



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004**

Charles Allen
Councilmember, Ward 6
Chairperson
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

Committee Member
Business and Economic Development
Education
Transportation and the Environment

October 1, 2020

Anthony Hood, Chairman
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW, S200
Washington, DC 20001

Submitted via email to DCOZ-ZCSubmissions@dc.gov

RE: ZC Case No. 20-14, 5 M Street Design Review

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Zoning Commission,

I am deeply concerned with the proposed project that is the subject of ZC Case No. 20-14 located at 5 M Street, SW, and write to share my objections. I also share the perspective and priorities outlined by Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D and in their communications to you regarding this case.

The Ward 6 neighborhood in Southwest DC is both steeped in a rich tradition of diversity, inclusion, and equity, and is also facing enormous pressures in recent years from rapid residential growth and redevelopment. This community and its leaders that make up the Southwest neighborhood are no stranger to large projects and have thoughtfully engaged consistently with development to prioritize the creation of affordable housing, the intentional design impacts of new growth and placemaking, and the value of public space and the public realm. On each of these three priorities, the current proposal for 5 M Street, SW falls well short and is not consistent with the Council approved Southwest Small Area Plan.

While the focus of the Zoning Commission's review is on design, I cannot omit mention of the woefully inadequate inclusion of affordable housing within this project. It is undeniable that the District of Columbia is facing an affordable housing crisis. I strongly object to the current proposed offer for affordability and recommend that the Applicant must dramatically increase the number and size of affordable homes.

The M Street corridor is the gateway to Southwest from the east and is a transition point, from almost exclusively new high-rise construction of the Capitol Riverfront, to a historic and lower density neighborhood. The current proposal is out of character to meet this unique space, and further, dramatically dwarfs the homes immediately to the south. It also lacks a cohesive and unified vision for how to site mixed-use functions – nor does it encourage a mix of building heights - along a main corridor such as M Street, SW to create significant sense of place and active public realm.

I urge the Commission to oppose the Applicant’s proposal at this time, and to encourage the Applicant to engage with the community and ANC 6D to redesign this project in such a fashion that it would benefit the critically important location and potential of this site – and its role as a future part of the Southwest community.

Thank you for considering these concerns in your review of ZC Case No. 20-14. Please make this letter a part of the official record for this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Allen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

cc: Commissioner Gail Fast, Chair – Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D