

DOLLY LANGDON CHAPIN

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Mr. Lloyd Jordan, Chairman

District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210S

Washington, DC 20001

Tel: 202-727-6311

email: bzasubmissions@dc.gov

September 11, 2015

RE: BZA Case No. 19097 (1626 29th Street, NW)

(Application from new owners, Mr. Abbe Lowell and Mrs. Molly Meegan, for Special Exception in order to build a rear addition to the 1626 29th St. house)

Dear Mr. Jordan and Members of the Board:

I have been advised that the Board of Zoning Adjustment has scheduled BZA Case No. 19097, Application for a Special Exception, on its Expedited Review Calendar for your meeting on October 20th. At the direction of Clifford Moy, Secretary of your Board (via telephone), and Stephen Varga, District of Columbia Zoning Specialist (via letter and telephone), I am writing to ask you to remove this matter from the October 20th Expedited Review Calendar and to reschedule it for a public hearing.

Case #19097 concerns a property at 1626 29th Street, NW, in the 1600 block of 29th Street, on the east side of Georgetown between Q and R Sts. I am the immediate next-door neighbor, owner of a property at 1628 29th Street, and am strongly opposed to this addition, both in principle and for personal reasons.

In brief, I am not in favor of an addition to the 1626 house because:

- 1) the new building would not conform to the lot coverage allowed by DC regulations, and
 - 2) Such an addition could set an alarming precedent for this already crowded block of row houses.
- RE DC zoning regulations: I have learned that the DC regulations were extensively revised as recently as 2013, for implementation in 2014. For the owners of 1626 29th Street to ask for a Special Exemption to these rules so soon after these revisions seems to be both a precipitous and highly irregular request.
 - RE size of proposed addition at 1626: the proposed addition at 1626 would actually extend 18 feet into the back garden beyond the rear of the existing house (12 feet from the rear wall, plus 6 feet including brick

landing and steps), rather than 12 feet as stated in the 1626 Application, thus increasing its volume. It's my understanding that the current DC zoning rules were put into place to curtail such overbuilding.

- RE an alarming precedent: I fear that such an addition would set an encouraging precedent for other houses in this block of 29th Street, as well as for other properties in Georgetown where the owners would like to enlarge their houses.

For example, I also have new neighbors at 1624 29th Street, Mr. and Mrs. Jeb Donohue. 1624 is attached to 1626 with a party wall and so is the other next-door neighbor to 1626. Both houses were designed and built by the same builder, and have similar floor plans and back gardens; 1624 and 1626 actually mirror each other in layout. Because 1624 and 1626 both have "front doors" on the side, rather than in the front, when viewed from the street, their connecting facades are often mistaken for a single residence rather than 2 adjoining ones.

Mr. Donohue has already— earlier this summer-- petitioned for approval of installation of an underground garage beneath his back garden. In reviewing the Lowell/Meegan Application to the Board of Zoning Adjustment for a Special Exemption, I noted that Mr. Donohue has also filed a letter with this Board in support of the 1626 addition. If the construction at 1626 is approved, I would not be surprised if Mr. Donohue – and perhaps others – would propose similar additions, thus further increasing the building density on this block.

- RE addition to the rear of my house at 1628:

Although I do have an addition at the rear of my house at 1628, this addition was built in 1985, some 30 years ago, under very different circumstances.

As I explained to the new owners and their architect, my lot is larger than theirs – a good 21 feet longer in the rear. The DC Public service alley that runs behind the adjacent houses on this block of 29th Street (1620, 1622, 1624 and 1626), dead-ends at my side (southern) lot line. My property thus abuts the alley and provides access on the side, rather than providing rear access as it does for the other houses. My lot then extends up a hillside an additional 21 feet beyond the 1626 lot to abut at its rear the backyard of the Ein property at 2920 R Street.

Furthermore, many years before my husband bought the 1628 property in the early 70's, previous owners had constructed a small raised semi-circular brick terrace at the rear of the house. Our addition was thus built atop this existing terrace so that the house remained within its existing footprint.

Other points to consider :

- In the new owners' application for Special Exception, the architect goes to great lengths to repeatedly describe the proposed addition as "modest," "diminutive," "small," and "only one story." Yet even this size of an addition – extending 18 feet beyond the existing building into the garden – represents a significant volume, diminishing the already limited open green space behind our houses.
- Although I would see only the rooftop of the new addition, I would still feel its volume affected my privacy. Now that we have summer, trees and shrubbery do provide some sort of barrier, but when winter comes, the narrow space between our houses is very bare and exposed.
- Any sort of addition also inevitably affects the quality of air and light in my garden, separated only by a fence from the 1626 property.
- I'm also concerned about potential extensive construction abutting the rear of my garden. As far as I know now, Mark and Sally Ein, who own this property (formerly the Katherine Graham estate at 2920 R Street), have pending plans for renovations to the house and surrounding land. The Eins have spent considerable time and money with various proposals to enlarge the house and update the property, but have consistently met with vigorous resistance from their neighbors and the Georgetown community at large. Whether the Eins continue to seek permissions for updates or not, the size of this lot would be tempting for building by any owner.
- I've lived at 1628 29th Street for 35 years, and have often been inside the house at 1626. This is a gracious, commodious three-story house (plus basement) that was extensively renovated, including a new kitchen, just 4 years ago. It has several bedrooms and baths on the upper 2nd and 3rd floors, a good-sized living room, entry hall, dining room, and kitchen on the first floor, and a finished apartment on the basement level, suitable for an au pair or in-law suite, guest rooms, even a rental unit. I wonder if the new 1626 owners have considered reconfiguring any of these rooms, especially the kitchen, to accommodate their wishes.

Mr. Jordan, I hope that you and your Board will understand my reasons for objecting to the 1626 29th plans for an addition, and will recommend that these plans be denied a Special Exception. Above all, I am seriously concerned about overbuilding in my Georgetown neighborhood. Please contact me by telephone or email at the addresses above if you have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,

Dolly Langdon Chapin

CC: Mr. Clifford Moy, Secretary Board of Zoning Adjustment
Mr. Stephen Varga, Zoning Specialist, DC Office of Zoning
Dr. Monica Roache, ANC 2E Commissioner
Ms. Leslie Maysak, Executive Director ANC 2E

DOLLY LANGDON CHAPIN

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Mr Stephen Varga, Zoning Specialist

District of Columbia Office of Zoning

441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S

Washington, DC 20001

Tel 202-727-0364

email. stephen.varga@dc.gov

Septembet 18, 2015

RE BZA Case #19097

Dear Steve

I so appreciate your call this afternoon. Thank you for your guidance in telling me how to make sure my objections to BZA Case #19097 (1626 29th Street, NW proposed addition) are directed to and heard by the appropriate authorities.

As you requested, please find enclosed a signed copy of BZA Form 140. I am also enclosing a hard copy of my September 11th explanatory letter to Chairman Lloyd Jordan that was previously sent via e-mail. I'm sending these documents via US Mail to you directly at the DC Office of Zoning to make sure they end up in the proper file.

With all best regards,



Dolly Langdon Chapin

202-337-3999

1628 29th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20007

2015 SEP 22 PM 2:50

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING



BEFORE THE ZONING COMMISSION OR
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

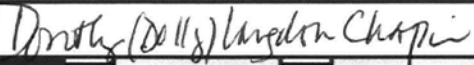


FORM 140 - PARTY STATUS REQUEST

Before completing this form, please review the instructions on the reverse side.
Print or type all information unless otherwise indicated. All information must be completely filled out.

PLEASE NOTE: YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THIS FORM IF YOU SIMPLY WISH TO TESTIFY AT THE HEARING. COMPLETE THIS FORM ONLY IF YOU WISH TO BE A PARTY IN THIS CASE.
(Please see reverse side for more information about this distinction.)

Pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 3022.3 or 3106.2, a request is hereby made, the details of which are as follows:

Name:	Dorothy (Dolly) Langdon Chapn			
Address:	1628 29th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007			
Phone No(s).:	202-337-3999	E Mail:	dlchapin@msn.com	
I hereby request to appear and participate as a party in Case No.:		BZA Case # 19097		
Signature:			Date:	September 18, 2015
Will you appear as a(n)	☐ Proponent	☒ Opponent	Will you appear through legal counsel?	☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please enter the name and address of such legal counsel.

Name:	Please see my letter of September 11, 2015, addressed to Chairman Lloyd Jordan		
Address:	and copied to Secretary Clifford Moy and Zoning Specialist Stephen Varga		
Phone No(s).:	(Copy of letter attached)	E Mail:	

PARTY WITNESS INFORMATION:

On a separate piece of paper, please provide the following witness information:

1. A list of witnesses who will testify on the party's behalf;
2. A summary of the testimony of each witness (*Zoning Commission only*);
3. An indication of which witnesses will be offered as expert witnesses, the areas of expertise in which any experts will be offered, and the resumes or qualifications of the proposed experts (*Zoning Commission only*); and
4. The total amount of time being requested to present your case (*Zoning Commission only*).

PARTY STATUS CRITERIA:

Please answer all of the following questions referencing why the above entity should be granted party status:

1. How will the property owned or occupied by such person, or in which the person has an interest be affected by the action requested of the Commission/Board?
2. What legal interest does the person have in the property? (i.e. owner, tenant, trustee, or mortgagee)
3. What is the distance between the person's property and the property that is the subject of the application before the Commission/Board? (Preferably no farther than 200 ft.)
4. What are the environmental, economic, or social impacts that are likely to affect the person and/or the person's property if the action requested of the Commission/Board is approved or denied?
5. Describe any other relevant matters that demonstrate how the person will likely be affected or aggrieved if the action requested of the Commission/Board is approved or denied.
6. Explain how the person's interest will be more significantly, distinctively, or uniquely affected in character or kind by the proposed zoning action than that of other persons in the general public.

Except for the applicant, appellant or the ANC, to participate as a party in a proceeding before the Commission/Board, any affected person shall file with the Zoning Commission or Board of Zoning Adjustment, this Form 140 not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the date set for the hearing.

Person vs. Party in a Proceeding

Any person or representative of an organization may provide written and/or oral testimony at a public hearing. A person who desires to participate as a party in a proceeding, however, must make a request and must comply with the provisions on this form. A party has the right to cross-examine witnesses, submit proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law, receive a copy of the written decision of the Zoning Commission or Board of Zoning Adjustment, submit a Motion for Reconsideration or Rehearing, and exercise any other rights of parties as specified in the Zoning Regulations. Approval of party status is contingent upon the requester clearly demonstrating that his or her interest will be more significantly, distinctively, or uniquely affected by the proposed zoning action than that of other persons.

INSTRUCTIONS

Any request for party status as provided in the District of Columbia Zoning Regulations (11 DCMR Zoning) that is not completed in accordance with the following instructions shall not be accepted.

1. All applications shall be made pursuant to this form. If additional space is necessary, use separate sheets of 8½" x 11" paper to complete the form (drawings and plans may be no larger than 11" x 17").
2. Present this form and supporting documents to the Office of Zoning at 441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 200-S, Washington, D.C. 20001, not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the date set for the hearing.



If you need a reasonable accommodation for a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Fair Housing Act, please complete Form 155 - Request for Reasonable Accommodation.

District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, N.W., Ste. 200 S, Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 727 6311 * (202) 727 6072 fax * www.dcoz.dc.gov * dcoz@dc.gov