

ZONING COMMISSION HEARING
CASE NO. 14-11
Testimony of Cecelia Waldeck
On behalf of
16th Street Neighborhood Association
January 15, 2015

My name is Cecelia Waldeck and I am the President of the 16th Street Neighborhood Association, a neighborhood association located in ANC04C where R-4 regulations apply. I own a row home at 4517-15th St. NW (between Allison and Buchanan Streets NW), which is two lots away from a pop-up development at 1424 Buchanan St. NW. This new development dwarfs the nearby row homes, invades my backyard privacy, and lowers the desirability of my home. It also creates a fire hazard in the neighborhood because it does not comply with the building codes. If this 3-unit condominium development existed at the time I decided to buy my row home, I would not have done so.

Many neighbors and I support the proposed amendments relating to residential buildings, namely lowering the matter-of-right height maximum to 36 feet, absent a special exception from the Commission, and lowering the height maximum for roof structures to 10 feet. In the last week, I obtained over 70 signatures from neighbors on a petition supporting the proposed amendments and am submitting these petitions for inclusion in the public record for this hearing. It is my impression that there is broad support for the proposed amendments relating to residential properties. If the Commission needs additional evidence of this, the 16th Street Neighborhood Association will be happy to obtain more signatures on the submitted petitions.

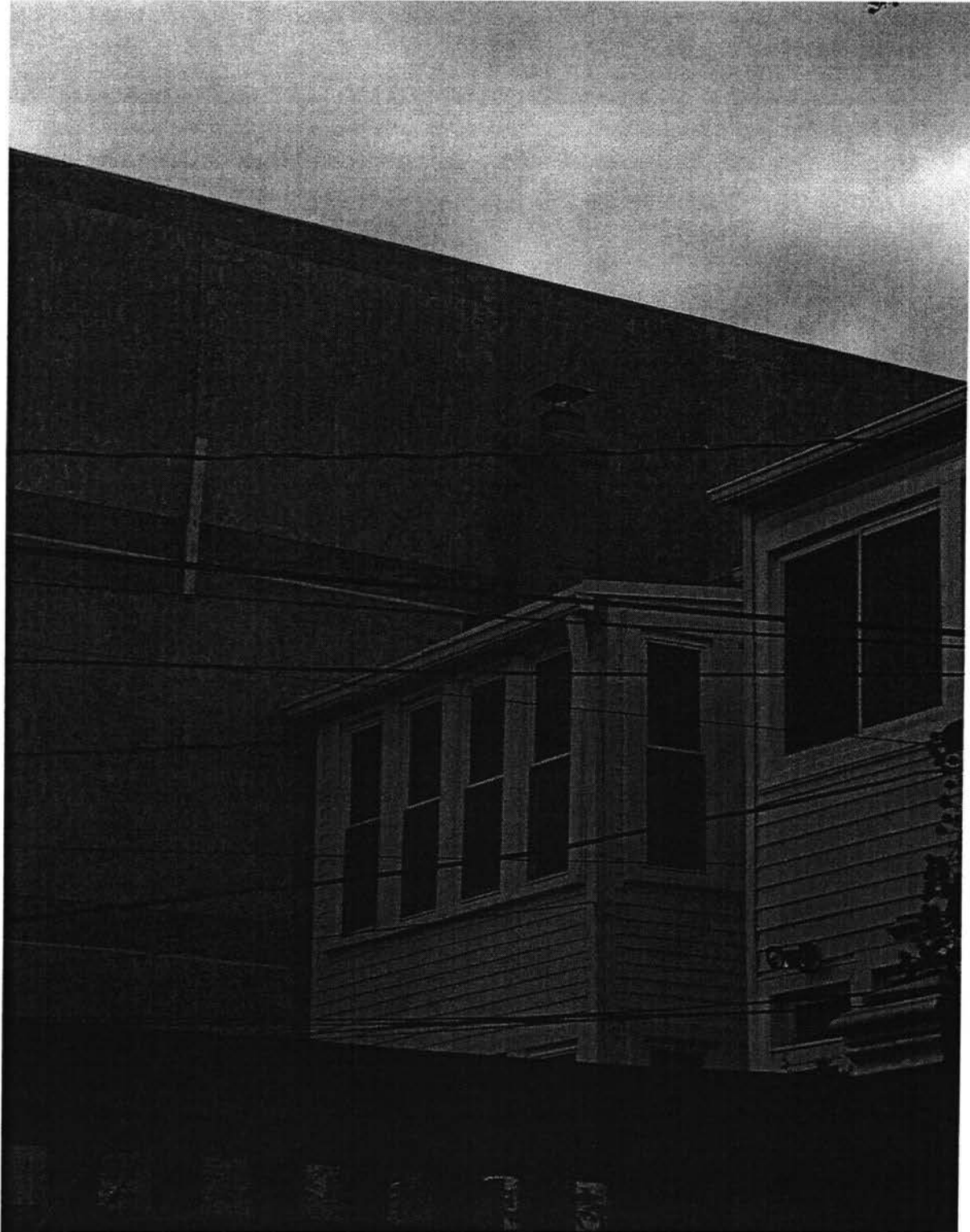
We would like to see these proposed amendments approved as soon as possible. Additionally, we would like to work with the Commission to develop future amendments that add two additional criteria for assessing the neighborhood impacts of a condominium development with a 40 foot height. First, the Commission should consider the impact on neighborhood parking. In ANC04C, there is already a lot of demand for on-street parking that routinely creates congested parking conditions late in the evening when everyone is home, on street cleaning days and Sundays. Demand from non-residents comes from the presence of many organizations in the neighborhood that do not have sufficient parking facilities for their employees, visitors and customers, including fourteen churches, four schools, restaurants, the Metro bus barn, and group homes. Additionally, ANC04C already has a dense population of residents due to the presence of nearby apartment buildings on 14th Street NW and single-family homes that rent out basement units or have shared roommate living situations.

Second, when granting an exception for a 40-foot high development, the Commission should consider the proposed development's compliance with building codes that relate to neighboring structures including, but not limited to, chimneys, solar panels, nearby roof load strengths, back porches and garages. Attached to my testimony is a picture of the construction site at 1424 Buchanan St. NW. Originally, a single-family home nestled between two other row homes, the developer is replacing the original structure with a very large, 3-unit condominium. The developer obtained zoning and other permits from the city to build this structure even though the exterior wall of the third unit is about one foot away from a working chimney on the neighboring row home. The code requires a distance of 10

feet to protect the neighborhood from fires and other dangers. This current hazard makes me and other neighbors nervous about our personal safety and the safety of our homes.

Several neighbors and I spent much time engaged with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) over code violations at the 1424 Buchanan St. NW site. What I learned was that DCRA routinely issues building permits for condominium developments, without first obtaining information about the structures on nearby lots. There are at least three such developments in the city subject to stop work orders because the upper level floor of the development is too close to a neighboring chimney. DCRA appears reluctant to resolve these situations because it has already issued the building permits. We do not know the specific reasons for this weak enforcement of important building codes. Perhaps, it is due to insufficient staffing at DCRA, incompetence or the conflict of interest problem that can arise when developers use a privately-hired building inspector, rather a DCRA employee, to certify that the development satisfies code requirements. If the Zoning Commission can take any actions to strengthen the enforcement of building codes, you would have the support of the 16th Street Neighborhood Association and the support of developers who find themselves subject to stop work orders after expending considerable time and money. The current under-enforcement of building codes benefits no one.

I really appreciate the opportunity to be heard at this public hearing and the good work of the members of the Zoning Commission on the issues facing 4-R neighborhoods. I also request that you include in the public record my statement and the signed petitions supporting the proposed amendments relating to R-4 residential buildings.



Back view of 1424 Buchanan St. NW construction site

**PETITION SUPPORTING PROPOSED CHANGES TO ZONING REGULATIONS FOR
R-4 NEIGHBORHOODS - ZONING COMMISSION CASE NO. 14-11**

We, the undersigned, reside in homes subject to R-4 zoning regulations in Ward 4 and support the proposed zoning regulation changes described in Case No. 14-11. Specifically, we support the regulation changes that have the following impacts:

- Require developers to obtain a special exception from the Zoning Commission to construct upper additions that extend the maximum building height to 40 feet. We understand that this proposed change will generally prevent the conversion of single family homes to three or more unit condominiums without first obtaining approval by the Zoning Commission.
- To obtain a special exception from the Zoning Commission to build up to 40 feet, the developer must show that:
 - 1) The planned development will not have a substantially adverse effect on the use or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent property, in particular:
 - the light and air available to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected,
 - the privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised; and
 - the resulting building or structure height, as viewed from the street, alley, and other public way, shall not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale and pattern of houses along the subject street frontage.
 - 2) The planned development will not have a substantially adverse effect on the defining architectural features of the building or result in the removal of such features.
- Restrict the maximum height of roof deck structures (e.g., stairways, elevators, and housing for mechanical equipment) on row homes and one-family detached homes to 10 feet in height above the roof. We understand that currently the height restriction is 18-1/2 feet above the roof.

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE/EMAIL
CERELIA Wolden	4517-15 th St NW	202-726-1187
Elizabeth Brown	4525 15 th St NW	202-332-9745
Billy Brown	4717 2nd St	202-726-5223
Thadine Floyd	1456 Buchanan St NW	(202) 829-1709
SANDRA LESENE	1422 BUCHANAN ST NW	(202) 726-4842
QUEEN E. CRIEY	1403 BUCHANAN ST NW	202-552-4155
JOYNE K	SANTEE AVE	SANTEE
Greg Phillips	1416 Buchanan St NW	202-465-1652
Julia Fernandez	1416 Buchanan St NW	202-487-3815
Art Mando	1416 Buchanan St NW	202-826-1811
Art Mando	1416 Buchanan St NW	202-316-3321
Art Mando	1410 Buchanan NW	202-588-1681
Art Mando	1403 Buchanan NW	202-562-9500
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NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE/EMAIL
Amy Madigan	4523 15 th St. NW	202-549-6099
Fatima Z. Helli	4517 15 th St NW	202-549-6099
Jalie Andringa	1403 Webster NW	202-829-0796
George Tray	1403 Webster NW	202-829-0796
Susan Bruninga	1410 Webster St NW	202-291-3042
Jeffrey Barker	1420 Webster St NW	202-291-1727
W. Barker	1422 Webster NW	—
Joel Wolf	1421 Webster St NW	—
Barbara Humphrey	1405 Webster St NW	202-291-7199
Edwards Household	1505 Buchanan St. NW	—
Todd R. Hopper	1505 Buchanan St. NW	202-569-9641
MIKE LEAKE	1507 BUCHANAN ST NW	202-882-0408
Cassandra Jester	1505 Buchanan St. NW	202-531-9416
Lara Quint	1517 BUCHANAN ST NW	202-247-1520

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NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE/EMAIL
Carlos Monterrosa	1513 Buchanan St NW	(202) 503-0662
Megan Nadolski	1512 Buchanan St. NW	202 436-2601
John Rave	1514 Buchanan St NW	202 465-1825
Doc Reensterboer	1518 Buchanan St NW	202 708-372-4218
Chris Rankin	1520 Buchanan St NW	202-422-5430
Cheryl Cooper	1527 Buchanan St NW	202-314-9710
Vincent M Beatty	4522 15th St NW	202 723 8771
MELZER	4518 15th St NW	202.291.6865
Lauren Edwards	4516 15th St NW	202.431.7345
Neel Banerjee	4512 15th St NW	202 297 9915
Amiel Dunn	4510 15th St NW	202-377-1385
Bob Hildum	4507 15th St NW	202-747-4392
CATHERINE HELDUM	4507 15th St NW	202-320-2440
JASON ANDREW ABELL	4508 15th St NW	202-445-0134

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NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE/EMAIL
Janel Gossinger	4509 15th Street NW	202 536-5322
Harvey Gossinger	4509 15th St NW	202 590 8096
Beverly A. Manley	4515 15th NW	202-723-8927
Bernard Spriggs	5322 Colorado NW	202-726-0648
Lenore Sek	5322 Colorado Ave NW	202-726-0648
Patricia Greene	1522 Vainum St NW	202-641-8082
Mark Taylor	1419 Crittendon St NW	202-882-4577
Doreen Holis	1419 Crittendon St NW	202-882-4577
Calvin Mann	3804 Kansas Ave. NW	573-819-5832
Cris Mann	3804 Kansas Ave. NW	301-906-9994
Russ Buckwalter	3802 Kansas Ave NW	202-450-7774
Julie Perkins	4521 15th St NW	202-4536-4453/6
James Costello	1419 Crittendon St NW	202-2725-527
Aiguntha Anderson	7247 18th Pl NW	202 642-6151

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NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE/EMAIL
Alexis Gutierrez	38 Varnum St NW	Washington, DC 20011 (202) 415-3973
Janis Williams	309 Taylor St, NW	DC 20011 202.722.2725
Thomas Burnett	921 Quincy St NW	DC 20011 202-205-3833
Joseph Vaughan	1305 Shepherd St NW	josephmvaughan@gmail.com
Elisa Irwin	1500 Varnum St, NW	202/722-9842
Carol Pfeiffer	623 Capshaw St NW	202/722-9842
Marc Powell	1206 Gallatin St, NW	732-602-6630 / mpowell@hotmail.com
Rita L. Lutz	418 Kendall Pl NW	202-545-0122 RitaLutz@aol.com
Chris Sylva	4409 7th St NW	202 421-8896
Timothy A. Wages	287 Rock Creek Rd NW	202-722-0751

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20120
C. Lutz - 202-545-0122

Thank you for your thoughtful letter I plan to testify at the hearing and would love to quote some parts of your letter if that is OK with you

Cecelia waldeck
4517 15th st nw
[Quoted text hidden]

Cecelia Waldeck <cwald4517@gmail.com>
To: Donna Washington <dray100752@verizon.net>

Sun, Jan 11, 2015 at 5 04 PM

[Quoted text hidden]

Donna Washington <dray100752@verizon.net> wrote

Dear Ms Waldeck,

I was born and raised in Washington, DC and I have resided in the city for over 60 years. My grandfather and aunt bought my property in 1955 and at that time, there were neighborhood block captains and comparison of flowers and landscaping. Fruit trees lined the back yards and it was one of the cities most beautiful places to live. Everyone cared about their property and its appearance. You couldn't change your property without the agreement of your neighbors and if your house was unkept you were notified what needed to be corrected. Neighbors actually assisted each other for the betterment of the overall look of each property.

I have driven through this city and been disgusted at the way that houses have stuck out like sore thumbs, because the owners made major changes to the appearance of their property. I find this new pop up idea as one of the absolute worst things that has happened in the city. It reminds me of the Mac Mansion problem that plagued MD for a couple of years before their property regulations were changed to stop the practice.

The city has very little parking and as it is there are at least three cars per house and they want to add three whole families to a house. The district regulations don't even allow us to create a closed in structure like a garage, in back of your house and yet these new comers want to buy up the properties and build four level properties next door. This new carpet bagger practice is fueled by greed and a total lack of respect for aesthetics and neighborhood flavor.

If you want to expand your house you can build onto the back, so their argument that you cannot expand if your family grows is false. There is no regulation that prevents expansion of your house. However, building a whole new modern level on top of a victorian style house is so distracting and plain ugly. I have only seen one pop up that was designed to carry on the tradition of the actual house. Every other one I have seen has been extremely obvious and overwhelming. Furthermore, it has to impact their immediate neighbors because the structure looming over their house blocks the sun, traps the wind over their house, etc. All of which is a negative.

Consequently, I not only find this new top over growth and degradation of the properties not only in Ward 4 but in DC as a whole, I fully support the zoning amendment outlined in Case No 14-11.

NO MORE POP UPS in DC!

Respectfully submitted,

DONNA R WASHINGTON
Owner
1417 Webster St, NW