

1/14/2018

Karinne Kennedy
1920 15th Street S.E. Apt 2
Washington, D.C. 20020

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street N.W., Suite 200S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Subject: In Opposition to BZA 19572 Application of SIM Development, LLC

My name is Karinne Kennedy and I own and reside at 1920 15th Street S.E. directly across the alley from the property in question, 1916 15th Street. I am writing this letter to put on record that myself, and my neighbors who reside at 1922, 1924 and 1926 15th Street S.E. oppose the current proposal to add three floors to the building at 1916 15th Street S.E. We also oppose the variance to a non conforming structure and the exception to the required 3 parking spaces. Here are our reasons:

1. At the January 9th ANC meeting, the Principal of Ketcham Elementary, Maisha Riddlesprigger, asked Mr. Jones if a safety study had been done. Mr. Jones stated that a safety study had not been done. Principal Riddlesprigger voiced her concern regarding the added vehicle traffic that would result from the added apartment units and the retail space that would be housed at 1916 15th St. She stated that in her years at Ketcham, she has witnessed several close calls where her students were almost hit by cars travelling through 15th St and suggested that a safety study be performed. Mr. Jones did not answer. There is also a new charter school (DC Prep) at 15th and V which also bottlenecks traffic during pick up and drop off hours as most parents come through 15th St. to get to DC Prep. So there are children from two elementary schools whose safety would be at risk with the added vehicle traffic that would be drawn by the property at 1916 15th St.
2. The addition of a minimum of 25 more vehicles (maybe more since many households have more than one car) would have a negative impact on parking which is already scarce and will further jam traffic with the dropping off and picking up of students from Ketcham and DC Prep. We feel that the number of legal parking spaces that are available on the 1900 block of 15th Street cannot accommodate an additional 25 cars (minimum). **Technically 1900 15th Street SE is a small block since the property at 1916 15th street occupies one half of the block.** The Applicant provided a traffic study that we, the residents, do not think is accurate. The traffic study states that on any given day, there are 435 free spaces in a 3 block radius of the subject property. We do not believe this is true. Also, the traffic study suggests that **the Applicant feels it's okay for the current residents to have to potentially park 3 blocks away from their homes to accommodate this project.** So far, the Applicant has not shown the residents that he is willing to work with us regarding the development of 1916 15th Street.
3. With our parking being at risk, we have no other choice than to apply for residential parking. This will have a negative effect on the staff at Ketcham since many of them park on the street during the school day. We have tried to avoid this over the years because we do not want to disrupt the students learning because the staff at Ketcham has to move their cars throughout the day. If the building goes up as planned, the residents will have no other choice.

4. I want to revise the language the Applicant has agreed to with the residents on the 1900 block of 15th St. on Monday, October 9, 2017 to provided rodent/pest abatement on a MONTHLY basis to 1920, 1922, 1924, and 1926 15th Street SE while the building is under construction. ***Additionally, the Applicant should begin and maintain proper rodent/pest abatement on 1916 15th Street SE before any renovation work begins to mitigate any migration to nearby properties.***

I want to reiterate that we, the residents of the 1900 block of 15th Street SE., do not oppose the development of the blighted building at 1916 15th St. We oppose the addition of 3 floors on top of the existing building and the failure of the Applicant's design plans to include three parking space as required by code for this project. We oppose granting the Applicant the variance of a non conforming structure and we oppose granting the exception to the required 3 parking spaces for the Applicant of 1916 15th St. SE.

The Applicant wants to make money at OUR inconvenience. The same Applicant (Yosief Mahari) does not have enough respect for us to even attend one community meeting with residents to listen to our concerns firsthand. The traffic study itself suggests that the Applicant is okay with residents having to park 3 blocks away from our homes with our children, groceries, packages, etc., in a neighborhood that, unfortunately, is not the safest. The Applicant has not been willing to compromise, does not care about gaining community support, nor does the Applicant care about the negative impact this project, as it is currently proposed, will have on the current residents of the 1900 block of 15th St SE.

At our last ANC meeting on January 9th, Mr. Jones and his team brought new drawings of a proposed façade since the residents were requesting a building design more complimentary to the historic district that 1916 15th St. SE borders. When it was announced that the ANC Commissioners would be taking an opposition vote against the variance and the exception, Mr. Jones then stated that he would not change the façade if the ANC voted against his two requests. He then walked out of the meeting while the vote on his project was being taken; he was not there to hear the ANC's Chairman's final remarks to Mr. Jones.

I think the Applicant and Mr. Jones have shown a blatant disrespect for the residents in the community by not compromising with us, by presenting that travesty of a traffic study, and most appallingly Mr. Jones' walking out during the ANC meeting. All of this is proof to me that they don't care about building a relationship with the community, they're just checking boxes.

With Kindest Regards,

Karinne Kennedy
D.C. Resident/ANC 8A05 Constituent

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