

Date: June 7th, 2018
To: BZA Board Members
From: Lou Capannelli (Property Owner located within 200' of Applicant)
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Application #: 19771 Malcolm Haith and Lee Well 1834 Ontario Place NW
Letter In Support of Relief Request

Delivery Method: Via Email bzsubmissions@dc.gov

Please permit this correspondence to serve as support for the applicants request for relief.

I understand the applicants previously received approval for the issues now being discussed.

I also understand that as a result of a very small percentage of the resident's subsequent objections the applicant's approvals are in jeopardy and the applicants have been ordered to stop work on critical elements of the property until these issues are resolved.

As a native Washingtonian and 20 year owner in this neighborhood, I believe I have a very good feel for "the character of my neighborhood".

Public record will support that the Lanier Heights/Adams Morgan area has always had a variety of housing stock and architecture. Eclectic has been used to describe parts of "the neighborhood". Uniformity in the strictest sense, which I believe those that oppose the applicant's relief are looking for, is not consistent with "the neighborhood".

I think an important consideration is that those residents who have chosen to stay silent on this and other similar issues should not be considered as neutral on an issue, as I believe most residents believe that if they chose to not oppose (stay silent) they are in fact supporting it. Based on this reasonable supposition the number of those who support the relief is significant larger than those who don't support the relief.

If we were in the suburbs the objectors position would be akin to supporting the preservation of "tract housing" (all houses essentially looking the same), which though often used as a negative connotation, is actually what this very common style of construction throughout the City was 100 to 110 years ago.

There is no shortage of this style of home, and the absence or modification a porch or minor exception to the construction of a garage does not "change the character of a neighborhood."

The applicant's modest yet expensive exterior modifications to the subject property will improve this street and our neighborhood.

This sort of narrow view by the objectors toward common architecture might have merit if the neighborhood and or the subject property were designated as "Historic", which they are not.

For those of us who own these 100+ year old homes which were built for a by gone era, the functional and esthetic obsolescence is real. Very few people want or can afford a large single family home with small bedrooms, virtually none existent closet space, often small windows, and no garage.


Equally important to owners like me is the ever increasing real concern that because we may not have been able to afford or desired to modify our homes prior to the recent down zoning, combined now with the subjective scrutiny of a small percentage of residents who don't want anything to visually change, single family home owners like me (which accounts for the majority of single family homes) will be frozen in time possibly with substandard function or esthetically looking properties.

For the record I have great respect for architecture preservation in the proper context. The subject case is not one of them.

The record will support the architecture of the homes in our neighborhood are in abundance (thousands if not tens of thousands) in the City. Based on this I appeal to The Board to not be persuaded by a handful of fear mongers.

If the City truly desires to keep its housing stock competitive it must permit it to keep pace with the tastes of the newer and desired future residents of the City.

Thank you,



Lou Capannelli