

To the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

My name is Matthew Laster, and I am a homeowner at 1901 Jackson Street NE. I am writing today not to oppose development on this block, but to raise concerns regarding the proposed apartment building at 1908 Irving Street NE. We believe that as currently designed, this project will negatively impact the health, safety, and character of our existing neighborhood, specifically regarding the shared alley that serves as critical infrastructure for all of us.

We have four specific concerns: architectural incompatibility, light pollution, traffic safety, and failed sanitation.

First, neighborhood character and exterior materials.

The existing apartment buildings on this block are predominantly masonry construction, specifically brick. The single-family homes are not modern, but a mixture of home styles that predate modern construction methods. Brick is not merely an aesthetic preference; it is a durable, fire-resistant, and noise-reducing material. The current proposal, which appears to rely on cheaper synthetic siding or panels, simply does not match the rhythm, texture, or permanence of this block.

We are not asking for luxury materials, but for compatibility. We would respectfully request that the Board condition any approval on the use of brick for the primary exterior façades visible from the alley and public right-of-way. To approve less would set a precedent that allows new construction to ignore the very character that makes this area worth building in.

Second, light pollution.

The existing adjacent apartment buildings already cast disruptive, unshielded light into our bedrooms and office windows. We are not asking for darkness. We are asking for *necessary* light only. We have already had to make adjustments to our living situation to block all visibility from any rear-facing windows at night and do not wish to continue making further adjustments due to poor light-control in new buildings.

In a confined alley, light trespass is magnified. We request that the Board require fully shielded, dark-sky compliant lighting directed downward, with motion sensors rather than always-on fixtures. More light is not safer: glare actually reduces night vision and creates dangerous shadows where intruders can hide.

Third, traffic safety/alley conflicts.

Our alley has a single point of entry/exit. This is not a through-street. It forces all delivery trucks, residents, and service vehicles to enter and reverse or turn around in a confined space. The proposed building will add dozens of new residents, plus moving trucks, plus any additional vehicles that come with new buildings/residents.

We have already experienced an accident in this alley due to congestion (an incident that resulted in direct damage to our property). I have documentation of this accident. Adding more vehicles to a one-entrance alley is not just an inconvenience; it is a geometric impossibility and a liability. Due to the tight turning radius in the single-lane alley, cars that are attempting turn

around have damaged trash cans and fencing that faces the alley. We are asking for limited alley parking to avoid further conflicts between vehicles and property.

Fourth and finally, trash and sanitation.

This is not a minor issue. The existing apartment buildings already have inadequate trash pickup. Their bins overflow weekly. The overflow spills into the alley, and because it is a dead-end, the trash accumulates against our garage doors. We have documented rats and spilled garbage that has sat for weeks in summer heat.

The proposed building will add more dumpsters, more bags, and more trucks navigating that same tight alley. Unless the plan includes a binding, enforceable waste management agreement (specifically, private hauler pickup three times per week, enclosed and screened trash storage that is actually large enough for the building's occupancy, and a prohibition on placing bags outside bins) the sanitation crisis will become a public health crisis. We ask the Board to require a detailed trash plan with penalties for non-compliance.

We are not anti-development. We are pro-compatibility, pro-safety, and pro-livability. We ask the Board to reconsider the current design and require the following conditions before any approval:

1. Brick exterior on all alley-facing and street-facing façades.
2. Fully shielded, motion-activated, dark-sky compliant alley lighting.
3. Limited or no alley-facing parking.
4. An enforceable, increased-frequency trash plan with enclosed storage sized for the full occupancy.

We live here. We will share this alley every single day. Please do not approve a project that ignores the physical realities of a one-way, tight alley; the safety of existing residents; and the basic dignity of a clean, quiet neighborhood.

Thank you for your time.