

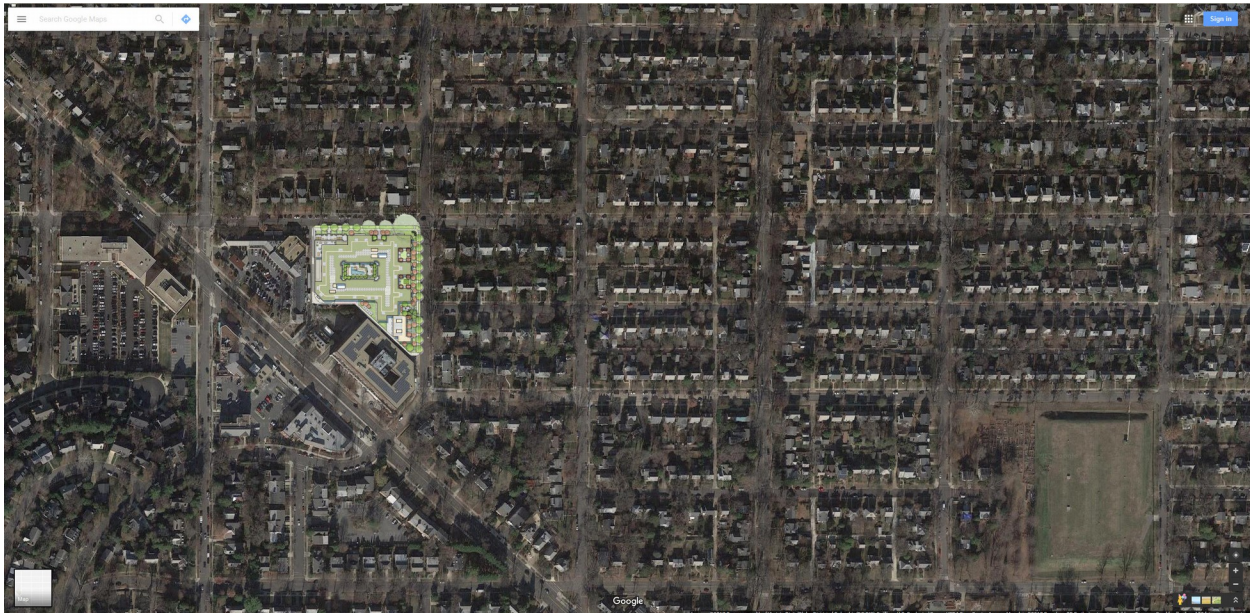
I am Milton Buchler, the owner of 4713 Windom Place, N.W. in the American University Park neighborhood. My house is directly across 48th Street from, and well within 200 feet of, the site which Valor Development L.L.C. seeks to develop, namely the site of the former Super Fresh supermarket at 4820 Yuma Street, N.W.

I strongly oppose this revised proposal by Valor Development to construct one huge main building, topping 58½ feet in height above Valor’s chosen 48th Street building height measuring point, the high point of their property, plus five “town houses”. Due to the lay of the land, the main building will be considerably taller when referenced to any point on Yuma Street-- five storeys higher than the Massachusetts Avenue Parking Shops.

My house is a one-and-one-half storey cape cod (not two storeys as is often repeated)– like all the other homes directly across 48th Street from the still overly-large, yellow proposed main building– which my parents bought new before I was born. It has always been a part of my life, and I would like to see it and its setting to be consistent with my memories of life there. Although many changes have occurred over the intervening decades, the neighborhood still remains largely recognizable to me. Allowing this proposal to cast a giant shadow, obliterating that consistency, is incomprehensible to me.

The very existence of the Massachusetts Avenue Parking Shops and the present Super Fresh building are a testament to the care previous developments took to ensure that structures on those sites would not overwhelm the low-rise residential character of the surrounding well-established A.U. Park neighborhood.

That this project is grossly oversized for this setting is readily apparent from the aerial image below:



Aerial view of American University Park in vicinity of the Super Fresh site with Valor Development L.L.C.’s rendering superimposed.

Of the approximately 550 buildings shown, only the American University building, which fronts Massachusetts Avenue, currently approaches the height and bulk (but not nearly the footprint) of the proposed main building of this development. Neither of these proposed new structures fronts the commercial Massachusetts Avenue.

Valor’s latest proposed yellow main building will still tower over, and dwarf, its surroundings. Despite Valor’s lowering the final height of their structure by a whopping 6½ feet, as the image below shows. This minor reduction in height is not due to any concern of neighborhood sensitivities or architectural harmony, but an effort to avoid the requirement by the D.C. government to provide more “affordable” housing. In other words, to squeeze the maximum sweet, green revenue juice from their huge, yellow lemon.

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 Testimony of Milton Buchler II

As can be seen by their own rendering, Valor’s December 14, 2017 submission when lowered by the 6½ feet actually has a lower street profile than their current iteration.



Valor Yuma Street facade in comparison with the height of the Massachusetts Avenue Parking Shops.

Below is the above Valor rendering repeated showing the Yuma Street elevation compared to the scaled west elevation of my house, directly across 48th Street, with the first floors aligned.



Valor Yuma Street facade in comparison with the west elevation of 4713 Windom Place (first floors aligned).

The excessive height and mass of this development still retains all the failures of the original design submission:

- this proposal is incompatible with the amended Comprehensive Plan
- there is no attempt in this development to respect continuity with the surrounding neighborhood of single-family houses and the low-rise commercial shopping center
- the western sky forever blocked and blotted from view at my house
- the loss of any sense of privacy
- excessive new traffic-- commercial, residential and visitor
- decreased pedestrian safety for both adults and children
- lack of adequate off-street parking for prospective residents and their guests
- increased pollution– air, liquid, noise, etc.
- an ill-conceived traffic pattern

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 Testimony of Milton Buchler II

- allowing parking on both sides of 48th and Yuma Streets throttling two-way traffic
- the too-narrow alley
- increase in school population leading to further overcrowding
- overtaxing of already strained emergency services
- no discernible benefit to the surrounding neighborhood.

And one more observation, if a supermarket at this location is a viable reality, why is there not one now? The building clearly exists. And why does Valor appear to have such difficulty in securing a commitment from an established chain? Even if a grocer can be found, based on recent history, the long-term prognosis does not seem very bright for this alleged “amenity”. And what then follows in the newly created commercial void?

If my concerns seem to be largely repeated from those of the prior submission, if in shorter form, it is because they remain uncorrected.

In closing, I will repeat once more, I am somewhat indifferent to the number of storeys any building on this site has. But I do not want a building higher than thirty (30) feet above 48th Street. This thirty feet applies to the whole structure and all its parts, however classified, including, but not limited to, storeys, “penthouses”, equipment sheds, elevator housings and other solid objects. In short, a building or buildings of a scale commensurate with those of the surrounding long-established and thriving A.U. Park community.

Yours in the fight *against* taxation without representation.