

American Conservation Coalition

Zoning Commission Case No. 24-16

Dear Members of the Zoning Commission,

As President of the American Conservation Coalition and a proud resident of the D.C. metro area, I'm writing to express strong concern over the proposed rezoning of the Grace Reformed Church site for commercial redevelopment.

Grace Reformed Church is not just another empty church in Washington—it's a cornerstone of our national heritage. As the spiritual home of President Theodore Roosevelt, who laid its cornerstone in 1901, and a place of worship later attended by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, this church holds a profound place in our country's civic and cultural history. The church is a rare example of Late Gothic Revival architecture that deserves to be protected, not erased.

At the American Conservation Coalition, we represent a nationwide grassroots movement of 75,000 young Americans committed to thoughtful, forward-looking conservation in the footsteps of Teddy Roosevelt. Our approach emphasizes market-driven solutions, local stewardship, and the importance of preserving the cultural and historical fabric of the communities we serve. These are all values that President Roosevelt, America's "Conservation President," also upheld.

This issue is not just about zoning—it's about values. D.C. has an opportunity to preserve an architectural and spiritual landmark that has served this city and our nation for over a century. Even more critically, the faith community that I am a part of is actively seeking to purchase and preserve the church, offering a viable and mission-aligned future for the property.

We urge the Zoning Commission to reject the proposed commercial rezoning and instead support a path that honors the legacy of this building, its architectural integrity, and its deep roots in the story of our capital. In doing so, you will send a clear message that Washington does not sacrifice its heritage for short-term gain, but instead upholds it for the benefit of generations to come.

Thank you for your attention and for your role in shaping a thoughtful, historically grounded future for D.C.

Sincerely,
Chris Barnard
President, American Conservation Coalition
Washington, D.C.