April 10, 2021

Chairperson Frederick L. Hill
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW
Suite 210S
Washington, DC, 20001

Dear Chairperson Hill:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed additions – both the garage pop-up and the addition of the 4th floor/pop-up roof deck for 308 11th St. NE.

When I purchased my home at 309 11th Street NE in 1992 I understood that the house was located within the designated Capitol Hill Historic District and that it would mean I would have to follow the rules and guidance in place to preserve the architectural integrity of the buildings within the twelve block radius of the U.S. Capitol. This was the trade-off that I – and my neighbors – knowingly made to live in the historic district.

Over the years most of us living here on 11th Street have made improvements to our homes and, each time, we have had to follow the zoning rules as well as the historic preservation guidelines. In fact, when I replaced outdated 1960s era windows a few years back I had to go through several hoops. That was one of the reasons I was amazed when the developers who purchased 308 11th undertook immediate expansion of their property without all of the proper permitting, approvals, and neighborhood notifications. Reputable developers should be well aware of zoning requirements. Yet there appears to be a questionable double standard if average residents must abide by all of the zoning and permitting requirements while developers purchasing houses to flip can simply ignore these requirements.

The changes being proposed to 308 11th are extensive and would be disruptive to the neighborhood in several ways. 308 is one of seven federal front-porch style row homes on the east side of the block. Each of these houses, which were built in 1918, make up a unform row. Altering one house so significantly – including the addition of an oversized garage – would not only disrupt the architectural design of the housing set it would create an eyesore visible from several angles on the block. Further, the addition of the mega-garage would seriously impact the privacy of neighbors.

Further, the addition of the mega-garage and the house pop-up would disregard current DC Zoning regulations pertaining to overbuilt lots. The volume of the mega-garage alone is more than 3 times the volume of the current structure.

The rationale cited for expanding garages and adding 4th additions to homes is the need for more affordable housing. This is not the case with 308 11th. Neither the addition nor the garage will be designated as low-income housing. The intent is to drive the selling price of the house so that developers can make a quick profit and move on. The unintended problem with this approach is that it drives property taxes higher and prices out our older neighbors who live on fixed incomes. The result is even less affordable housing on the Hill and diminished diversity in our neighborhoods.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.20382
EXHIBIT NO.53

I strongly urge the Board of Zoning Adjustment to reject the proposal for the mega-garage and the 4th floor house pop-up. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Kirsten Sloan
309 11th NE
Washington, DC 20002