

Written Comments for Case 21379

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

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Good evening,

I am submitting the following comments for consideration for the BZA's Special Exemption Hearing on Case 21379, involving the rezoning of a former restaurant at 3700 14th St NW for housing.

My name is Jeremy McLane, and I have been a DC resident for around 8-9 years, and lived up the street from this proposed development for over 4 years. I understand that the development proposes to construct a large, 4-story + penthouse condo built in the place of the formerly-Carolina's Restaurant, which has been vacant for many years. I completely understand and support the need for additional housing in all of DC, and support the general idea of developing the space into housing. However, I remain concerned regarding two issues:

1) The design and placement, in part due to the shape of the lot and proposed plans, will stick out like a sore thumb at the intersection of 14th and Spring. The western side of 14th St NW, where this proposed building would be, is entirely single-story restaurants/bars, with one bar that has a second story up the block. This building would be 4 stories, and tower above the buildings on the block.

2) Our city absolutely needs more housing. **However, I urge the Commission and the developers to endeavor as much as possible to make the units that are for sale or rent affordable for the neighborhood in which they are being built.** Columbia Heights is one of the last affordable places to live in DC. Our neighborhood needs affordable housing, not condos and apartments that price out the working-class individuals and families who live here already. Renovated, modern condos on this stretch of 14th St NW are currently listed (per Zillow) for between \$400,000 - \$750,000, depending on beds/baths/sq ft etc. These prices are wildly unaffordable for the majority of residents in the area, especially when there are many rent-controlled buildings too. Some of these same units are nearly \$3,500-4,000/month in rent, too. This is close to 2x the rent of rent-controlled buildings nearby, demonstrating that these properties are not for those who already live in the neighborhood, but instead, for people moving into the neighborhood with significantly more wealth and resources.

In short, I support the intent and desire to build housing in the place of an abandoned restaurant. But I urge the commission to consider both the style/height of the building in relation to the block & corner

where it is being built, and also the ultimate pricing for the neighborhood. More housing is what we need, but housing that prices out the entire neighborhood defeats the purpose in the first place.

Thank you!

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Jeremy