

DATE: March 15, 2021
TO: Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen F. Lintner
3201 P Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
CC: Rick Murphy at ANC (2E03@anc.dc.gov)
Peter Sacco at ANC (2E@anc.dc.gov)
SUBJECT: BZA Application No. 20412 - Letter in Opposition
1515 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Hearing of the Board of Zoning Adjustment of March 17, 2021

Introduction

Dear Chairperson Hill, Members and Staff,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed mixed-use addition to 1515 Wisconsin Avenue, NW.

I am a neighbor at 3201 P Street, NW which is built on two lots and is directly south of the proposed project. The rear of the current building and proposed addition to the building can be seen from my backyard.

My concerns include both the impact of the proposed project on surrounding properties, as well as the precedent it sets for the continuing development of the block. I have reviewed the most recent revised drawings prepared for the proposed project, dated March 9, 2021. I have also reviewed the most recent associated documents provided to the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA), dated March 12, 2021, which were prepared for the hearing on the proposed project scheduled for March 17, 2021.

Project-Specific Issues

General

Proposed Addition Significantly Out of Scale. This is an historic block with small-scale commercial and residential properties in very close proximity. We have successfully co-existed as neighbors and wish to continue to do so. However, the dimensions – especially the height and mass – of the proposed addition, even as revised in the most current drawings, are inconsistent with that spirit and are significantly out of scale for the block. The proposed massive addition will have adverse impacts on the adjoining neighbors and the historic footprint of the block, including its open space, tree canopy and visual harmony. The owner is proposing to extend the building towards the neighbors' homes, leaving only about 20 feet for a yard, and to increase the height of the back portion of the building that abuts the neighbors' properties from one story to three, a substantial difference.

Requested Mitigation Measures

Landscaping for Artificial Light Reduction and Noise Control. In addition, it is requested that the owner of 1515 Wisconsin Ave, NW, advise the concerned neighbors about plans to landscape the backyard of the building, for aesthetic reasons, but in particular to reduce impacts of artificial light reduction and control noise.

Construction Management Plan. It is strongly requested that the owner, his architect and construction contractor engage with the concerned neighbors to develop and adopt a Construction Management Plan (Plan). The development of this Plan is not addressed in the most recent submission of materials to the BZA, despite the fact that when the ANC discussed the proposed project on March 1, 2021, it was noted, along with the Shade Study, as a task to be undertaken. The Plan should provide coverage of working hours, safety measures, management of light, noise and waste and other relevant issues to be addressed during and after any construction. The Plan should be discussed with the concerned neighbors and a clear procedure established for the management of complaints by a designated contact person. The development of this Plan is especially important given that four of the families in the immediately adjacent homes on 32nd Street, NW, have young children. This includes a newborn baby and two children under 3 years of age.

Creating a Precedent – Cumulative Impacts

I wish to express my deep concern to the BZA about the establishment of a precedent for the expansion of other commercial buildings on the 1500

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block of Wisconsin Ave, NW, into the limited rear lot space of the interior of the block, following approval of this project. This block has no alley, so the impact of the extension into this interior space has both cumulative and project-specific adverse impacts. These impacts include the loss of open space and foliage on the block; a decrease in natural light and air circulation; a reduction in the privacy of our homes and back yards; changes to the historical character of the block; as well as an increase in noise and artificial light for all the surrounding residents, especially those on the 1500 block of 32nd Street. Resolution of these issues is necessary and desirable to preserve the historic value of the Georgetown Historic District.

Next Steps

My neighbors and I would be pleased to speak with the owner, his architect and construction contractor about these concerns and proposals, especially the request for development of a Construction Management Plan.

I would like to thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Best wishes,

Stephen

Stephen F. Lintner

3201 P Street, NW

Washington, DC 20007

(202) 294-5451

Submitted on 3/15/2021 by:

Stephen Lintner

3201 P Street, NW Washington, DC 20007