

Letter in Opposition from Ronald Baker

Photo Surveys of Argonne Place and Adams Mill Road

I am one of the many residents of Lanier Heights who opposes the application to the Zoning Commission in Case 15-09 to rezone the row house portions of Lanier Heights from R5B to R4.

Here are some reasons why Lanier Heights should keep its R5B zoning rights:

1. Lanier Heights is not a row house neighborhood. It is a neighborhood of small to medium sized apartment buildings. More than 80% of the approximately 4,400 residents of Lanier Heights live in apartments or condominiums. Just compare the relatively small number of Lanier Heights row houses (approximately 150) to Mount Pleasant, a row house neighborhood of nearly 1,500 town homes, and the differences between the two are obvious.
2. Lanier Heights row houses do not constitute a single neighborhood. They are several small neighborhoods separated by large apartment buildings between blocks and smaller apartment houses within blocks. There is little contiguity among these various neighborhoods and each one features a different architectural style, or more often a combination of different styles.
3. The Zoning Commission recently reduced zoning rights for 35,000 R4 town homes city-wide to preserve them for single family use. Rezoning 150 Lanier Heights row houses will add very little to this preservation effort but will reduce the potential for additional housing in this R5B zone that overwhelmingly consists of apartment buildings.
4. No single neighborhood should bear the full burden of coping with the District's ongoing housing crisis, but no neighborhood should be exempt from accepting some residential expansion. This is particularly important for a predominantly R5B apartment neighborhood like Lanier Heights.
5. Although ANC1C claims majority support among residents for rezoning, the application contains signatures from just 60% of row house owners. Since the filing of this application, some supporters have sold their homes and moved. Due to the relatively small number of row houses involved, each departure significantly reduces the level of documented support for rezoning.
6. Even assuming majority support for rezoning, allowing residents to "vote" themselves decreased density is an approach to city planning and zoning with potentially dire consequences.

Residents opposed to rezoning have filed exhibits for each row house neighborhood of Lanier Heights. These neighborhoods can be easily identified on the map provided below. They are Adams Mill Road (the smallest), Argonne Place, 18th Street, Ontario Road, Ontario Place and finally Lanier Place (the largest), which divides neatly into two parts at its intersection with Ontario Road.

The following pages contrast Lanier Heights with the Mount Pleasant town home neighborhood and examine two Lanier Heights neighborhoods: Argonne Place and Adams Mill Road.

The question of neighborhood consensus is discussed on page 9, and a list of residents opposed to rezoning Lanier Heights is on page 10.

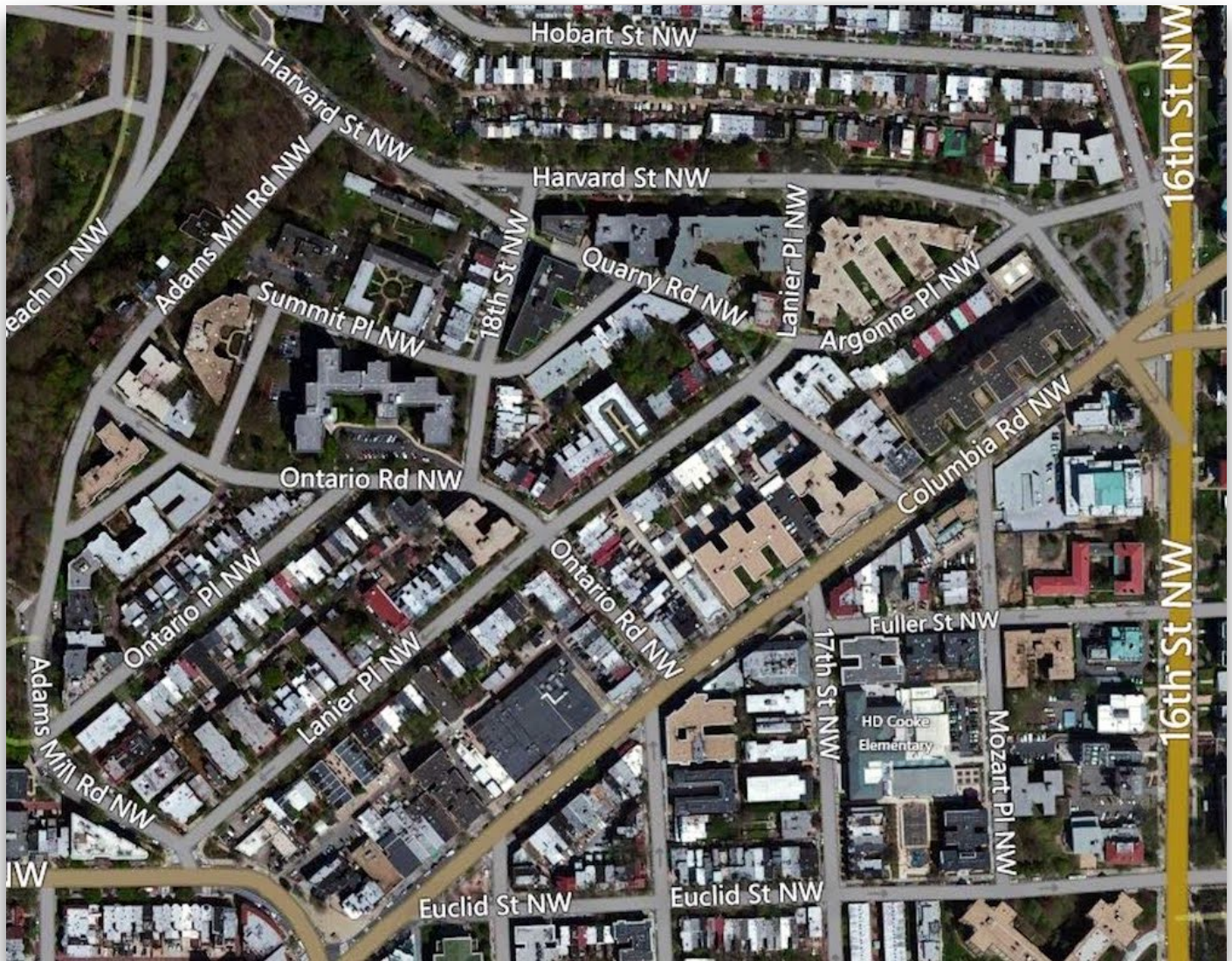
Sincerely

Ronald Baker

Ronald Baker
1620 Argonne Place NW

THE VARIOUS ROW HOUSE NEIGHBORHOODS OF LANIER HEIGHTS:

- ARGONNE PLACE
 - 18TH STREET
 - ONTARIO ROAD
 - ONTARIO PLACE
 - LANIER PLACE (East of Ontario Road)
 - LANIER PLACE (West of Ontario Road)
 - ADAMS MILL ROAD



MOUNT PLEASANT = R4. LANIER HEIGHTS = R5B.

MOUNT PLEASANT IS AN ACTUAL R4 NEIGHBORHOOD. LANIER HEIGHTS IS NOT.
There are about 150 row houses in Lanier Heights but almost 1,500 in Mount Pleasant.
Every row house in Lanier Heights could fit onto any ONE of several streets in Mount Pleasant.

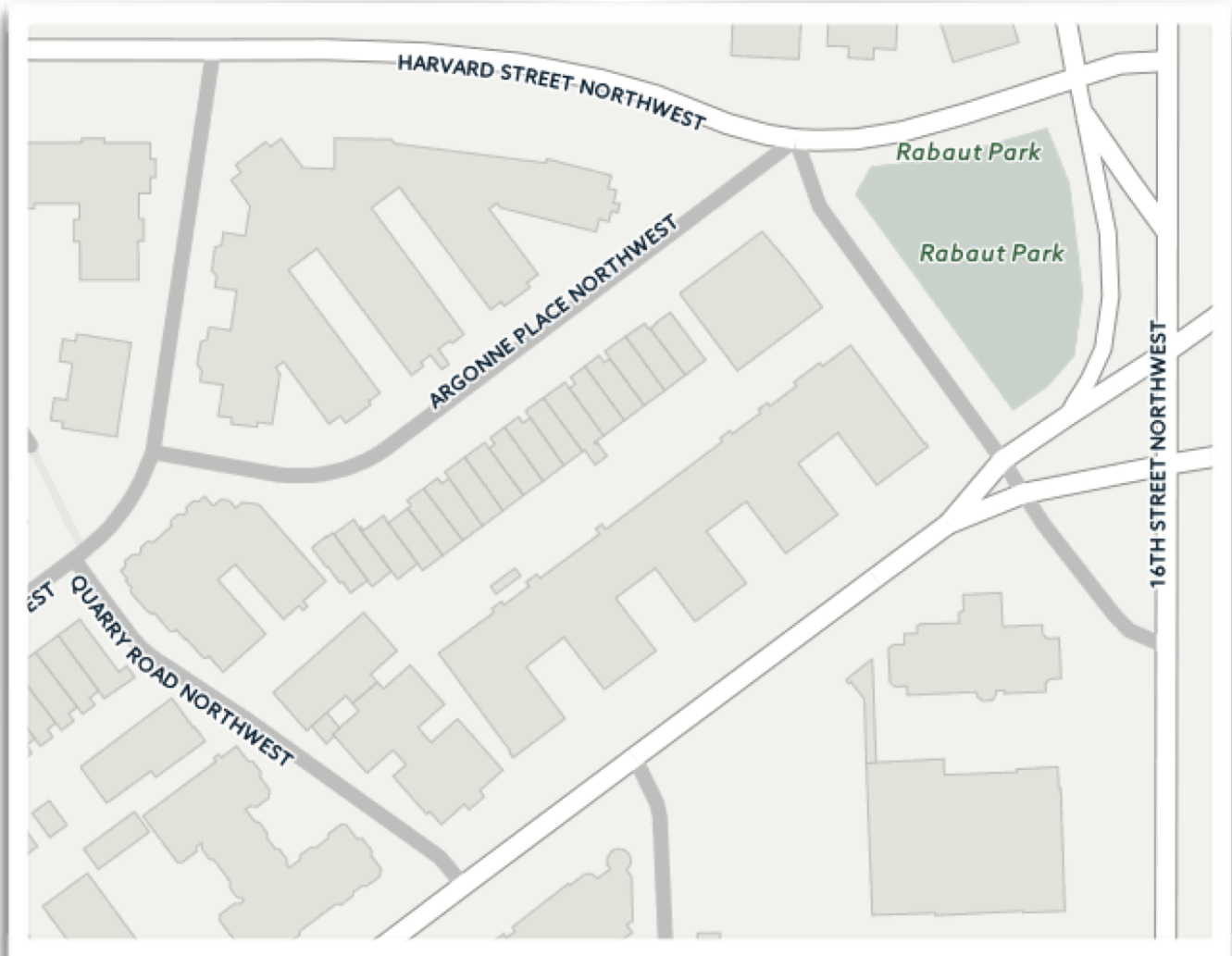
LANIER HEIGHTS IS NOT AN R4 NEIGHBORHOOD.

Throughout its history, it has been a neighborhood of moderate density apartment buildings interspersed with small groups of row houses. Lanier Heights should keep its R5B zoning.

All of Lanier Heights could easily fit into Mount Pleasant twice over with room to spare. Every Lanier Heights row house could fit on a single street.



ARGONNE PLACE NW is a one-way, one block street between Lanier Place and Harvard Street, just one block from 16th Street and Columbia Road. The Chalfonte Apartment building fills one side of the block. The other side consists of 17 row houses. Two of these row houses have been developed to their maximum square footage potential under R5B zoning: one as a single family household, the other as a four unit condominium in the center of the block. Three other row houses adjacent to the completed condo development are currently vacant and gutted, awaiting conversion.



Map shows Argonne Place row houses already surrounded by large residential developments.



The CHALFONTE APARTMENTS fill the block opposite the row houses on Argonne Place.

SEE ALL EXHIBITS IN OPPOSITION TO CASE 15-09 ONLINE:

Neighbors Against Downzoning website: www.nadz.org

Zoom in online for color photo details not viewable in print documents.



Two views of Argonne Place from Harvard Street.



Two views of Argonne Place from Lanier Place.



Two views showing Argonne Place row houses surrounded by apartment buildings.



1620-1622-1624 ARGONNE PLACE



1624-1626-1628 ARGONNE PLACE

NEW HOUSING FOR NEW NEIGHBORS: 1636 Argonne Place was recently redeveloped into a four-unit residential building. 1630, 1632 and 1634 are currently gutted and awaiting similar development.



1630-1632-1634-1636 ARGONNE PLACE



1634-1636-1638 ARGONNE PLACE



1640-1642-1644 ARGONNE PLACE



1646-1648-1650-1652 ARGONNE PLACE

ARGONNE PLACE ALLEY VIEWS: Square 2589



Argonne Place row houses share a back alley with the eight story Argonne Apartment building.



Most of these homes have no back yards, although a few have small yards enclosed by fences. All Argonne Place row houses have 15 foot rear setbacks, making them nonconforming under R4.



The last photo shows the back of the 1636 Argonne Place development. Three adjacent row houses in the foreground (1630-1632-1634) are gutted and vacant awaiting redevelopment.

ADAMS MILL ROAD NW has four houses and a large apartment building on one side of the street. These four houses face large apartment buildings across the street and their back yards overlook the National Zoo. This is the smallest and most remote neighborhood of Lanier Heights single family homes.



VIEW FROM 2800 ADAMS MILL ROAD.



VIEW FROM ADAMS MILL & ONTARIO ROAD.



2810-2812-2814 ADAMS MILL ROAD.



2810-2812-2814 ADAMS MILL ROAD.



NEXT DOOR TO 2814 ADAMS MILL ROAD.

THERE IS NO NEIGHBORHOOD CONSENSUS FOR REZONING

Applicants' claim of 99 signatures of support from owners of 165 Lanier Heights row houses is stated on page 95 of Exhibit 2-B (applicants' filing with ANC1C in September 2014). Those numbers indicate 60% support. The exhibit provides a four-page list of properties to be rezoned and claims to show which owners are in favor of rezoning. The accuracy of these claims are in doubt.

The concluding sentence of applicants' introduction to these statistics is worth quoting: **"Properties that have already been or are planned to be converted to pop-ups have also been removed from the list."** This is a curious admission, implying the only opinions that count belong to owners of single family row houses.

As noted previously, there are instances of multiple signatures of support from the same addresses. We have documented several examples of rezoning supporters selling their homes and leaving the neighborhood. **Exhibit 27 is one example:** The new owners of 1818 Ontario Place have filed their opposition to rezoning, whereas the previous owner was in favor.

The people who live in the redeveloped row house condos of Lanier Heights represent a significant population in opposition to rezoning. Two of them live in the development at 1696 Lanier Place; both have filed exhibits in case 15-09.

The development at 1696 Lanier Place is a critical factor in understanding the current controversy in Lanier Heights. This four-unit condo project so annoyed the neighbors next door that they posted a sign on their front porch: **"Ugly Pop-Ups: Destroying Family Housing on Lanier Place."** On December 17, 2013, the popular Prince Of Petworth blog reported on the public spat under the headline: **Some Serious Pop Up Drama in Lanier Heights.**

The uproar over this Lanier Place row house conversion ultimately led to this application for rezoning. And it brought heightened scrutiny of other projects by members of ANC1C, who are actively crusading against row house redevelopments on Argonne Place, Ontario Place, and 18th Street. Appeals to the Board of Zoning Adjustment by some residents, usually with the support of ANC1C, are filling the BZA calendar and have left seven row house lots in Lanier Heights gutted and vacant for more than a year.

Lanier Heights is a neighborhood of apartment buildings. My exhibit in opposition to 15-09, and the exhibits of **Andrew LeBoeuf, Jackie Greenbaum, Lou Capannelli, Nic & Elizabeth Makris, Robert Corcoran and Ken Rubotzky**, provide comprehensive photo surveys of the entire neighborhood.

We hope this will help the commission see the real Lanier Heights and allow the neighborhood to preserve its current zoning.

Ronald Baker

Ronald Baker
1620 Argonne Place NW

OPPOSED TO THE REZONING OF LANIER HEIGHTS

LANIER HEIGHTS RESIDENTS (42):

Josh Askarinam
Greg Keats
Brendan Reardon
Herminia Villacres
Richard Rosenzweig
Sonia Montes de Oca
Jonathan Margolis
Rolf Loter
Bruce Kangisser
Louis Capannelli
Alex Kaufman
Andrew LeBoeuf
Chris Montwill
Robert Corcoran
Susan Marcisz
Mary Gordon
Gayle Monkkonen
Charles Brodsky
Zachary Gittens
Vladimir Kramsky
Grace Yoon
John Strayer
Sarah Babbage
Asana Mathema
Kiran Mathema
Erin Talkington
Cynthia St. Hilaire
Gwendolyn Carter
Jackie Greenbaum
Ronald Baker
Carolyn Farmer
RJ Hamilton
Michael Rose
Kara Moore
Andrew Morin
Nicolas Makris

Elizabeth Makris
Chris Porter
Beth Purvis
Robert Bailey
Ted Wolde
Scott McMichael

OTHER D.C. RESIDENTS (27)

Thomas Reilly
Kayla Anthony
Matija Jevtic
Sammy Geta
Christopher Webb
Joel Church
Matthew Grace
Myles Smith
Scott Chessare
Maura Brophy
Mike Waske
Jaso Trzebny
Susan Subak
Bruce Majors
George Jackson
Nadav Rindler
Joseph Stromberg
Garrett Hennigan
Daniel Weiss
Curtis Jackson
Grant Fitzgerald
John Ricco
Joshua Sewell
Ben Barry
Rebecca Kalmus
Brett McBride
Ken Rubotzky