

July 12, 2026

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W.
Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Letter of Opposition - BZA Case No. 21475 – 1226 F Street, NE

Dear Members of the Board,

We are writing to express our opposition to the requested zoning relief for **1226 F Street NE**.

As homeowners on Maryland Avenue, we chose to invest in this neighborhood because of its historic character, human-scale architecture, and the quality of life created by its access to light, air, and privacy. These characteristics are central to the neighborhood's appeal and are worth preserving for both current and future residents.

Our primary concern is the impact the requested zoning exceptions would have on our and neighboring properties' access to natural light, air, and privacy. The proposed increase in the building's height and overall mass would create a more imposing structure than what currently exists on the block, reducing the openness that defines this section of the neighborhood and diminishing the enjoyment of nearby homes and outdoor spaces.

During ANC 6A's Zoning Committee meeting, we attended specifically to raise concerns regarding the proposal's effects on neighboring properties, including impacts to light, air, and privacy. We provided our contact information with the understanding that the applicant might follow up to discuss these concerns or explore potential modifications. Despite doing so, we were never contacted. **We were disappointed that, despite raising our concerns early in the public process and making ourselves available for discussion, no effort was made to engage with us or address the issues we identified.** This left us with the impression that meaningful collaboration with affected neighbors was not a priority and that maximizing the development potential of the property took precedence over finding a design that better respects the surrounding community.

The application's update proposes privacy screens as a means of addressing concerns about overlooking neighboring properties. While we appreciate the acknowledgment that privacy is an issue, the proposed solution does not resolve our concerns. Instead, it highlights the underlying incompatibility of the design. Adding privacy screens increases the overall visual bulk of the structure while further obstructing natural sunlight reaching adjacent properties. In other words, the attempt to mitigate one impact exacerbates another. We do not believe this represents a balanced solution for neighboring homeowners.

Beyond these direct impacts, we are concerned that the proposal is inconsistent with the established character of the surrounding neighborhood. The nearby homes maintain a relatively consistent scale that preserves access to light and open views while contributing to the cohesive appearance of the streetscape. Granting multiple zoning exceptions for a building of this size would represent a significant departure from that established pattern and could encourage similar requests in the future. **We emphatically want to recognize and reinforce the importance of neighborhood character, walkable neighborhoods, housing affordability, aging in place, preservation of housing stock, improvements to the overall environment, and low- and moderate-density housing to the overall housing mix and health of the city.**

Notably, one of the considerations as outlined in the Zoning Handbook is to consider housing affordability. Per his opening statements at the June 17th EDZ meeting, the current owner wishes to undertake these renovations to begin charging “market rate rent”. The property was purchased with three tenants who had vouchers, which the current owner knew in purchasing the property that he was providing affordable housing for our neighbors. Moreover, the current owner failed to maintain the property while low-income tenants were living there, but implies he will be willing to provide maintenance when he is charging market-rent. During the June 17th hearing, the current owner implied that he would remove the tenants during construction and while they could be welcomed back, he also recognizes the rent will be too high for their vouchers. The landlord currently has one empty unit which he has attempted to rent for \$2,950 for a three bedroom, one bathroom unit. We are extremely concerned that our neighbors will be removed from this area and not be able to find comparable housing in this area. **This construction will remove affordable housing from our neighborhood.** The construction does nothing to expand the number of units but instead expands two existing units to be larger; it does not do anything to increase the number of available housing units. While the board may or may not include this within their scope of consideration, we do feel it is important to raise this issue as another concern for this proposed construction.

Ultimately, the purpose of zoning relief is to accommodate reasonable requests while ensuring compatibility with neighboring properties and protecting the public interest. In our view, this proposal does not strike that balance. The cumulative impacts on light, air, privacy, and neighborhood character outweigh the justification for the requested exceptions.

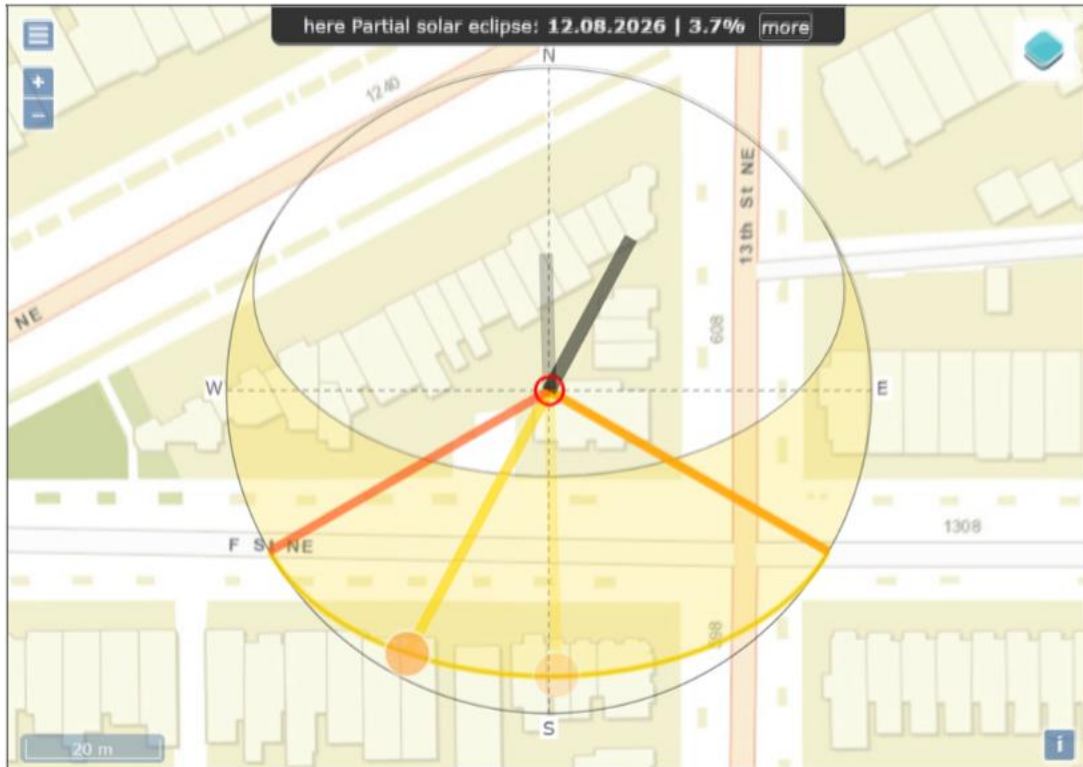
For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Board deny the requested zoning relief. Thank you for your consideration. Please see exhibits below for supporting documentation:

Sincerely,

Blair Pitcairn and Leah Castelaz
Homeowners
1241 Maryland Ave NE, Washington, DC



Overlay of post-construction at 12pm and 2pm



Note: The shadow of the proposed building obscures all direct sunlight during daytime hours (Dec 21).

UNFIT CHARACTER:

Panoramic view from the corner of 13th and F.

No visible buildings have three full stories above the ground.



VIOLATIONS OF LIGHT, AIR, AND PRIVACY:

View from top of roof of 1241 Maryland Ave, looking toward F St homes. *Most of the space between Maryland Ave homes and 1226 F St is used for living space (i.e. grill outs, fire pits, relaxing, etc.) that are prone to 1226 F St Terrace overlook.

View of kitchen of 1241 Maryland Ave looking from 1226 F St. The proposed addition would obscure a significant portion available sunlight and be part of an imposing view.

Additionally, these windows are subject to an increase of the time sunlight is blocked.

