

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

September 19, 2019

Re: Case No. 19-10 Valor Development, LLC Consolidated PUD Application for Square 1499 (Lots 802, 803, 806, and 807 (the "SuperFresh" site))

## **LETTER IN OPPOSITION**

Dear Chairman Hood,

I live at 4817 Butterworth Place NW, which is three blocks from the SuperFresh building site at 48th and Yuma Streets NW, where Valor Development, LLC, is applying to construct a very large apartment building.

I wish to add my voice in opposition to this PUD project, which does not belong in a residential neighborhood. This project will result in an enormous hulk of a building, 4 to 6 stories high, which will be completely out of proportion with the surrounding grid of shops and houses it will confront. Such a building would be appropriate if it were facing a major thoroughfare such as Massachusetts Avenue or Wisconsin Avenue, but this building will be constructed in a residential neighborhood where it does not belong.

Furthermore, Valor's project lacks any of the design features that would provide an architectural transition, or buffer zone, between the toweringly high walls of its building and its smaller neighbors. The project also lacks any of the counterbalancing factors that might provide a rational justification for its existence, such as public amenities (there are few or none that qualify under the PUD rules) and affordable housing beyond the bare legal minimum. With 214 apartments and a grocery store, it will bring more heavy truck and car traffic along 48th and Yuma Streets, and down the alleys behind the building, than these side streets and narrow alleyways are capable of safely accommodating.

Like everyone else I know in this community, I have no objection to the development of the neglected SuperFresh site, but I insist on a development project of suitably moderate proportions, that is intelligently designed to fit the space and harmonize with the surrounding two-story houses and one-story shopping center. The Zoning Commission can require Valor to do this. I resent Valor's efforts to mislead the Commission, the ANC's, and the community into believing that its building is a "superior" design that everyone can live with, when in reality it is simply the largest structure that Valor thinks it can build in the space available.

With regard to the grocery store, which Valor Development has put forward as the major benefit its building is supposed to bring to our community, I would point out that there are already several other grocery stores available to us within a short distance (three miles) of

this building site. Under the PUD rules, Valor's grocery store cannot be considering to be a justifying "amenity."

In short, Valor's project will bring mostly trouble to the neighborhood in the form of traffic tie-ups, pedestrian safety problems, ruin of existing businesses, light pollution, and just plain ugliness. With woefully inadequate parking, it will not even be a convenient place to live for its own residents. Valor has boasted of the building's decorative architectural elements and upper-level setbacks, but the visual representations we have seen prove that these cosmetic features cannot disguise the actual mass and height of the building, nor the fact that it will be built right up to the property lines all around. You can dress up a circus elephant with fancy trappings, but in the end it will still be an elephant.

Finally, the Commission should be aware that, in placing its Base Height Measuring Point (BHMP) on 48th Street, at the very top of this steeply sloping building site, Valor has seriously jeopardized the legality of its project. It has, of course, done this in order to maximize the height of its building along the descending slope, where it rises to 81 feet at its rear facing the north-south alley. The problem, as the Commission is doubtless aware, is that Valor's BHMP rests upon an artificial embankment that stretches along the full length of 48th Street. This embankment was constructed for the obvious purpose of leveling the roadbed for 48th Street across the hillside over which the road was laid. Under the Commission's rules, at Subtitle B, Section 307.7, a BHMP cannot be placed on top of any form of artificial elevation, embankment, etc. Conveniently, §307.7 also provides the Commission with the remedy for this problem, which is for Valor to redesign its building with a BHMP at its front facing Yuma Street, NW. This will result in a building that would be far more appropriate for the site.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Stover". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Stover  
4817 Butterworth Place NW  
Washington D.C. 20016