

Hanousek, Donna (DCOZ)

From: George Hager <ghager50@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 21, 2019 11:16 PM
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

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the DC Government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. If you believe that this email is suspicious, please forward to phishing@dc.gov for additional analysis by OCTO Security Operations Center (SOC).

FROM: George Hager
4627 Alton Pl. NW
Washington, DC 20016
Jan. 21, 2019

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

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission:

I attended the Jan. 7, 2019, hearing in this matter, but time ran out before neighbors like me could testify. I'll be out of town for the followup Jan. 24 hearing, so I hope you'll accept this letter in lieu of my oral statement.

I'm George Hager, and I live at 4627 Alton Pl. NW, about two-and-a-half blocks from Valor's proposed development. I oppose it in its current form.

During testimony at the Jan. 7 hearing a couple of weeks ago, we heard Valor talk about how much they'd changed and improved their building. No doubt it looks better than it did initially, but Valor's first proposal was almost comically large compared with the scale of the neighborhood around it. The latest version is better looking, but it's still enormous and way out of scale with its surroundings.

Judging from Valor's latest drawings on the commission's website, the building has shrunk by about half to two-thirds of a floor, and it would contain almost exactly the same number of apartments as before.

Maybe I missed something, but in all of Valor's many renderings I saw no depiction of what the building would look like compared with the houses across Yuma and 48th streets. I suspect that's because Valor's building would dwarf those houses. It's still 4 to 6 stories tall, while the homes

around it are all two stories. When Will Lansing called the latest version of the building “context sensitive” during his remarks at the Jan. 7, 2019, commission hearing, I wondered what he was talking about. A “context sensitive” building would be at least two stories smaller than what Valor is proposing to build.

Further, with 219 apartments, the numbers of cars and trucks used by residents, their guests and the service people who will come to work at the building will inevitably worsen a traffic situation that can already be difficult.

There are at least two new buildings in our neighborhood that are far more fitting. Across Massachusetts Avenue next to Crate & Barrel there’s a new retail building that’s just two stories tall. I understand it’s that small because it sits on an historically protected site – but still, that’s much more in tune with our neighborhood. Up at the corner of Ellicott and 42nd streets, Georgetown Day School is constructing a new building that looks to my non-architect’s eye like it’s capped at two to four stories. Unlike Valor’s 4- to 6-story building, the GDS structure seems to occupy a small portion of a large site and sits well back from the few houses nearby.

As opponents have testified again and again, we’re not opposed to development at the old SuperFresh suite. The old grocery store there has been empty for five years; it’s an eyesore and sadly wasted space. A couple of years ago my wife and I went door-to-door in the neighborhood with a petition protesting the scale of Valor’s building. Most people we met with signed it, and they told us two things: They badly want a full-service supermarket to replace SuperFresh, and they want a building that won’t overwhelm the neighborhood.

We’ve said repeatedly that we’d support a building two stories smaller, with commensurately fewer apartments. Judging from what Will Lansing told us at a neighborhood meeting, that would still let Valor construct a building with 140 units and roughly 14 affordable housing units – far more density and affordable housing than exist in AU Park now. The building would still be large – even larger than we’d like -- just not overwhelming.

When Will Lansing told us what would happen if Valor knocked two stories off, he added that it would be out of the question and off the table. We’d respectfully ask the Zoning Commission to help us put it on the table.

Sincerely,

George Hager