

4913 UPTON STREET NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20016-2349
DECEMBER 31, 2017
202-363-4459

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16-23

Mr. Anthony Hood, Chairman
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW -- Suite 210 S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Case Number 15-23, Proposal for Design Review and Development
by Valor Development, LLC, Square 1499, Lots 802, 803, 807,
Letter In Opposition

Dear Chairman Hood:

Enclosed please find my letter to the Honorable Mary Cheh,
District of Columbia Council Member, in opposition to the Proposal for
Design Review and Development by Valor Development, LLC in Case Number
15-23.

Please consider my arguments as part of your deliberations in
this matter. The proposed project is simply too big for the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Judith S. Ryan

Judith S. Ryan

Enclosure

4913 Upton Street NW
Washington, DC 20016-2349
December 20, 2017

Honorable Mary Cheh, Member
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Proposed Valor, Inc. Ladybird Project,
48th & Yuma Streets NW

Dear Councilmember Cheh:

I have been a resident of Spring Valley for 28 years. I am writing to voice my strong OPPOSITION to the Ladybird Project as proposed by Valor. My objections to this project arise from three inter-related issues:

ISSUE 1: HEIGHT AND DENSITY

The scale and mass of the Valor Project do not fit the character of the immediately surrounding area, that is, there are no seven-floor buildings in AU Park/Spring Valley (AU/SV). Many of us are vested in protecting our current low density, stable neighborhood. A rental apartment building clearly does not fit in this neighborhood. Valor has stated that its market survey predicts a high demand for such rental units by empty nesters. Trust me, no AU/SV area residents downsizing from their million dollar plus homes will be interested in a rental unit of 1,000 square feet. Downsizing empty nesters are in the market for co-ops or condominiums such as the Colonnade, Westchester, or Watson Place, NOT small rental units. Unfortunately for the District of Columbia, such empty nesters will likely look to Friendship Heights (the Willard, Willoughby, Carlton, and Somerset are examples) instead of staying in their beloved AU/SV neighborhood. Neither would millennials be enamored by a location one mile away from the nearest Metro stop. Due to the uphill climb from the corner of Yuma and 48th Streets to the corner of Albemarle Street and Wisconsin Avenue, the Metro stop is not walkable for most ages.

Clearly the bulk of the rental units Valor is proposing would become substitute AU dormitories, often with four students in a two-bedroom apartment.

Alternatively, a Valor Project of two or three fewer floors with much larger and grander units purchased as co-ops or condominiums could be a positive addition to the neighborhood.

ISSUE 2: GROCERY STORE

Many residents favor the present Valor Project solely because they believe it will include a full-service grocery store. With the Wegmans grocery slated to be constructed on the Fannie May site on

Wisconsin Avenue near Upton Street, the reality of a full-service grocery becoming part of the Ladybird Project is elusive at best, and simply will not happen. As to the Letter Of Intent (LOI) Valor has negotiated with Balducci currently in place, several points not apparent generally became evident at the ANC-3E meeting on Thursday, December 14. First, it is evident that a Balducci store is not a full-service grocery store at the practical level; rather, it is an upscale, speciality food store. Second, due to the upscale nature of the store, items carried will be costly, much higher than supermarket prices one finds at Giant and Safeway.

Please note also that as of the date of this letter Valor has NO firm commitment from Balducci. Without a firm, long-term (10 years, at least) commitment, it could easily happen that the Ladybird Project comes into existence with no Balducci or any other grocery store. In the event that Balducci does create a store, that would be the end of Wagshall's, an AU/SV institution. The effect of the Valor Project on Wagshalls, Salon Jean Paul and DeCarlo's could result in fewer choices for AU/SV residents and less employment for many of those currently employed in the neighborhood of Massachusetts Avenue between 48th and 49 Streets NW.

ISSUE 3: PARKING

Valor's recent parking proposals, a parking "lease back" agreement, would alleviate many of the prior concerns. Having said that, as with the Balducci LOI, there is no long-term (10 years minimum) legal document committing AU to this "lease-back" agreement.

SUMMARY

Given these three outstanding issue I request that you look into the Valor Project that will likely have a devastating effect long term on this Ward 3 community.

Sincerely,

Judith S. Ryan

Judith S. Ryan, Resident, 4913 Upton Street NW