

ANC1C Panel Statement on ZC 14-13 for April 30, 2015 Public Hearing

2015 MAY 11 PM 1:07

My name is Bert Denolf, a resident of Bloomingdale, DC (Ward 5) and below are my submitted comments for ZC14-13.

We endorse

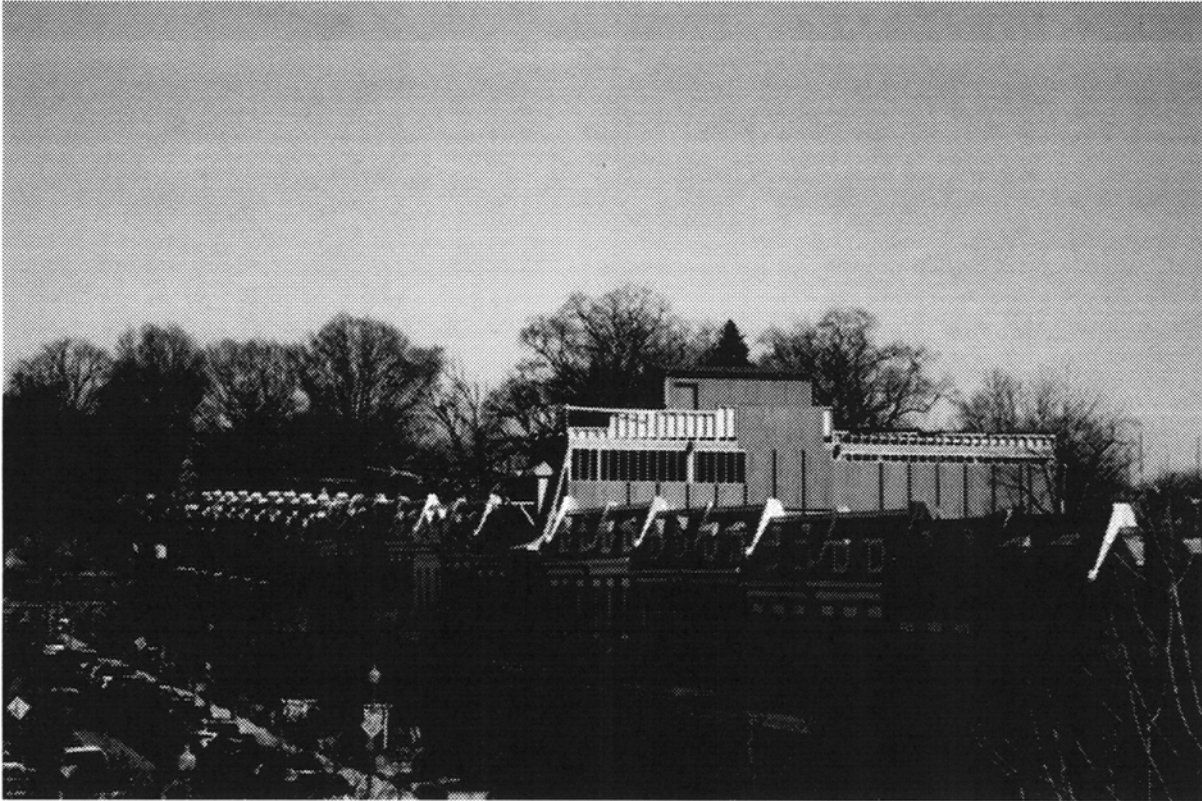
- ☒ The 10 foot height limit, which is in sync with the comprehensive plan's discouragement of roof structures on row houses.
- ☒ Front, back and alley side setback requirements.
- ☒ R-4 prohibition on human occupancy in penthouses.

We object to provisions that:

- ☒ Are inconsistent with the comprehensive plan. Proposed penthouse rule changes for R-5-B are largely out of character with the Comprehensive Plan in terms of setbacks on common walls and maintenance of the inventory and integrity of residential row house neighborhoods.
- ☒ Allow penthouse space to be habitable.
- ☒ Exclude penthouse space, which can now be habitable, from Floor Area Ratio calculations. This rule change further diminishes the purpose of FAR, which is to put a cap on maximum square footage in a building. With the current and often-abused loophole with the lower level exemption of so-called "cellar" space from FAR, 50% or more of FAR square footage in an R-5-B row house does not get counted. This will urge more pop-ups in R-5-B.
- ☒ Omit any setbacks from shared common sidewalls. lack of a setback from common walls shared by row houses will create multiple problems, including:
 - o Structural pressure on common walls
 - o Impinge upon the development rights of abutters who may wish to build penthouse structures but will be limited in doing so if existing penthouse walls occupy common wall space
 - o Create potential snow load problems
 - o Interfere with the functioning of abutters' chimneys
 - o Create potential fire safety problems with penthouse walls

Below is a photo of 42 W ST NW which you can clearly see dominates the street and sticks out like a sore thumb. This structure ruins the historical charm of this neighborhood, destroys access to natural light as the houses are north to south facing, and also further reduces any type of privacy. This building has degraded the quality of our neighborhood and our community. This is a prime example of what should **never** have been allowed by the Zoning Commission.

The saddest consequence is that you are converting single family homes into multiple condominiums, thereby detracting the appeal to families. This trend will **deter** families from living in these neighborhoods and instead focus on transient purchasers. This same builder has purchased other homes on the block and threatens to create similar, destructive structures. Please stop self-interested developers and real estate agencies from destroying the natural beauty and charm of our neighborhoods.



Regards,

Bert Denolf
52 W ST NW
Washington, DC 20001
bertjandenolf@gmail.com