

From: [Janet McMahon](#)
To: [DCOZ - ZC Submissions \(DCOZ\)](#)
Subject: Case #23-02 letter in opposition
Date: Sunday, November 19, 2023 3:06:22 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the DC Government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. If you believe that this email is suspicious, please forward to phishing@dc.gov for additional analysis by OCTO Security Operations Center (SOC).

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jmcmahon@wrmea.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

To the Zoning Commission and Zoning Commissioners:

I have lived less than half a block away from 1617 U St., NW—specifically, 200 feet plus the width of one alley away—for more than a quarter-century. During the pandemic--when, like everyone, I spent a great deal of time sequestered in my home--I realized how much I cherish living in an historic district which the Office of Planning describes as “a compact residential enclave of rowhouses and small apartment buildings” (https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/Strivers_Section_Brochure_0.pdf).

The proposed radical upzoning of the parcel of public land at 1617 U St. from MU-4 to MU-10 would destroy the physical and aesthetic character of my neighborhood in multiple ways: it would allow for the construction of a 100-foot-tall building (the current height limit being 50 feet) in the middle of this historic district, a structure which would loom over and dominate the entire neighborhood; it would deprive neighborhood residents of our police and fire/EMS first responders for an unspecified period of time, if not permanently, in favor of an unspecified relocation for an indeterminate period; it would dramatically increase traffic congestion not only on U St., NW, but on the narrow one-way streets which border the site; it would allow for the transfer of a valuable public asset to a private, for-profit entity; and the construction of such a massive building on this site would entail a possibly years-long disruption of century-old, hence fragile, neighboring residences and small businesses with no environmental impact studies having been conducted to date.

I therefore strongly oppose the proposed upzoning, and urge you to deny the application currently before you. There are many alternative approaches that can and should be considered, such as split zoning or smaller, city-owned affordable housing units that could give priority to city employees who today cannot afford to live in the city and neighborhoods they serve. In other words, it is not necessary to sacrifice the character of this unique historic neighborhood in order to achieve such important goals as affordable housing, an upgrading of our police and fire/EMS stations, etc.

To ensure transparency, it is also imperative that the Zoning Commission rule only on a specific proposal by the Office of Planning rather than rely on vague promises of future adjustments to the current proposed upzoning of the entire site at 1617 U St. Based on several signature-gathering initiatives resulting in a more than 1,000-signature petition opposing the proposed upzoning, it is clear that many neighborhood residents were taken by surprise by this upzoning application and its implications. Your decisions are a crucial component in reassuring residents of this neighborhood and city that their voices are being heard.

Thank you for your consideration.

Janet McMahon
1931 17th St., NW
Washington, DC 20009