 1832, to which they rejected outright. Their response was to not amend any part of the design or scale of their addition, but rather to "possibly, as they see fit" give us choices on paint colors and materials used, hardly a compromise at all. The owners of 1832 did not make any realistic attempt to find compromise, despite a request by the ANC to do so as stated in the April 24, 2019 ANC 2B resolution.

We have repeatedly seen 1832 use the fact that they are a 2 adult, 2 small children (plus a live-in nanny) household, and they need additional space for this small family. Instead, we fear (and based on their renderings) that they actually intend on converting the historic and small footprint to 2 or 3 separate units, given that they propose turning this (already large footprint) into a 5-bedroom, 4-bathroom home while adding a kitchenette in the basement and second story garage, and an additional washer/dryer unit in the basement. The purported rationale for the project is to expand the available living space to accommodate 2 adults and 2 children, along with a live-in nanny, but this project could be easily converted to a two-unit home and potentially a three-unit home with the kitchenette and half-bathroom on the garage's second story. This is explicitly against the regulations aimed at protecting the low-scale, residential character of the neighborhood. These homes were built as single-family units, and there are laws in place to try and preserve these smaller footprints so as to keep the historic and small-scale nature of our neighborhood and prevent massive homes to take over the landscape.

If we were to ever expand our family, we would do so under the current zoning laws, not seek a special exception, or simply move to a new home that is large enough to accommodate our sole needs, without ruining the homes of multiple other families. Their entitlement is offensive.

We bought our home in 2011, and a huge reason was due to the unique and precious outdoor space that it afforded our "family" of 4. To see this be detrimentally and adversely affected is disheartening and frustrating to say the least.

Finally, the addition would be a huge change to the historic character and smaller footprint of our neighborhood.

The owners of 1832 have repeatedly demonstrated little concern for how their oversized addition will affect the neighboring houses (us - 1830, and 1834) and will remove more green space from the neighborhood. Having lived in the neighborhood for almost a decade, we believe that new owners should have some appreciation for the existing character and not try to create huge houses that overpower neighboring structures. We do not support this lack of consideration, both to their immediate neighbors (us - 1830, and 1834) and to the neighborhood, and are against granting an exception to a 70% occupancy, plus a rear deck, plus third floor deck, plus a two story garage.

The addition will be larger than any of the neighboring houses and create a 13.25 ft deep (plus a 4.3 ft deck) and 24 ft high solid wall along the side of our yards, which will drastically and negatively affect the enjoyment of both our properties (us - 1830, and 1834) when using our outdoor spaces. Such a huge addition will block the sunlight and air flow and make the space very uncomfortable, no longer private and quite intrusive.

Allowing this massive expansion to proceed will grant permission for every house to do so and soon the charming historic alleys beautiful rear yards of DC row houses will be lost. We understand this cannot be built as a "matter of right" and are opposed to this massive addition.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
EXHIBIT NO.34

This is in clear violation to the intentions of the RF-2 Dupont Circle zoning regulations.

Sincerely,

Brittany & Peter Bepler
1830 15th Street NW