

January 14, 2015

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2015 JAN 15 AM 8:41

Chairman Anthony Hood  
District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
441 4<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Suite 2105  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: ZC Case No 14-11

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission.

I write in general support of ZC Case No 14-11, specifically efforts to stop conversion of single-family homes into multi-family apartment buildings or condos.

We have worked hard in the past on Capitol Hill to maintain single-family streets/blocks AS single-family blocks. There are real apartment buildings in my neighborhood, and that's fine, but we do not want developers buying and converting single-family homes into condos or apartment houses.

I do not, however, want to prevent homeowners from adding an additional story to their homes if they need additional room, and I urge you to ensure that the language chosen protects single-family homeowners' rights to expand their dwellings.

**Those single-family homeowner expansion rights actually add to stability of a neighborhood where there are many small houses, because they allow growing families (or others who might move just to get more space) to "grow in place" rather than forcing families into a constant real-estate "churn" as they outgrow one house and then another.**

Please adopt the portions of this amendment that will restrict expansion and conversion by developers of single-family homes into multi-family buildings

**There is, however, a proposed change that I think would be unwise:**

The redefinition of "Mezzanine" to count as a story. Here's an example of why this is a problem: In my block on Capitol Hill, the ground level rises behind the houses. Most houses on the block also have some type of extension in the back, many dating back 50-100 years, but some more recent. I have a neighbor whose house appears to be 3 stories when you see it from the street. But in the back, each floor of the expansion is half-a-story up from the front of the house because of the rising ground. If those were

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counted as separate stories, then my neighbor would officially have a 5-story house! (Or maybe it's six ..) But anyone with common sense would realize that it it's really just a 3-story house.

Other houses in the neighborhood have similar "split-level" designs where there are steps up or down to the extended part of the house at the back, or where there are sunken living-rooms. We don't want those all counted as separate floors.

So I suggest abandoning this redefinition. The overall building height limits (including the proposed "matter-of-right" reduction from 40 feet to 35 feet) will prevent oversized expansions, and I don't believe you need to worry about how the internal flooring is arranged within those heights

Thank you for your consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randolph Steer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randolph" and last name "Steer" clearly distinguishable.

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