

AFFIDAVIT OF WENDY SCHUMACHER

I live in the Chastleton, a historic building constructed in 1920 listed in Best Addresses: A Century of Washington's Distinguished Apartment Houses by James Goode. The Chastleton is located at 1701 16th Street NW and is separated from the Masonic Temple by a 15 foot wide alley.

I moved into the Chastleton in 2007. After viewing many units in various stages of renovation I picked an unrenovated unit that looked towards the back of the Masonic Temple and across to the large green open space behind the Temple with trees, flowers and a picnic table. It was very quiet and peaceful.

My windows are only 15 feet across the alleyway from the Masonic Temple. Looking out my windows, it was a beautiful view. A great sense of calm would come over me as I looked at these views of open space, flowers and trees from my windows which became therapeutic while stuck home during the early days of the pandemic. I appreciated the quiet and privacy my unit had since the nearest houses were on the north side of S Street almost 300 feet away. My late uncle, an architectural historian, liked to sit on my couch to take in the impressive views from my windows. We used to look at those beautiful views and talk. I get up early in the morning and the views of the rising sun from my windows were especially enchanting. I anticipated the smell of the grass being cut in the large garden area behind the Temple as a sure sign of spring.

My privacy, quiet, and my tranquility, will be destroyed forever unless the Appellants prevail. The proposed building will have a pool and commercial kitchen on the roof which will be about the same height or higher than my windows. There are no other rooftop pools in the immediate area, but they exist in neighborhoods like NoMa where issues with rooftop noise and misbehavior are common.

Because of the noise from construction only feet from my windows, I have not been able to open my windows for fresh air as the noise and dust are and will continue to be very disturbing. This apartment building when built will have over 150 apartments. The noise from these apartments and from the rooftop clubhouse, especially at night, with a pool and a bar and a commercial kitchen on the roof at the same height or taller than my windows, is going to seriously harm the enjoyment and peace I get from living in my unit.

Many people in my building are very upset with the construction and the prospect of such a large building with hundreds of residents and a parking garage for over 100 vehicles on the alley between my building and the Masonic Temple.

I have reviewed the materials that Perseus has submitted to DCRA. The diagrams show the entrance to the parking garage and the entrance to the only loading dock for this huge building Perseus wants to construct will be on the alley. My unit is in the back of the Chastleton. The entrance to the parking garage and loading dock will only be about 100-125 feet from where I live.

Ever since I moved in, the alley has been a very quiet place with only a few cars all day. People liked to stroll or walk with their dogs there. It is two-way alley.

But now construction is ruining the peaceful nature of the alley right below my windows. It has become very noisy and congested.

Since March 17, 2020, I have been working from home and my management does not anticipate that I will return to the office full time. The first workers arrive before 6am and turn on the lights in the site shop. Vehicles arrive through the alley which is directly under my window. Many days workers go to the new chainlink gate along the alley to let vehicles in and out. Sometimes it requires rearranging the vehicles because it is so crowded so there is some idling under my window with exhaust fumes in addition to the noise of engines and the chatter from the workers. I've attached a photo I took from my window of a couple of trucks parked in front of the gate which occurs frequently.

Prior to construction, the trash collection trucks entered through the S Street entrance to pick up trash from the Masons. Now all trash collection trucks have to go down the 15 foot wide alley under my window. In the attached photo the truck is backing down the alley under my window making noise and spewing exhaust fumes as it moves backwards towards 16th Street.

The other photo is of a dumpster outside the carriage house. Trash is being dumped there starting around 7am daily. Since the space to turn is tight a small truck makes multiple trips to remove the debris. The noise disrupts my video calls which I must do throughout the day, as part of my job, at home, my currently designated worksite.

Since the Surfside building collapse, I, and many of my neighbors, have been concerned that such a large building project is putting undue stress on our building because the developers are working in a space that is part of an appeal. A proper subdivision would only allow a smaller building thus less stress on our property and our nerves.

I stopped opening my main living space blinds since the construction crane went up. The crane is a constant distressing reminder of the pain I feel and the developer's disregard for the BZA process.

The Masons want to call S Street the front of their building even though it doesn't have a door. That makes the small grassy side yard across from my windows their rear yard.

But, if the area across the alley from my windows is supposed to be the rear yard, then it has an 11 ½ foot wall in the middle of that rear yard. I went out with one of the other residents of the Chastleton and measured that wall. It is 11 1/2 feet when nothing over 4 feet is allowed.

Even the school age residents of the Chastleton can tell that that object is a wall and not a fence. These young neighbors can tell it's more than 4 feet high because it is bigger than them.

The violation is so clear. I think BZA should grant a stay of construction.

Every day that construction is allowed to go on I and my neighbors suffer, deprived of the views, the tranquility, the peace and we are subjected to noise, dust, exhaust, backed up traffic. There is no monetary way to compensate us. We are simply being irreparably injured. The building that Perseus wants to build is simply too big and too tall for the space legally available.

The BZA denied my Motion to Intervene and said that the issues I raised would be addressed by the Appellants. To me, this means that correctness of the zoning decision made by Mr. Matthew LeGrant is still to be determined at the Hearing in February, 2022, but the developers are moving ahead with full construction. I feel like it is disrespectful of the process and presuming that the decision has already been made in their favor.

I base this Affidavit on my personal knowledge of the facts contained above. I swear the above is true to the best of my knowledge, information and believe.

SO DO I SWEAR:

Wendy Schumacher:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendy Schumacher". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Date: December 7, 2021