

Oakland Planning and Development Corporation

OPDC

Community Improvement
through Involvement

May 16, 2019

Alice Mitinger, Chairwoman, Zoning Board of Adjustment
Department of City Planning
200 Ross Street, 3rd Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

RE: Zone Case 126 of 2019 3247 Ward St.

Dear Chairwoman Mitinger and Members of the Zoning Board:

I submit testimony on behalf of Oakland Planning and Development Corporation (OPDC), a community-based organization whose mission is to build a better Oakland and help neighbors thrive. Fundamental to our work is communication to the public about development proposals and hosting public meetings to discuss plans and proposals. We are also the Registered Community Organization for the four Oakland neighborhoods.

Ryan England from CityStudio first reached out to OPDC in December with plans to construct a single-family home facing Ward St. and a duplex facing Hardie Way and to inform us of their zoning hearing scheduled for December 13th, 2018. OPDC requested a postponement of the hearing on December 13th due to a lack of community process. Mr. England then attended a South Oakland Neighborhood Group (SONG) meeting on January 8th, 2019 to present plans to residents and solicit their feedback. Residents had many concerns about the proposed use variance in the R1 zoning district and the construction of a home facing Hardie Way. After hearing resident concerns, Mr. England came back to the community with a plan to drop the multi-family unit and instead subdivide the lot and build two single-family homes with one facing Hardie Way and another facing Ward St. Residents from SONG expressed their concerns with this iteration of the proposal, mostly concerning a home facing Hardie Way. Mr. England then reached out to residents and OPDC again in April to propose the current plan.

The applicant's current proposal is less concerning, given that homes front Ward Street and that the use is as-of-right in terms of the base zoning. The oddly shaped lot line and party wall seems concerning in terms of long-term property ownership and maintenance. We note that some neighbors are concerned about how this development will impact neighborhood quality. South Oakland residents are interested in supporting homes occupied by owners rather than a proliferation of rental units. *The Oakland 2025 Master Plan* identifies South Oakland for "encourage restoration and homeownership." While the construction of two single-family units could further this goal, the lot line configuration may not attract owner-occupancy; there is a lot of wariness from the community around who will occupy these units.

Sincerely,



Wanda E. Wilson
Executive Director

We build a better Oakland and help neighbors thrive.

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