



Case # 25-11 - Proposed Text Amendment (ZC 25-11) Rear Addition

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To DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ) <DCOZ-ZCSubmissions@dc.gov>

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To Whom it May Concern:

While understanding the rationale for the proposed zoning change that would permit 16-foot extensions to rear additions in the District of Columbia, we are writing to express strong opposition to the proposed amendment unless it carves out an exemption for the Federally-protected and historic district of Georgetown.

Georgetown, as you know, is a unique enclave of Federal and Victorian houses that date back to the origins of the country. As you also know, it attracts tourists from all over the world as well as commercial development along its thoroughfares, both of which will be threatened if current trends continue and which the proposed zoning change will accelerate.

In 1950 Congress understood that the historic neighborhood of Georgetown needed to be protected, and so passed the Old Georgetown Act (Public Law 81-808) that is designed to protect the area from commercial development that would ruin, or even erase, the original streets and structures. Unfortunately, recent zoning changes in the District ignore the principle of historic preservation, and threaten to undermine the intention of the Act and the integrity of Georgetown, one of the nation's gems.

We live in a small free-standing home, built in 1814 on 2919 Dumbarton Street, NW. The developer of the two recently-purchased houses next to us was given permission by Old Georgetown Board (OGB) to build two 3-story brick additions, 11' deep, claiming that the proposed rear "bump outs" are within the current District guidelines. Not only will the proposed addition impact our house by covering all of our east-facing windows, casting shade, and adding density to a block that currently has open air, trees, and gardens in its center, it will also block the views of the District's oldest African-American church, not to mention blocking the air, light, and views of everyone on the block including the views from 29th Street, NW.

Based on the District's encouragement of expansion and OGB's failure to protect Georgetown from rapacious developers, who contend that by expanding square footage they can increase the value of

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 25-11
EXHIBIT NO. 20

homes before reselling them, that decision sends a "free-for-all" message that building deep and tall additions behind houses in Georgetown is permissible. Your proposed zoning change will make a bad situation even worse, undermining the intent of the Old Georgetown Act of 1950 to preserve the historic district which is unique in the country.

No other municipality would be so cavalier about its inheritance and one of its critical assets.

We ask that you commit to preserving the historic integrity of Georgetown, and add an exemption to the proposed zoning change, stating that the proposed 16' addition does NOT apply to a Federally-designated historic district.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ruth and Edward Abrahams
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