



February 10, 2017

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

**Re: BZA Appeal No. 19374**

Dear Board Members:

Unlike the architecture of any other city in the world, Washington, DC architecture is uniquely balanced in density and scale. Our skies are not overwhelmed by towering structures. Our homes and businesses are unabashedly extensions of our streets and sidewalks. These two unique qualities stem directly from the zoning development rights regulating the tops and heights of buildings and the grounds of buildings.

As an architect who has invested twenty five years in helping preserve and beautify our incredibly distinctive city, I am concerned that the English Basement/habitable cellar, long part of the city's curb appeal, urban character, and charm to many, is at risk of being eliminated due to self-serving individuals.

I have designed numerous buildings with habitable cellar spaces in this City, and I believe habitable cellars not only can create visual interest and curb appeal, but also help create friendlier and safer sidewalks. Designing within the zoning regulation has produced many wonderfully creative cellar habitable spaces and landscapes. These projects add value to the surrounding neighborhood and to the City as a whole.

Furthermore, cellar dwelling spaces are true options to prospective home owners and renters who are challenged by the cost of living in the city-- something that DC sorely needs and will continue to need.

I strongly urge the Board to maintain the development right of cellars as habitable spaces to preserve the beauty and charm of Washington, DC. I am in full support of JC Development and their development of habitable cellar spaces.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chuong T. H. Cao', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chuong T. H. Cao  
Principal