

LETTER OF OPPOSITION

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200-S
Washington, DC 20001

Case No. 21361
Property Address: 1253 Morse Street NE
Hearing Date: October 29, 2025

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing as one of the two closest neighbors to the property located at 1253 Morse Street NE, BZA Case No. 21361.

1247 – Dawn Boutelle – my home

1249 – vacant 5 years

1251 – vacant 5 years

1253 – Property in question. Occupied within last year and vacant previous 5 years

1255 – no permanent resident

1257 – Natalie Martinez – other resident with party status

I have lived at my property, 1247, since shortly after purchasing it in 2007.

Special Exception Relief for Conversion

This block contains traditional row houses on the north side of the street and mix traditional row houses and duplexes. The property in question, 1253, is part of 5 sets of duplexes side by side – see Photo #1. The quaint nature of these duplexes and their 7foot side yards would be marred by continual exceptions to zoning. These duplexes are ~1600 square feet, 3 bedroom, single family homes – perfect for raising families.

Parking can be difficult on this block and neighboring blocks. Four units means, at the minimum, 4 cars. With two parking spots in the back, that would put 2 additional cars on an already full street. Half a block away at 1326 Florida Ave (528 feet from 1253) is the Hendrix Apartments – a 45-unit building. Although they do have a parking garage, it is \$250 a month and many residents park on the street. The Hendrix coupled with other house to apartment/condo conversions and other large apartment/condo buildings should be taken into consideration when thinking about the impact of development on a neighborhood. It is the aggregate of all the projects that make the large impact on the neighborhood.

Three units should be all that is allowed. Three units already have an impact on the neighborhood from parking, density, scale and shape of the buildings compared to neighboring buildings. Four units put an unnecessary burden on the surrounding area.

Special Exception for the Side Yard and Rear Extension

Referring to Photo #1, not approving the side yard and rear extension would preserve the moderate density, character, and livable scale of the neighborhood.

Letters of Support submitted by the owner do not mention the request for an additional 20-foot rear addition, it only mentions 10 feet. It is unclear of those neighbors would have signed their support for a 20-foot addition. Twenty feet past the back of 1255 would adversely impact the view, light, and air to 1255. It would also open the door for 1255 to build an additional 10 feet past 1253 in the future, by right, making it 30feet past 1257. Granting exceptions for additional feet in the rear of the property is a slippery slope to a domino effect down the block of increasing rear extensions.

The sun study submitted by the 1253 does show the absence of light to 1257 (Natalie Martinez property) on 3 separate days:

- April 1, 6pm – after rear addition – back of property would lose ~40% of light
- July 1, 6pm – after rear addition – roof would lose ~60% of light.
- October 1, 6pm – after rear addition – back of property would lose ~60% of light

While I support thoughtful investment and responsible development, I believe exceptions to zoning regulations must remain the exception—not the rule—if those regulations are to have any true meaning. By continually granting special exceptions relieve we gradually erode light, air, and open space for everyone.

For all the reasons listed here, I respectfully ask the Board of Zoning Adjustment to deny the requested reliefs in Case No. 21361.

Thank you,
Dawn Boutelle
1247 Morse Street NE, WDC 20002
27 October 2025



Photo #1

1253 Morse St NE

