

Dear DC Office of Zoning,

I am a resident in the Petworth neighborhood of Washington, DC and have lived here for more than seven years. I moved to Petworth specifically for its quaint and quiet neighborhood feel. There are many older families who have been here for generations as well as younger couples who moved here to start a family because of that same neighborhood feel. I am deeply concerned about the quick development that is happening in the neighborhood. Just recently a developer purchased a rowhouse behind my house and expanded it substantially both up and back. It now blocks my entire view of the neighborhood and the lovely skyline we once had to the west. We could see the Washington Cathedral from our back yard and would regularly sit outside to watch the sunset over the horizon. I would like to raise my voice in opposition to the conversion of rowhouses to large multi-unit condos/rental units. The large multi-unit condos/rental units are not only unsightly and out of place on our quaint street but they are raising the population density of the neighborhood which will inevitably lead to greater traffic, difficulty in parking, more noise and more trash. Additionally, these structures are blocking sunlight to our backyards and rooftops. My husband and I just spent \$17K on home solar panels to reduce our energy costs and to lighten our carbon footprint (good for our bills, good for the planet). The new building behind our house is already blocking a few hours of light from the sun onto our solar panels. I expect this problem to worsen in the winter when the sun spends less time overhead. Additionally, my garden will suffer a reduction of sunlight. There are many older couples in this neighborhood who have been here for generations and take great pride in their yards and gardens. If pop-ups continue to be erected, they will also suffer a loss of sunlight to their yards and to their homes. This problem will only be exacerbated if more and more of these structures are permitted. We did not move to Petworth for the skyscrapers.

There are plenty of condos being built up along the Georgia Ave Metro stop which seems to me a more appropriate place to build multi-family units. I urge you to put proper zoning rules in place to prevent the construction of these large units on our smaller and historic streets. At the same time, I would like to voice my objection to pop ups. While I understand the desire for homeowners to have more space, I believe that popups are making our neighborhood unsightly. We have beautiful homes here, some more than one hundred years old. We have beautiful churches on grant circle, and many homes that merit historic preservation. When quick pop ups are allowed to be erected without regard for the neighborhood's history and potential to be one of the most desirable places to live in Washington, DC, we all lose. There are big houses in many parts of the city, and if people would like to live in them, I think they should make the investment and live in those neighborhoods.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. In addition to my above comments, I ask that you place a moratorium on any new permits for pop-ups and for converting rowhouses to multi-family units until the community has had sufficient opportunities to weigh in and a decision has been made.

Sincerely,

Jackie Ostfeld

Submitted on 9/15/2014 by:

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