

July 11, 2021

TO THE ANC 3F COMMISSIONERS

We own and reside at properties abutting 3007 Albemarle St. NW. Mr. Paul Harrison, owner of 3007 Albemarle Street, has applied to DDOT for a curb cut onto Appleton Street.

With this letter, we would like to formally request that Mr. Harrison's application for a curb cut on Appleton Street be denied by DDOT and that the ANC 3F advise DDOT against granting this application. According to the DDOT Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review (June 2019), "Curb cuts are detrimental to the pedestrian realm as they create a conflict point between moving vehicles and pedestrians, and result in a loss of green space and street trees." Mr. Harrison's requested curb cut requires the removal of a large number of trees on Appleton Street.

More importantly, **Mr. Harrison already has a driveway on his property at 3007 Albemarle St.** The Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review states "If a curb cut is proposed, the Applicant shall demonstrate that alternate access is not physically possible, a maximum of one (1) curb cut can serve the entire site." Currently, Mr. Harrison's property has an existing access to the property via the driveway which is located on 3007 Albemarle Street. For this reason, his request for a curb cut should be denied because it violates the "maximum of one (1) curb cut per site" regulation.

If the sole justification of the curb cut on Appleton Street is to allow Mr. Harrison to subdivide his existing property and construct a large second home (6000 sq ft) on said property as well as raze and construct a new larger home (8000 sq ft) on the site of the present house, then the environmental impact of this division of the lot and second home construction is germane to the decision to grant or not grant the curb cut being requested.

For this reason, the home owners surrounding the Harrison property have substantive, serious concerns about the impact of these actions. These concerns are outlined below:

1) **Water management.**

Critically, there is a **longstanding, ongoing, unresolved, severe water management problem on the 3007 Albemarle Street property** that results in storm water running from 3007 Albemarle across the two properties downstream (3009 and 3005 Albemarle) and then onto Albemarle Street itself. This results in flooded backyards and basements of these two properties. Owners of these two properties (signers to this letter) have gone to great expense to install costly water mitigation strategies such as French drains and sump pumps in order to prevent further water damage. In spite of this, with heavy

rains, the surrounding homes are constantly at risk of experiencing flooding. Beyond these two properties, on Albemarle Street itself, as noted in the Forest Hills newsletter referenced below, during the winter, this flooding and underground springs create sheets of ice that can cover the roadway and sidewalks on Albemarle St. creating a true public safety issue. This is all the more concerning as upstream from 3007 Albemarle, neighbors have installed extensive, expensive water management systems devised by CAS. Taken together, the water runoff and flooding issues connected with 3007 are not resolved. Therefore, we are concerned that development on this property with reduction in permeable surface and disruption of natural springs that run underneath this property (see below) will worsen water flooding and overflow onto neighbors' properties as well as Albemarle St., a busy residential street connecting Broad Branch Road with Connecticut Ave. Furthermore, the natural topography and the presence of underground springs on this property, render the 3007 Albemarle property a critical nexus of the water issues that plague the surrounding properties. Replacing the current house with an 8000 square foot house and building a second 6000 square ft. house on this section of the property will have a tremendously negative environmental impact on the surrounding homes.

Underground springs in the Forest Hills neighborhood are well known phenomena as documented in our neighborhood newsletter. [The snow's mostly gone. So why are some streets and sidewalks still so icy? Natural springs. | Forest Hills Connection || News and Life in Our DC Neighborhood](#). Given these underground springs, and the voluminous surface water runoff from this property, we believe construction and disruption of the land as well as reduction of permeable surface will alter the trajectory of these springs and worsen the surface runoff onto the surrounding properties. Any water flow diversion with development is potentially dangerous because it could also weaken trees and home foundations.

2) Tree Cover

The "curb cut" requested by Mr. Harrison for Appleton Street is not a simple curb cut. It involves the deep excavation of a hillside and the construction of a 9 foot retaining wall. It implies removing several trees on the site of the excavation. In addition, there is a heritage tree on the downslope of the property in the path of the water runoff, which will be at risk once the runoff is augmented by the increased impermeable surface on the property to be developed. Over the years even water tolerant trees such as weeping willows have died on this property. A river birch is presently dying due to the existing swamp-like conditions.

3) Variances:

A variance will be required to place a second house on this property as this second house will be 'infill', lacking the required street frontage. In addition, a second variance is required as Mr. Harrison seeks zoning relief from the setback from Appleton St. Failure to obtain these variances will render the curb cut redundant as the property already has a driveway. Therefore, we question and disagree with the order of applying for a curb cut before seeking the two variances.