

Testimony of Douglas Barnes
DC Zoning Commission Case 19-10
Valor Development Project in American University Park
October 2019

Commissioners,

This neighborhood investment will last 30 or more years so it is important to get it right. *The neighborhood deserves a better building than this one.*

Next, this is the current view of Spring Valley Shopping Center.

Next, the picture on the left is the proposed building towering 6-7 floors over the shopping center.

On the right side is my photoshopped view of the new building minus 2 stories. I think you will agree that the smaller version looks better than the larger one.

Next, in the wide view of the neighborhood, you can see that the height of AU building makes it stick out like a sore thumb. In the upper right-hand corner is a rendering of the proposed Valor building. It shows that the proposed building is even bigger than that AU building.

Next, with the project, the alley widths in yellow are unchanged at 20 feet. The traffic will increase more than 10 times to the level of the nearby city streets in red.

Next, The new building wall actually narrows rather than widens the alley space from 50 to 35 feet. There will be less room for vehicles and pedestrians to maneuver.

Next, Valor's own rendering of the 3-foot sidewalk shows it being encroached by a parked vehicle. The mirror hangs over and compromises the narrow sidewalk.

Next, here is a picture of a 3-foot sidewalk at the PNC Bank adjacent to the new project. It is doubtful anyone uses this sidewalk. During peak times 1 pedestrian every minute will be using the north-south alley.

Next, with a little imagination, the alleys could come alive and keep pedestrians safe. Pictured are a Georgetown alley where cars are guests and a pedestrian-only alley in Bethesda.

Next, We may lose Wagshal's because of this development. Wagshal's proposed an urban market concept to Valor-Mill Creek, but it was rejected. It would be a shame to lose a popular local retail business.

Next, I did an analysis of the finances of the project and found that a smaller building will have a meager impact on the financial rate of return. Lower revenue will be balanced by lower costs.

Next, many neighbors are against the project. Each star represents neighbors that signed a petition against the project in 2016. Today, the nearby neighbors are still against the project.

Next, in conclusion, this new building should be a win-win for the neighborhood meaning:

- ✓ Lower height,
- ✓ New more diverse retail
- ✓ A building with fewer apartments
- ✓ A pedestrian-friendly alley network, and
- ✓ A better fit with the neighborhood.

This neighborhood deserves a better building.