

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: George Hager <ghager50@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 2, 2019 9:23 AM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: RE: Case Number 16-23, Proposal for Design Review and Development by Valor Development, LLC, Square 1499, Lots 802, 803, 806, 807. Letter in Opposition

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4627 Alton Pl. NW
Washington, DC 20016
Jan. 2, 2019

Mr. Anthony Hood
Chair, District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW
Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Case Number 16-23, Proposal for Design Review and Development by Valor Development, LLC, Square 1499, Lots 802, 803, 806, 807.

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

I live at 4627 Alton Pl. NW, about two and a half blocks from the proposed Valor development, and I write in opposition.

I join many opponents in saying we very much want a building with a supermarket at the old SuperFresh site, even something like Valor's proposed development – but smaller and closer to the scale of the surrounding neighborhood. The sheer size of the project still dwarfs the single-family, two-story homes it will sit across from on Yuma and 48th streets.

Many of us have asked repeatedly that Valor take two stories off its main building to make it less intrusive and overwhelming. As I understand it, Valor has scaled back the physical size of the project to about 4 to 6 stories (from about 5 to 7 stories), so I'd argue we're halfway there. But Valor apparently reduced the height by putting units underground, so there will still be roughly 220 apartments there, which will significantly add to traffic and parking problems in a neighborhood where both can already be a problem.

I understand the desire for more density and affordable housing in a neighborhood like ours. But look at the numbers. By my rough calculation, you could fit about 10 typical AU Park homes on the

Valor site, and at about 2 people per house, that would add about 20 new residents to the neighborhood. At market prices, exactly none of those houses would be affordable.

Valor proposes roughly 220 units, or enough to add about 440 new residents, and if 10% of the units were affordable, that would add 22 units of affordable housing here. Valor has said that knocking two floors off the project would reduce its size to about 140 units, enough for some 280 new residents and 14 affordable apartments. That's still far more density and affordable housing than exist here now – and the building wouldn't overwhelm the neighborhood.

Two other recent, nearby developments seem to be much more in keeping with the scale of our neighborhood. At Ellicott and 42nd streets, the Georgetown Day School expansion looks to be capped at 2 to 4 stories, even though it sits on a much larger site and mostly backs up on a commercial area along Wisconsin Ave. And the new building along Massachusetts Ave. next to Crate and Barrel was kept to two stories – though I understand that's because the site is protected by an historic designation. Still, that's an excellent example of a building that fits the neighborhood.

During Zoning Commission hearings on this project last year, I thought I heard Chairman Hood express some concern about how big the Valor building would look when seen from neighboring houses across Yuma Street, something Valor seemed to have avoided showing in its drawings. And I recall Commissioner Miller saying the entire project might be a better fit on Massachusetts Avenue on the current Spring Valley Shopping Center site (where a historic designation makes that impossible). While I certainly can't speak for them or claim to know their views on this project, I think the commissioners' apparent qualms were exactly right. The Valor project is just too big for the old SuperFresh site. Shrinking it wouldn't make it perfect, but it would make it a much better fit for the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

George Hager