

February 25, 1969

It is not too late, however, to recognize the variance whatever of the off-street parking regulations. It seems plain to me that if the Board wants to keep Alexandria a desirable Mr. Charles B. Moore, Jr., Chief of Current Planning, Room 306 City Hall, Alexandria, Va. I have always thought, is one of the nicest Alexandria, Va. I regret to see those in charge of permitting the erection of buildings to Dear Mr. Moore: which is bound, in the long run, to take away a lot of the charm of living in Alexandria.

As a homeowner at 619 South Lee Street in Alexandria, I wish to register my opposition to any variance from the provisions in Chapter 42 of the City Code relating to off-street parking, Case #1131 - M. C. E. Corp. I think it will not be possible for me to be present at the meeting at 4 P. M. today and am therefore sending you this letter to be considered in that case.

When I first moved to 619 South Lee Street in 1939 there was no trouble about street parking. The number of cars in that vicinity has slowly increased since that time and now it is sometimes difficult to get any place to park close to one's home. It is, therefore, obvious that the construction of new homes is bound to have a decided effect on the opportunity of the people who live in the new homes as well as the people who live in the old homes to find parking places at night. My own belief is that even if the off-street parking ordinance is strictly enforced the construction of the new buildings by the M. C. E. Corporation is going to make parking a far more serious problem than it has ever been before. What we have in their buildings are small houses, some of them, I am informed, being no more than sixteen feet in breadth, which was at one time called a "shot gun" residence. The plain facts are that allowance of buildings on such small lots means that the chances are more than 99% that the people who occupy those buildings are going to find themselves without any parking places and other people who have lived in the community a long time will be compelled to make some new arrangements for their own parking. Furthermore, as I understand it, some of the off-street parking area for some of these buildings will be immediately adjacent to the street where parking is parallel. Moreover, I understand also that some of the so-called places for their parking will be on the streets themselves and I assume that the City cannot forbid other people who want to park on those streets to park there. Since the City has already granted permits to erect these buildings, small as they are, and which are bound to increase parking problems for present and future residents, it is too late now to do anything about the construction of the buildings.

It is not too late, however, to recognize that there should be no variance whatever of the off-street parking regulations. It seems plain to me that if the Board wants to keep Alexandria a desirable residential district, it must begin to consider whether future building permits will be granted to divide up lots for residences on miniature pieces of land. Alexandria, I have always thought, is one of the nicest and most desirable residential areas in the vicinity of Washington, I regret to see those in charge of permitting the erection of buildings to follow a course which is bound, in the long run, to take away a lot of the charm of living in Alexandria.

Again I wish to add that my wife and I are both opposed to deviating in the slightest extent from the full application of the off-street parking provisions with reference to the large number of small houses being compressed in a small area. And we do hope that hereafter the construction of houses will be required to be done in such way that it is not an inducement to put multitudes of houses on small areas. It is true that the City might be able to look forward to a temporary increase in taxes in such vicinities but it is likewise true that such construction will, in the long run, reduce the amount of taxes because the property around such places is bound to decrease in value.

One of the main charms about Alexandria homes is that nearly all of them, like most continental homes, have gardens, even if small, in which the occupants can enjoy flowers, shrubs and green grass. A city without homes of this kind, one of blank walls that must rely on electric lights only, should not be the goal of Alexandria.

Very truly yours,

Hugo L. Black

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