

Katherine Campo
1420 Crittenden St NW
Washington, DC

March 6, 2022

Dear Members of the Zoning Commission:

I am an interested and impacted homeowner living in ANC4C at 1420 Crittenden Street NW, which abuts Square 2704. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to the development plan and application of Dance Loft Ventures LLC seeking: (1) a Map Amendment; (2) a PUD ZC 21-18 to upzone the site from MU-3A to an MU-5A Zone; and (3) additional density through the Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning (MIZ) process ("Dance Loft Project Venture PUD"). As further outlined below, I oppose the size, height, and density ("Impact Issues") of the Dance Loft Ventures PUD 101-unit project in this residential neighborhood where the RF-1 zoned two-story town homes in Square 2704 will be significantly dwarfed.

The application of the Dance Loft Project Ventures PUD for 4618 14th Street NW (Lots 64 & 828, and 830-832 and 823 in square 2704) proposes an increased height from 40'0" to 66'8" feet with an additional penthouse, for a total built height of 75'4" plus an additional 6'6" of rooftop enclosure for condensing units and solar panels. If approved as proposed, this property almost doubles the existing MU-3A zone height maximum of 40'0." Moreover, the Dance Loft Project Ventures PUD seeks to extend the entire mass of the proposed building from the eastern lot boundary 295 feet to the west into the alley areas directly behind single- and two-family row houses, overshadowing the existing 100+ year-old residential development. The topography of the site trends to 20 feet above the measuring point on 14th Street at the western end of the development resulting in a development that, at its lowest point, tops out at 58'0" plus an additional 6'6" of rooftop enclosure for condensing units and solar panels, above the adjacent row houses, typically only 22'0" to 25'0" at their highest elevation in the rear yards facing the proposed Dance Loft Ventures PUD.

I have read the Office of Planning set down report and have also been actively engaged with similarly situated property owners in efforts to responsibly address the Impact Issues generally and specifically for abutting property owners in square 2704. Most supporters of the project WILL NOT live in the shadows of this 75'4" (plus an additional 6'6" of rooftop enclosure for condensing units and solar panels) that will be within (insert distance) from my property line. The myopic view of proponents of the project who live outside of square 2704—and in some instances, outside of the District of Columbia—continue to reference that the addition of this 5-story residential building (plus setback penthouse level) will bring a reasonable increase in density along a major commercial corridor such as 14th Street. Such a characterization is disingenuous and ignores that the residential properties on the streets that abut the Dance Loft property, namely the 1400 block of Buchanan Street, 1400 block of Crittenden Street, and the 4600 block of 15th Street ARE NOT major commercial corridors.

On two occasions during virtual meetings with the developer, I have inquired whether they could add volume to the building only along 14th street (by adding levels only at the front of the building) so that they could then remove levels off the back of the building. On both occasions, my question was dismissed, and the developer indicated they could not consider any options like this due to the cost of materials and profitability.

Time and time again, the developer has refused to concede on any of our concerns about the size of this building, always referring to their profitability margins. By constantly falling back on this explanation of their profitability margins, they have avoided actually meeting us halfway on any of our concerns about the density of the building. The developer's complete intransigence and refusal to consider our recommendations has been frustrating, to say the least.

As I mentioned previously, it is not that I am against this development -- development of this lot will be a welcome change from what is there now. All we are asking for is a more reasonable proposal from the developer that significantly reduces the scale and density of this building. I believe there are multiple reasonable proposals they could put forward that would assuage our concerns about size and maintain everybody's commitment to affordable housing. Such a proposal would be a welcome compromise and would deserve the support of the neighborhood.

I respectfully ask that this Commission require the density sought in this project to largely face the commercial corridor on 14th Street and right-size the height of the rear of the building to decrease the impact to the abutting properties on Crittenden, Buchanan and 15th Streets, and reject the Comprehensive Plan amendments. I urge you to require the project to focus its design height on the 14th Street commercial corridor and reduce the impact to abutting homes.

Thank you,

Katie

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