

Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia  
441 4th Street NW, Suite 210S  
Washington DC 20001

January 2, 2019

Re: Case number 16-23; Proposal for Design Review and Development by Valor Development on Square 1499, Lots 802, 803, 806, and 807, in American University Park; Letter in Opposition.

Members of the Zoning Commission:

**I strongly oppose this development. In short, this plan provides no benefits to the present neighborhood residents and creates multiple problems without solutions that will irrevocably change the character of the community and harm the families currently in the area. I urge the Commission to protect the way of life of local residents, including families, children, and senior citizens, and reject this out-of-scale proposal by Valor.**

**This proposal should be rejected based on current zoning principles. Clearly this proposal:**

- 1. Is not in keeping with the spirit of the Comprehensive Plan.**
- 2. Results in unacceptable project impacts that cannot be mitigated.**
- 3. Does not include public benefits and amenities.**

I live at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue, Fordham Road, and 48<sup>th</sup> Street. My property and the life of my family is adversely affected by the massive development proposed by Valor as the entrance for most trucks, cars, pedestrians, and ALL LARGE TRUCKS will be directly at my front door on 48<sup>th</sup> Street.

**The development is too dense.**

The plan includes 219 residential units in approximately a half-block of area. According to Valor, there will be 406 bedrooms which implies at least 500 (and legally upwards of 1000) new residents will reside in this half-block of property. This is many times out of proportion to current population densities in the area. My development at Spring Valley Court (the densest housing in the immediate area) has density of approximately 15 units per half-block of area as a comparison.

**The development does not provide adequate parking.**

Parking spaces for residents, although roughly one per unit, is grossly inadequate given the potential occupancy rate of at least 500 people. Inadequate parking will result in overflow to our local streets. As it stands, Fordham Road does not easily accommodate two-way traffic. This problem is compounded by the continued growth of Millie's restaurant and the new 250 seats at Pizza Paradiso and 75 seats at Compass Coffee which were not taken into consideration at the time of the Valor traffic study. We are grossly underestimating recent neighborhood growth on local parking and further growth in this area will definitely overwhelm the available parking.

**The development compromises residential safety.**

Trucks (and all large sized trucks) for deliveries, movers, etc. are to enter at the corner of Mass/48th/Fordham. Additionally, this will be an entrance for most cars and pedestrians. This intersection is already a high accident intersection according to DDOT statistics and further de-

velopment will undoubtedly increase the accidents. Certainly this development risks the lives of local residents including children and senior citizens and should be a critical factor in rejecting this proposal. Furthermore the pollution caused by the inevitable traffic congestion will disproportionately affect the health of children and senior citizens.

**The development will negatively impact regional transportation.**

The increased population will increase traffic going north/south on Massachusetts Avenue. This will not only cause local problems but regional traffic problems given the fact that Montgomery County residents use this route daily. Additionally, since trucks of all sizes cannot easily negotiate the turn from Massachusetts Avenue onto 48<sup>th</sup> Street, traffic will be stopped on this regional artery on a routine basis, perhaps on both sides of Massachusetts Avenue.

**The development will disrupt the peace and the integrity of the neighborhood.**

Spring Valley and that portion of AU Park are known for families and peace. In fact, peace is the overriding character of the area. Peace and security is why most people moved to the area. This oversized development with its density of people and traffic will disrupt the way of life of this otherwise serene, secure environment. We have a right to maintain our identity and way of life and avoid projects that are not consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

**The development is too high.**

The building, including the penthouse and mechanical, will reach approximately 59 feet high. This is completely out of character for this neighborhood composed of single family homes.

**The development does not provide tangible public benefit.**

My Organic Market (MOM's) is a small, expensive grocery store. Although this may provide limited convenience shopping, this is unlikely to provide full service shopping that families require. Since Superfresh closed their doors, residents have found alternative sources of shopping. For example, three large grocery stores (two Giants and Whole Foods) are within minutes of the site. Wagshal's (a local business that is unfortunately threatened by this development) and CVS provide adequate convenience shopping presently. Additionally, on-line vendors continue to be a growing source of groceries. Finally, Wegman's supermarket on Wisconsin Avenue is under construction and is located 5 minutes away from the proposed site. Wegman's is an award winning supermarket that will eclipse any small neighborhood store based on volume, variety, and especially price. Thus, given multiple grocery alternatives that currently exist, there is no public benefit provided by this development.

Our neighborhood is a DC treasure that should be preserved and utilized responsibly. I urge the DC Zoning Board to reject this proposal so that a more constructive and scaled down plan can be proposed that is in character with the neighborhood and is acceptable to the local stakeholders.

This project is ill conceived. It will create unnecessary, irreversible problems for the area. Please, reject this proposal.

Respectfully,

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