



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

Representing the communities of Burleith, Georgetown, and Hillandale

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February 7, 2024

Mr. Frederick Hill
Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001
bzsubmissions@dc.gov

RE: Board of Zoning Adjustment Application for a Special Exception from the Penthouse Setback Requirements and Area Variances from the Rear Yard Requirements and Lot Occupancy Requirements to Construct a Three-Story Plus Cellar Addition to an Existing, Detached, Religious Building at 2801-2803 N Street NW and 1308 28th Street NW (BZA #21047)

Dear Chairperson Hill,

On January 29, 2024 ANC 2E held its regularly scheduled public meeting, which was properly noticed and attended by eight commissioners, constituting a quorum. At this meeting the Commission adopted the following resolution by a vote of (8-0-0) with regard to the above-referenced matter:

One of our community's greatest assets is our wide range of religious institutions. These institutions allow many of our residents to worship close to where they live and to contribute to the community outreach efforts sponsored by these institutions such as feeding the unhoused.

Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) application #21047 is for a renovation project being pursued by Keshet Israel, the oldest temple in Washington, DC. Keshet Israel has been in Georgetown for nearly 100 years. Local residents, residents in other neighborhoods, and national and international visitors come to Keshet to worship. The zoning exceptions requested by Keshet Israel include lot occupancy and rear yard variances that are in line with other nearby religious institutions, while the penthouse exception is solely for the shaft of a wheelchair-sized elevator.

The applicant's design has received Old Georgetown Board (OGB) concept approval and ANC 2E's support. The zoning application is not for a private residence or business, instead the renovation will allow Keshet to appropriately serve its congregants by

COMMISSIONERS:

Kishan Putta, District 1 Topher Mathews, District 2 Paul Maysak, District 3
Joe Massaua, District 4 Mimsy Lindner, District 5 Gwendolyn Lohse, District 6
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including accessibility to Kesher's main worship area, greater security given ongoing security challenges, and much needed modern updates to its basic facilities such as family-friendly bathrooms.

That being said, this proposed renovation will impact the neighbors. Therefore, ANC 2E supports Kesher's application provided that the application is amended to include the set of conditions in Attachment A. These conditions reflect numerous discussions among the applicant, the single member district (SMD) commissioner, and the immediate neighbors to Kesher. Should BZA not accept any of these conditions as part of the application, the ANC looks to Kesher to proactively keep its commitment to its neighbors regarding the conditions in Attachment A.

ANC 2E looks forward to the renovated Kesher being a part of our community for another 100 years.

Commissioner Gwendolyn Lohse (2E06@anc.dc.gov) is the Commission's representative in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwendolyn Lohse" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gwendolyn Lohse
Chair, ANC 2E

Attachment A

**Proposed Conditions for the Board of
Zoning Adjustment Application for
2801-2803 N Street NW and 1308 28th
Street NW**

**ATTACHMENT A:
KESHER ISRAEL CONDITIONS for ZONING CASE # BZA #21047**

1. Keshet shall install landscaped buffers to reduce the visual impact on the immediately abutting properties to the west and north. Specifically, Keshet will install a landscape buffer on a portion of the abutting property to the west immediately adjacent to the portion of Keshet's western property line, provided the owner of said property desires and agrees to the landscape buffer. In addition, Keshet shall install a landscape buffer along a portion of its northern property line. The locations of the above-described landscape buffers are generally depicted on Sheet 30 (Landscape Plan) of the Approved Plans. Keshet will consult with the immediately abutting neighbors to the north and west to determine planting selection. To the extent practicable, and desired by the immediately abutting neighbors to the west and north, Keshet shall install native flowering and/or canopy trees within the area of the landscape buffers to provide screening and help mitigate the removal of trees that is necessary for the project. Keshet shall maintain the landscaping on its property in a healthy growing condition.
2. Keshet shall use commercially reasonable efforts to promptly enter into a Construction Management Agreement should the current owners of property immediately abutting Keshet's property or any nearby neighbors want to establish such an agreement, which shall include: a restriction against contractors and subcontractors parking on public streets, hours of construction, noise restrictions including a willingness to work with abutting owners on specific concerns, prohibition on use of driven piles in connection with the construction of sheeting and shoring and the below grade space, rodent control measures and contact information for an on-site construction manager and other relevant information. Rodent control measures shall be continued after construction of the project and at a minimum shall be maintained on a quarterly basis.
3. In an effort to avoid any adverse construction-related impacts on abutting or nearby properties, Keshet will engage a contractor that has experience with historic structures within historic neighborhoods. Both the contractor and the structural engineer will take appropriate steps to prevent such impacts including conducting pre-construction surveys on abutting and nearby houses, some of which lack footings, and installing monitoring equipment. In the event of any adverse construction-related impacts on nearby properties, Keshet shall take immediate steps to address the issue. Either before or after the issuance of a building permit, Keshet's structural engineer will be made available to the abutting neighbors for two meetings for purposes of providing information about the structural design and its impact on the adjacent structures. The neighbors may bring their own structural engineers to the meetings. Moreover, Keshet will share with its abutting neighbors the builder's risk clauses in its contractor agreement, and will do so before construction begins given the proximity of these homes to Keshet's site.
4. In an effort to reduce noise impacts during the construction phase, Keshet will offer to temporarily soundproof the east-facing bedroom window associated with the house located immediately to the west of Keshet on N Street.

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5. Music and amplification of any kind shall not be permitted at any time in the courtyard running along the entire west side of the Kesher property ("Courtyard") or on the third-floor outdoor terrace along 28th Street ("Terrace"). Kesher's use of the Courtyard and Terrace shall abide by all applicable provisions of the D.C. Noise Control Act (20 DCMR, Chapters 27 - 29) at all times.

6. The Courtyard and Terrace shall not be marketed, advertised, or used as a venue open to the general public "for rent," or rented to any party or organizations both related and unrelated to Kesher. Kesher's use of the Courtyard and Terrace shall be limited to small gatherings associated with prayer or other religious activities.
 - a. All gatherings on the Terrace shall be completed by 8:00 pm daily, with the exception of during the week-long annual Sukkot holiday where gatherings on the Terrace shall be permitted until 11:00 pm.