

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

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Sent: Monday, March 21, 2022 10:40 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ); Planning; ANC 4C Office (ANC 4C); Johnson, Paul (SMD 4C07); Botstein, Clara (SMD 4C08); Lawson, Joel (OP); steve.mordfin@dc.gov; wperkins@dccouncil.us; jlewisgeorge@dccouncil.us; Campbell, Ulysses E. (SMD 4C03); Barry, Maria (ANC 4C02); Rubio, Vanessa (SMD 4C01); Marbury-Long, Yvette (SMD 4C04); Mansaray, Namatie (SMD 4C06)
Subject: Letter in Opposition to Square 2704 Development/Dance Loft, LLC & Heleos (ZC Case #21-18)

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Dear Members of the Zoning Commission –

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the development plan and application of Dance Loft ventures in its entirety including updating from MU-3A to a MU-5A Zone and additional density. As homeowners living in ANC4C at 1419 Buchanan St NW which abuts Square 2704, we are directly impacted by this proposed project.

When we learned that this property was going to be re-developed, we were excited to hear a proposal that included affordable housing and even the potential for expanded arts space, however we firmly believe these goals can be achieved without a variance and ask that you reject this development as proposed.

As you know, this is a unique parcel of land. It is only one of a handful in the city that extends a full city block while being surrounded on three sides by residential housing. We believe that the current zoning reflects this unusual circumstance and recognizes the impact that any building in this space has on the neighborhood in ways that it does not elsewhere. Providing a variance that essentially doubles the allowed height (from 40' to 75' 4" plus an additional 6' 6" of rooftop enclosures – netting over 80' total) isn't necessary to meet the stated goals of increasing access to affordable housing and providing expanded space for the arts. For context and comparison, most homes in the neighborhood are only two stories and 22' to 25' above ground. When we engaged the developer regarding the potential for a building that falls within the current zoning requirements the only response we have received is that reducing the size would not be profitable for them.

In addition to the concern about inserting a building of this height and density to a fully residential area, the plan also proposes a dangerous and untenable narrowing of the alleyway. Currently, the alley that runs east from 14th west to 15th between Crittenden and Buchanan measures about 18' with an additional 2' of ground level building footing that extends from the building into the alley. The proposed plan would narrow the alley by half – taking it down to 10' wide. This is not wide enough for those who live here to continue to safely traverse the alley, makes it impossible for sanitation vehicles to pass – especially on pickup days (in the narrow portions of the alley, cans are currently moved to the wider spaces to allow for pickup, including behind the existing stanchions) – and would place an over 80' building less than 10' from existing yards rather than 20'. While the developer will be widening the section of the alley that serves as an entrance from 14th street to 15' in order to accommodate increased traffic flow to their proposed building parking, they are unsafely narrowing the rest of the space that is utilized by existing residents.

The community has shared many other concerns ranging from parking implications to loss of local community businesses and restaurants among others only to be met with indifference by the developer and our local elected officials. We ask that you thoroughly review this proposal and its implications and reject the map amendment, upzone

request and application for additional density. There are many options for developing this space that provide a much needed resource to the city while still providing existing residents with access to safe, usable alleys and without looming over the homes and businesses that surround it – the development as proposed by Dance Loft, LLC is not it.

Sincerely –

Andrew Elting and Jessica Strieter Elting
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