

October 5, 2017

Lauren Yamagata
Victor Tineo
1701 Harvard Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Lauren and Victor

First of all let us express our regret that you find yourselves having to confront this issue in the first place.

Though they may be absentee-owners of 1665 Harvard Street and its rather anomalous (to say nothing of controversial) adjacent lot, we certainly can't begrudge the Lawrences for wanting to maximize the return on their investment. To do so with such apparent indifference to the consequences for their more immediate neighbors, many of whom have spent years (we've been here for about 28) is, sadly, just the way the world wends.

Nevertheless, whatever reasons or rationalizations may be employed in justifying the development, as an "impacted" household, we are most adamantly opposed to any such structure.

Obviously the houses in 1600 block Harvard (north side) and 1600 and 1700 Hobart (both north and south sides--down to about 1732) were built prior to the mid-century modern ones on Harvard (starting with 1701). Before those mid-century houses were built I am sure there was no real obstacle to automobiles making a wide sweep into their south side Hobart garages. As clearly evidenced by our experience at 1708 (and the adjacent 1706), IF fences/walls or other impedimenta were to be built along the property line directly opposite these garages, it would be virtually impossible for us to gain vehicular access to our own garage. I own a Fiat 500, and even that is a tight fit! In fact, I'm not certain it can even be done without making an incursion of several inches onto the property opposite (1707 Harvard)...and as property owner, Yvonne Dale, will no doubt recall, it was for this very reason years ago that I left a note begging clemency in the matter. She graciously acquiesced by pulling her car a little farther up on her parking pad. (This begs other questions, but no need for further digression here.)

Such a variance as is requested by the Lawrences, it seems to me, is not in the community interest. Yes, there may be advantages for some, but those advantages to the abstract or invisible "some" would be more than offset by the potentially huge disadvantages to an already existing community of persons (who, despite their differences) really do seem largely to treasure connections that come with a sense of belongingness and neighborhood stability. I do not say the place is perfect, but it has been a very good home to us as well as to many neighbors, old and new. I can assure you MANY would naturally salivate over the prospect of additional income to be derived from such development as is proposed...but it surely would alter the very nature of the block and the neighborhood.

The Lawrences' proposal cries out for a sort of airbnb occupancy, which use has already adversely impacted Harvard's lower end. (We had a friend who cited that as among his reasons for leaving.) Why not simply do as has already been done in most cases: pave the lot and use it as a parking pad and collect a bit of income on it.

Further, according to your ANC rep, the owner of the parcel would have to establish "hardship" in order to justify a variance. Between this, lot coverage of nearly 100% AND the precedent itself, I cannot imagine why they persist in the endeavor. This is not to say I am confident the effort is doomed. Real life teaches us to hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.

Good luck.

Steven Dunn