

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Liz Mohre <lmohre.fbg@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, October 2, 2019 3:00 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: ATD EOM3; Cheh, Mary (COUNCIL); Mendelson, Phil (COUNCIL); esilverman@dccouncil.us; dgrosso@dccouncil.us; sbrepp@verizon.net
Subject: Case No. 19-10 Valor Development, LLC Consolidated PUD Square 1400, Lots 802, 803, 806, and 807 LETTER IN OPPOSITION

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Mr. Anthony Hood, Chairman
D.C. Zoning Commission
441 4th Street N.W.
Suite 210 S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission,

I am writing to express my continued strong opposition to the proposal by Valor Development to build a 220-unit, 6-storey apartment building at the above site. I own and reside at 4706 Windom Place, NW, approximately one-half block from the proposed development, which is visible from my front yard. I've lived here since 1996 and raised my daughter, who attended Janney Elementary, here.

My neighborhood, including the site of the proposed development and all the adjacent blocks off Massachusetts Avenue in American University park, is one of primarily single-family homes, two-story colonials, overwhelmingly owner-occupied. My family has loved the character of our block and neighborhood for these past 23 years. An oversized development such as the one the developers envision, immediately abutting our homes and towering over the existing properties, would permanently and negatively alter the character (and even the quality of light from being in the shadow of a towering building) of this part of AU Park.

My primary concerns are:

- The adverse impact on our community based on the increased traffic and congestion on our residential streets and on Massachusetts Avenue from that many additional vehicles, and the potential danger to pedestrians and bicyclists because of the added vehicles and the difficulty large delivery trucks (for the proposed grocery store and the existing businesses) will have in navigating the alleys adjacent to the proposed structure. There are 10 children living on our block of Windom Place alone, who currently play ball in the street, skateboard, and ride their bikes. A development of the scope proposed would mean they could no longer safely enjoy these simple neighborhood activities on their own block.
- The size of the proposed development is simply too massive for the site and the adjoining neighborhood and out of character for what has long been envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan: a neighborhood low-density small retail area. We are not Friendship Heights or Tenley, and do not want to see our neighborhood with its small one- and two-storey retail and commercial businesses turn into a large commercial corridor like those areas, which unlike 48th Street, are anchored by Metro stops.

- The devastating impact this construction would have on the existing businesses in our neighborhood. These long-standing businesses—DeCarlo’s Restaurant, Spring Valley Catering, Wagshal’s kitchen, and Pitmasters Barbecue--would be forced to close. Salon Jean-Paul, a long-time neighbor whose owners were apparently too dispirited to continue with the uncertainty of the past four years, has already closed. Wagshal’s deli, restaurant, and market, all neighborhood fixtures for generations with a loyal customer base, would also be jeopardized and might have to look for alternative space (in close-by Maryland?). The employees of these businesses—approximately 60 people—risk losing their jobs.

I am not an opponent of smart growth in our city, or of affordable housing, and would welcome a thoughtfully developed residential project on a smaller scale. But this neighborhood, which abuts a small commercial “pocket” of two blocks up and down Massachusetts Avenue surrounded by two-storey residential properties, is not the right place for a large-scale development such as Valor proposes.

I respectfully urge the Zoning Commission to require that any proposal by Valor Development or its partners conform to the existing Comprehensive Plan for our neighborhood and respect the existing scale and character of the surrounding properties.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth H. Mohre
4706 Windom Place, N.W.