
BZA Application No. 21361 of Moshood Olayinka

From Liza Offreda <lloffreda10@yahoo.com>

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To DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ) <DCOZ-BZASubmissions@dc.gov>

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To: Zoning Board / Planning Commission

From: Liza Offreda

Future Address: 1251 Morse Street

Date: 10/27/2025

Re: Case 21361 – Opposition to Relief for 1253 Morse Street

Dear Members of the Board,

I am in the process of purchasing a new home at 1251 Morse Street, with closing scheduled for October 31. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the application at 1253 Morse Street.

The applicant is seeking the following zoning relief:

1. Reduction of the required side yard from 5 feet to 3 feet
2. Rear extension of 20 feet (10 feet beyond what is permitted)
3. Conversion of a single-family dwelling into a four-unit apartment building

Under Subtitle X §901.2, the requested relief must:

- Be in harmony with the intent of the Zoning Regulations and Map, and
- Not adversely affect neighboring properties

In addition, Subtitle X §1201.1 requires that:

- A. The light and air available to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected.
- B. The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised.
- C. The proposed structure, as viewed from public ways, shall not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the street or alley frontage.
- D. Graphical representations shall be provided to demonstrate these relationships.

A — Light and Air

My home has multiple side-facing windows designed to receive natural light and ventilation through the required five-foot side yard separation. Reducing that separation to three feet would significantly diminish their function and the livability of our home, contrary to §1201.1(A).

A1 — Second- and Third-Floor Push-Out and Massing

The applicant proposes to extend the second and third floors laterally to within three feet of our shared property line, while the first floor remains set back slightly farther. These upper-story projections will create significant additional shadowing on our unit's side windows and central sliding doors, which are the primary source of daylight for our main living area.

Significant Additional
Daylight to Columbia
CASE NO. 21361
EXHIBIT NO. 33

Because the second and third floors extend farther than the ground level, they will also cast deeper shadows on the lower level throughout the day, compounding the loss of natural light and air. The result is a canyon-like effect that defeats the intent of the required five-foot side yard separation under §1201.1(A).

The proposed massing, in combination with the height of a three-story structure, would completely eliminate the light and air currently reaching our windows and side spaces and would produce a looming, shadowing effect across multiple floors.

Rear Extension — Outdoor Space Impact

The requested 20-foot rear addition, which exceeds the permitted limit by 10 feet, would project significantly deeper into the lot than adjacent properties. Our home features a rear balcony and outdoor living space that would be directly affected by this extension. The additional depth would cast shade across our balcony and central windows, reduce access to daylight and open air, and create a sense of enclosure where openness currently exists. It would also increase visibility into our private outdoor space.

This materially diminishes the use and enjoyment of that space and violates both §1201.1(A) and §1201.1(B).

B — Privacy

A four-unit apartment building located only three feet from our side windows and balcony would create direct visibility into our living spaces and outdoor areas, significantly reducing privacy and quiet enjoyment.

In addition, the applicant's plan shows a ground-floor stairwell to the basement located along the same side yard. This feature would bring regular foot traffic and direct lines of sight toward our windows and sliding doors, further eroding privacy for both properties. These effects are inconsistent with §1201.1(B).

C — Neighborhood Character and Streetscape

Our block is defined by semi-detached homes with side yards, which create rhythm, light, and openness between properties. While my future home was approved under a previous exception, removing a second adjacent side yard would fundamentally alter the traditional spacing pattern.

Two homes built directly to the property line would produce a continuous wall effect, eliminating openness and setting a precedent that encourages the loss of all remaining side yards on the block. This outcome conflicts with §1201.1(C) and is not in harmony with the intent of the Zoning Regulations or Map.

D — Cumulative Impact and Precedent

A single variance may be viewed as transitional, but two sequential approvals in direct adjacency constitute a permanent shift in the block's development pattern. This change would have lasting implications for light, air, privacy, and neighborhood character. The applicant has not provided adequate graphical materials, as required under §1201.1(D), to demonstrate how these cumulative effects are mitigated.

Request

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request that the Board:

- Deny the requested relief, or
- Require design modifications that preserve a meaningful side yard setback and limit the rear extension to prevent further loss of light, air, and privacy.

I support thoughtful and balanced development but believe this proposal, as submitted, would negatively affect adjacent homes and undermine the intent of the zoning requirements that protect the quality and character of this street.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to becoming part of the community and contributing positively.

Sincerely,
Liza Offreda

1251 Morse Street
loffreda10@yahoo.com