

Frederick L. Hill, Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Christiane Frischmuth
1702 Hobart Street NW
Washington DC 20009

March 17, 2018

Re: BZA Case 19629 to allow the subdivision of an alley tax lot to create a record lot for construction of a garage behind 1701 Harvard Street NW

Letter in opposition and request for party status

Dear Mr. Hill:

I am responding to the plans filed with Exhibit 77.

I am resident and owner of 1702 Hobart Street, which is directly across from the proposed structure. I have been the owner of 1702 Hobart Street since November 1999 and moved here in January 2000. Access to my home and garage as well as my privacy would be directly impacted by the proposed structure. I opposed the proposed garage in 2008. I have also been impacted by the neglect of the absentee landlords (Lawrence's) for many years.

The Applicants in this case previously proposed a two-story residence and garage, a proposal to which I wrote in opposition and requested party status. They then their proposal to a one-story garage against which I am also in opposition. At the very end of the BZA hearing they proposed at the last minute a one car garage proposal. I am again writing in opposition because the newest proposal does not eliminate (i) the requirement for a variance with respect to the alley center setback requirement and (ii) the requirement for variances in relation to conversion of the lot to a record lot. Granting of either of these variances is not in the public interest and harms the intent and/or is contrary to the zoning regulations as outlined below. For the avoidance of doubt, I am reaffirming my request for party status.

1) Based on history, I am convinced that the applicant would be using a zoning relief to later on add a second story up to 20 feet.

I have experienced them as landlords and – for a few years as neighbors prior to their move to Africa - who act in bad faith and are not interested in their impact on the neighborhood. This process again confirms my experience. I therefore believe that

granting any variances will lead to the Lawrence's building their originally intended design of a tall structure on the entire plot. Once the variances for the currently proposed structure has been granted (the major obstacle) as well as the conversion to a lot from Tax to Record lot, it would be far easier to go ahead with their originally intended plans.

Some of the facts for my experience of their not acting in good faith as good neighbors who can be trusted:

- Plans keep changing and often at the last minute.
- No contact has been sought with us neighbors during any of the time prior to this process of requesting variances.
- The lot has been kept in such bad condition that I personally have called the city inspectors to force the removal of trash (food, furniture, construction debris) repeatedly without action on the landlord's side. I believe they were issued with warnings. Following their application to the BZA, we again asked for removal of trash and remediation of the rat problem that was building due to the trash and again nothing happened until close to the hearing date. The public alley, which runs along their property and is overgrown with plants from their property, was not cleared until the day prior to the ANC hearing. Repeated requests were not headed for all the years prior to this process. I have been in touch with the tenants and occasionally been compelled to remove trash that has spilled from the lot into the alley.
- The landlords are absentee landlords. They own another property outside of the District.
- Conflict occurred with the previous owners of Harvard Street 1701 as well as Hobart Street 1700. Any consequences to the architecture and community feel to the street or impacts due to the variance relief they seek would not be felt by them.

I therefore strongly oppose any of their plans and proposals. I cannot trust that what is being proposed and said is a commitment and true intent.

2) Granting the variances would set a precedent for the alley, making it less safe and congested.

As I am convinced that the applicant would continue to build to the originally intended higher structure, it would severely impact my privacy. Given the short distance between the proposed structure and my garage, deck and house (my bedroom and living room face the alley as does my balcony), noise and sightlines lead directly into my private space.

3) I have a garage directly across from the proposed structure which I use for storage and car parking. The shade would make it less safe in terms of walking as it would remain icier for longer. It would also be darker and have fewer sight lines, which is of

particular concern when coming into the alley to walk to the bus stop or go shopping; to go to the trash containers and to my garage.

4) I use the public stairs to Harvard Street every day, which would be less safe due to more shade and fewer sightlines. It would also remain icy and be easier for people to linger unobserved and use as public toilet and trash deposit.

5) The alley is already congested which makes it hard for any vehicle to move, including passing each other. This is compacted by city service vehicles needing to stop and vehicles turning in and out of their parking spots. Granting the variance would make passing and moving through the alley more difficult.

6) The applicants can use their lot for their intended purposes of parking cars without building a structure that requires variance relief. There is absolutely no need to subject all of us including the ANC and the BZA to this process.

7) This community cares for each other and about their neighborhood. The applicant has not ever displayed care for this neighborhood. Quite the opposite. Having the structure built would not only set a precedent and change the open space that exists in this already dense area, but change the way Mount Pleasant was designed, making and keeping it historic and a village in the city. This would become a more hidden and isolated row of houses, less sunlight coming in; not seeing neighbors and creating a barrier to friendly exchanges.

It is known that when you can interact with each other, you can keep each other safe and know what is going on. When you know and can see each other, you are more likely to trust each other, and the neighborhood is safer. The way space is designed can either reinforce isolation or reinforce community. Building the proposed structure and setting that precedent would reinforce barriers and isolation. Right now we look out for each other and can see what is happening. That would be taken away from us!

I would encourage the applicant to serve this city and neighborhood in a positive way.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christiane Frischmuth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christiane Frischmuth

Sincerely,

Christiane Frischmuth
Owner 1702 Hobart Street NW

