

To: Zoning Commission

Regarding: Letter in opposition to ZC No. 24-15

Ownership Address: Tony and Doris Johnson, 3426 9th st NE, Washington, DC 20017

We are the owners of this home that has been in the family for over 30 years and is currently being rented to our son's family.

While we know this property will be developed at some point, we have several concerns with the current plans as well as a desire to see the project done well and ultimately benefiting the neighborhood.

This letter contains concerns and impacts that are highly likely from the project as well as requested potential amenities (many of which had been requested by the immediate neighbors as part of a survey we had all participated in) and have not been reflected in the plan updates.

Concern #1: Health and safety of immediate neighbors

A. Communication poles in the alley

The alley where 2 way traffic is being proposed directly behind residential homes (some with children) is supposed to be widened to 20 feet. There are currently poles in the middle of that proposed widened alley that are communication poles. From the sounds of things, those likely will not be undergrounded, at least by the developer, which would mean the alley's widened space likely would not have the space for the 2 way traffic as proposed. Additionally, those backyards and driveways are unprotected from the traffic and leave children particularly vulnerable to danger

Addressing the concern:

Work with the neighbors in the alley to provide safety measures for the reality of the traffic and ensure the proposed alley has protections for the homes and children, and underground the communication poles

B. Rodent activity

Increased construction, particularly in an area that is currently a habitat, will increase rodent activity. Mice and rats are already a problem in the area and would only be more so.

Addressing the concern:

Cover the cost of extermination / pest control for nearby neighbors for the duration of construction and about a year after to reduce impact and disease risk

C. Indoor / Outdoor Air Quality

Construction will reduce the quality of the air outside, but also with the proximity to the house, it will reduce the indoor air quality, potentially causing health impacts to nearby families

- **Proposed Amenity/Remedy:** Provide high quality air purification system during construction to all within 200 feet of the construction zone. Utilize construction equipment and materials that minimize impact on the air quality. Have a construction plan in place

that is agreed upon by nearby neighbors to prevent dust and construction debris from going into nearby homes and to address what comes through despite mitigation efforts

Concern #2: Property Damage

A. Structural Damage

We are concerned the shaking and drilling so close to the home will cause structural impact to this 100 old house, which will cause repair costs and rental income lost during repairs that would be unaffordable

- **Proposed Amenity/Remedy:** Project does impact study (pre-inspection and post-inspection) and pays for any structural damage caused by the construction as well as lost rental income during the time of repairs

Concern #3: Property Taxes/Affordability

Adding the project will likely increase the assessment of the home and therefore increase the property taxes, making the home less affordable as owners, and therefore for our renters / children as well.

The city is concerned about supporting affordable housing, it's important to do development with a consideration of the impact on affordability in the area. Failing to do so would actually go against that goal.

- **Proposed Amenity/Remedy:** Grandfather in the a cap at the current assessment value and tax rate of the surrounding properties for current owners and their descendants

Concern #4: Property Enjoyment/Access

A. Parking

There is no available parking behind the house like many other neighborhood homes have (including several in the surrounding area). Parking during the day is largely taken up by those going to Metro or the university. The plans proposed a few years ago by Metro area include taking away the parking there as it's underutilized. That will push more cars onto the streets and limit what's available for the owners and renter of the property. This will be exacerbated by increasing the density without restricting usage of the surrounding streets by apartment residents and their guests, especially as there's only around 55 spaces for over 200 units. Given the crime in the area in recent years, our residents/renters (who are our children) who often come and go later at night, would be pushed further from the property for overnight parking which is a safety concern

Proposed amenity: Make 9th St (at minimum between 9th St and Monroe) zoned residential parking permit and include restriction in lease from apartment residents getting residential permits.

B. Light and Green space /view

The bottom floor has minimal light right now, and the top floor has some, but not much. It will be blocked out entirely now on the bottom and likely top too, particularly on the front side (though the back side of the house does not get much light either). The height of the building and its proximity to the house mean that the little natural light that comes in will be reduced or eliminated as the building will be between the sun and the house. This impacts the well-being of the residents of the home, and that can also impact current and future rentability if the home is no longer one that residents can do well in.

- **Proposed Amenity/Remedy:** Reduce the height of the building, especially on any street with residents (including 9th St) increase the setback so the building shadow will not have impact, light study before moving forward with building design to see how to minimize impact
- **Supporting Pictures: Bottom floor lighting (side facing 9th) during the day**



In addition to the removal of light, the green space currently visible from the home's porch and inside will not be available, and instead would be replaced with primarily a building view. The proposed green space that's being added is elevated and wouldn't be visible to the 9th St residents, which means this amenity is completely lost.

Proposed Amenity/Remedy: Provide greenspace that is visually and physically accessible to surrounding neighbors - place to sit and enjoy green trees, beautiful space to think, enjoy something natural, gather with neighbors, etc.

The community survey provided a variety of desired amenities along with top concerns from those most directly impacted by the project. Almost none of those have been taken into account in the project to date.

We would love to see a project developed which benefits the community and provides a space for neighbors, new and old, to gather and grow the Brookland community. Hopefully, as these conversations continue, that can be the result.

Thank you,

Tony and Doris Johnson
Owners of:
3426 9th St NE
Washington, DC 20017