

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

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Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for the application submitted by Three Tables, The LLC, regarding the property located at 1314 21st Street, NW, Unit 1. I am both a long-time customer of Ching Ching Cha and an area resident.

Ching Ching Cha provided a wonderful sanctuary in Georgetown, a shining gem in a neighborhood which has now been dulled by its loss. In fact, my spouse and I have not visited Georgetown since Ching Ching Cha closed, and have no intention of doing so in the near future - that shopping district no longer has anything unique to offer.

Tea shops such as this have a deep cultural tradition in China, and are popular in other countries. The way in which this shop operates is entirely normal for this type of business, and when I lived in San Francisco there were many such tea shops.

However, Ching Ching Cha is unique DC. I have often seen local media lament that DC has a Chinatown "in name only". In spite of having a large population which is of SE Asian descent, the city has remarkably few cultural institutions from that region. I cannot imagine deciding against supporting such a mainstay as a tea shop. That it will also bring people like myself into the city - and notably causing less disruption than people who come in seeking nightlife - ought to make this an easy decision.

Ching Ching Cha has been an integral part of our community since its relocation to 1314 21st Street, NW, in April 2023. Having been a staple in Georgetown for 25 years prior to its move, Ching Ching Cha brings a rich cultural heritage and a unique offering of artisanal teapots, pottery, and accessories to our neighborhood.

Furthermore, I believe that the granting of area variance relief from C-204.9(b) is warranted given the unique circumstances of the property. The mixed-use nature of the building, coupled with its commercial history dating back to at least 1972, presents practical difficulties in conforming strictly to zoning regulations. Denial of this relief would not only impose practical difficulties on the owner, as the pouring and sale of tea are integral to the existing art gallery use, but also risk the loss of a cherished community asset.

In conclusion, I urge the Board to approve the special exception and variance relief sought by Three Tables, The LLC. Doing so would uphold the vibrancy and character of our neighborhood while ensuring the continued success of Ching Ching Cha. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Regards,

Benjamin Hartley