

TO: Zoning Commission

February 20, 2018

**FR: Cecelia Waldeck
4517 - 15th St NW
Washington, DC 20011**

RE: Zoning Case 17-18

I am the owner of a row home in 16th Street Heights, which is zoned RF-1. Currently, I am converting my single family row home into a two unit duplex, with a separate basement unit. Part of the construction involves lowering my basement floor at a substantial expense which is still reasonable given the appreciation of home values in my neighborhood. At the conclusion of my renovation, my two unit home will still have only three floors and the same footprint as the pre-renovated residence.

Under the zoning rules, I had the opportunity to game the zoning rules and add a fourth floor like a developer around the corner who renovated a similar size row home into a four floor, three unit condo. This developer did not lower the basement floor but simply raised the floor of the second story and added a very ugly fourth floor that is out of character with all the other homes on the block. Very oddly, the original large windows on the front facade now show the feet of the inhabitants walking on the floor of the raised second floor.

However, as a home owner, my affection for the neighborhood and its neighbors, as well as my appreciation for the 100 year old row homes on my block, caused me to forego the profits made by the nearby developer. My renovation is increasing the housing stock in my neighborhood but in a manner that respects the historic look of the neighborhood and the privacy and air rights of my neighbors. I see other neighbors in my neighborhood making similar responsible changes and encourage the Zoning Commissioners to not succumb to any financial hardship arguments proffered by supporters of the current zoning loopholes that permit the development of four story residences in RF-1 neighborhoods.

Although I appreciate the proposals to eliminate some of the loopholes in the zoning regulations, they do not go far enough. I encourage the adoption of a straightforward rule limiting the number of stories of residences in RF-1 neighborhoods to three, irregardless of whether the first story qualifies as a cellar or basement. Cellars or basements can be lowered to make them habitable. The distinction is one that should not make much differences at this point in time.



Cecelia Waldeck
4517 - 15th St. NW
Washington, DC 20011