

February 10, 2026

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To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in regards to an application for a project, Number 21429, of Rachel Kohli. We are opposed to the building of an Accessory Dwelling Unit at 3704 Brandywine Street, NW (Square 188, Lot 37). While we certainly are not in favor of exceptions being made for Ms. Kohli, our issue is not primarily with her plan. Our objections are larger, and we would like to use this opportunity to convey our feelings to the Office of Zoning and relevant Board members.

As longtime DC residents/taxpayers/homeowners, we are extremely dismayed at the trend toward the building of SECOND dwellings on properties originally intended to house a single family unit. Our complaints include the following:

1. These projects create MONTHS of noise and mess for neighbors. They disturb the peace and make it extremely unpleasant to exist in the homes for which we pay mortgages and taxes.
2. They increase the density of the neighborhoods. Increasingly, the neighborhoods feel claustrophobic. We have had neighbors directly on either side of us build large structures that are literally INCHES away from our property lines. This does not seem right and should not be allowable.
3. Not only does it feel like people are living on top of one-another in these circumstances, but the insertion of more bodies creates traffic and parking problems. The existing streets cannot accommodate the accompanying increase in cars on the streets, and need for parking of more vehicles. Longtime residents now find themselves getting frustrated, circling for parking spots that only a few years ago were plentiful.
4. During building periods, construction teams block alleys and access. We, for example, have had on-going trouble opening our back gate and exiting our property from the rear due to construction equipment and vehicles.
5. The structures are often huge, unsightly, and badly constructed. Instead of a nice view from our back windows and yard which we had when we moved in, all we can see now are large, tacky structures. The charm and character of these early-to-mid last century neighborhoods and their solid brick architecture is lost.
6. Also, lost, in our experience, are mature trees and other plantings. We have seen grand old trees cut down to make way for new and expanded structures, which dramatically reduces the shade, beauty, and canopy in our city.

7. Furthermore, the people who typically live in these sorts of units are generally not people who add to the sense of community. They are most often short-term dwellers/renters who do not try to fully integrate into the neighborhood. We very much value the relationships we enjoy with our long-term neighbors, people who are more likely to share gardening tools, watch one-another's kids, help with snow shoveling, swap banana bread recipes, retrieve mail during vacations, organize block parties, etc.
8. These structures are argued to increase property value for surrounding lots, but that is only a benefit if someone wants to SELL their home. If one wishes to continue to LIVE in their house, then the projects on other lots only increase property taxes unfairly for the rest of us who have not made these additions. While the city is surely thrilled with this increase in revenue, this is not an acceptable arrangement for people who originally bought houses they could afford, but now find themselves getting priced out of their family homes.

In our opinion, the answer to affordable housing in the District is not ADUs. Maybe more emphasis should be put on converting all the (post-pandemic) unused office space downtown to reasonably-priced apartments and condominiums. Or perhaps there should be a cap on rental prices of existing spaces. The home we saved for and bought over 30 years ago is no longer the place we moved into, or frankly, a place we would choose if we were looking now. We are speaking out to protect people like us, and also future DC homeowners. Please take our concerns and objections seriously.

Sincerely,

Tracey Filar Atwood

John Filar Atwood

Washington, DC