

Frederick L Hill, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW
Washington DC, 20002

March 16, 2018

RE: BZA Case 19629/Request for Zoning Relief for Parking Garage at 1665 Harvard St NW

Letter in opposition to proposal in Exhibit 77 (dated 3/14/2018)

Dear Sir,

We are owners of and residents at 1715 Harvard St NW, Washington DC, less than 200 feet from 1665 Harvard St. We write in serious opposition to the applicant's plans (the latest plans outlined in Exhibit 77) in Case 19629, for the following reasons:

- (i) All proposals to build on this lot are unacceptable to the neighbors. The applicant has now submitted 3 different plans, including one for a 2-story dwelling, which we believe is still their ultimate intent. Making the building smaller does not address the concerns of neighbors. Their contention that lowering the height of the building is responsive to concerns is of no consequence as once a structure is built, they wouldn't need a variance to build higher once a structure is on the lot. The owner and applicant in this case attempted to build a similar garage on the same plot 10 years ago, and neighbors had the same concerns at that time.
- (ii) The proposed garage will reduce safety along the public pass through to Harvard street, thereby affecting all of those needing to pass through. It will impact adversely those without cars or elderly who would need to walk a long way to get to bus, groceries, banks, Rock Creek Park post office etc. It would impact those of use who use it to take advantage of the access to the zoo and walk across to the red line. Those walking alone would be adversely impacted. Taking away the public access or making it less safe due to a restriction of sightlines is unnecessary, since there is no compelling reason to build a garage - the space is already used as a parking pad.
- (iii) Although the property address is 1665 Harvard, it sits along the "row" of parking pads behind 1701 Harvard and west (1703, 1705, etc). NONE of these parking pads have structures on them, and this would not only be inconsistent with the other homes, but would also create a serious difficulty for folks trying to park in their parking spots if garages start popping up along the back - the alley simply isn't wide enough to handle that sort of traffic. Moreover, there's no need for a parking garage - the owner already uses that area as a parking space. The rest of the homes along the row have parking pads, and we all park our cars without any issues.
- (iv) This applicant has been acting as though they are responding to neighbor concerns, but they have been anything BUT neighborly. Exhibit B to the revised proposal are designed to make it appear as though the applicants cleaned up the trash that was covering their lot and causing a rat problem in the alley. In fact, they left heaps of detritus out there for months (not responding to neighbor concerns or outreach from Councilwoman Nadeau's office). DCRA came to inspect after neighbors and a representative from Councilwoman Nadeau's office requested an inspection. Even then, they did not clean the lot, and again the

representative from Nadeau's office scheduled a bulk trash pickup. The applicants in this case have been anything but responsive to neighbors' concerns, they instead appear to have been acting in bad faith throughout the process.

- (v) The letter in support from the Coalition for Smarter Growth (exhibit 76) doesn't seem to address the issue here. The letter urges the Board to ease restrictions in the alley to permit "infill housing" and "less expensive housing." This is not the stated goal of the proposal – rather, it's for a small garage that would only be for a car to park. It's not clear how easing the restriction in this case would allow for "walkable. . . and transit-oriented communities" given that the idea is for someone to be able to park a car with cover here, not to walk or take public transit.

Very respectfully,



Jessie Brown & Christopher Fanelli
1715 Harvard Street NW