

Submitter: Kathryn Grantz

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

I built an ADU behind my house demolishing my 1925 garage in 2019/20. Living in a historic conservation zone I had to go through a minor review. It was not onerous. It was more difficult to built an ADU that looked like my main house (a requirement of the zoning) but it wasn't as onerous as building in a true historic zone. I added a living space where there wasn't one, previously a garage. This new rule doesn't tie demolishing a historic structure which someone went through the trouble of designating with the goal of adding middle and affordable housing. Many historic homes are on double lots and instead end up with expensive McMansions or multiple condos. My eliminating the review there is no incentive for out of the box thinking.

I agree with many of the thoughts of the Archtectural Hertiage Center:

This new rule would eliminate the minimal protection of a process that is designed to review and balance the needs of local communities and their historic homes and places.

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- Removing demolition review denies the public a voice
- As written, Section 22(1)(f) has no requirement that middle housing or affordable housing replace the demolished historic structure. It has NO connection to the bill's goal.
- Historic designation requires rigorous research and vetting to prove cultural significance. They should not be erased without careful consideration.
- Demolition is forever and more demolition works against our climate goals
- Contributing structures play a vital role in maintaining the historical integrity and character of a district. Removing or altering them can change the district's historical narrative and erode its authenticity.
- We can move the needle for increased housing in heritage areas by creating an inclusive "both-and" strategy that would add more units within designated historic areas through an incentive package for adapting existing residential, to multi-unit housing in non-contributing properties, adding ADU's, offering affordability incentives to retain existing affordable heritage properties and more.