



Coalition for Smarter Growth
DC • MD • VA

February 16, 2017

DC Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Oppose BZA Appeal No. 19374 – retain current interpretation of cellar space as habitable

Dear members of the Board:

We would like to express our opposition to the BZA Appeal No. 19374.

We support the current interpretation of the Zoning Commission that allows cellar space to be used for habitable rooms and dwelling units. To exclude dwellings in the cellar space would significantly reduce the amount of living space available in the city, especially in denser, in-demand neighborhoods. To change the interpretation of the allowable use of cellar space to exclude habitable rooms would cause substantial harm to property owners who use their cellar space for habitable space, and harm the city at large by shrinking the availability of dwelling units. Partially below-grade dwellings tend to be priced at lower rates than wholly above grade dwellings. Reinterpretation of the use of cellar space for habitable space will impose new affordability problems onto a city that already has a major problem with housing affordability.

For these reasons, we ask the Board to reject the claim that the use of cellar space as habitable is not allowed under the zoning regulations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Cort
Policy Director