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**Bateman, Flicka**

**From:** JulieLentz@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, February 21, 2003 3:44 PM  
**To:** Ftbatema@aol.com  
**Subject:** duplex occupancy--Columbia Place

Dear Ms. Bateman:

As we discussed by phone earlier today, several residents of Columbia Place attended the January 27 Chapel Hill Council meeting and requested that the number of occupants per unit in each duplex building be limited to two unrelated adults so as to eliminate the problems detailed below. (Clearly married couples and domestic partners would be considered as being related.)

Columbia Place is comprised of 33 duplex buildings, each containing two dwellings, most of which have only three bedrooms. Between 1998 and the present, the number of homes in Columbia Place that are owned by absent landlords has grown from a mere handful to 20.

This is leading to overcrowding which undoubtedly will get worse. The resulting problems are:

- 1) Neighborhood disruption. Unlike a family or domestic partners, each unrelated adult has a network of family and friends who gravitate around a single dwelling. When this is multiplied by four, the neighborhood is frequently disrupted by excess traffic along with:
- 2) Parking shortage and street congestion. Due to insufficient street parking, the Columbia Place covenants state that "Ownership of each Lot shall entitle the owner or owners thereof to the use of not more than two automobile parking spaces, which shall be as near and as convenient to the front door of each Lot as reasonably possible." There is simply not enough street parking in Columbia Place for each unit to have even ONE street parking space. As a result, oftentimes there is double parking and nose-in parking which prevents access. Mailmen are refusing to deliver at homes where the curbside box is not accessible and emergency vehicles have no access.
- Subsequent to our conversation today, I learned that on a number of occasions the police have been called with regard to double parking and parking over sidewalks. While the officers have responded and called by, they have not ticketed nor towed with the result that drivers move their cars only briefly and then return them to the violated spaces.
- 3) Garbage and trash. The more unrelated adults per unit, each with his/her own social network, the more trash is generated in the household. Renters tend to be less house proud than owner occupants and consequently there is a growing amount of trash strewn across the neighborhood.
- 4) Noise. With the rapidly increasing overcrowding comes noise and unneighborly conduct which is severely detracting from our quality of life. Many of the owner occupants at Columbia Place are mature adults nearing or at retirement age. We purchased our homes on the understanding that we were buying properties that were zoned for single family occupancy. Since there has been a four-fold increase in absentee landlords in five years, without Council intervention it is merely a matter of time until owner occupiers such as myself will be forced out of the neighborhood.

One of Chapel Hill's most appealing features is the downtown area which provides a unique mix and diversity in meeting the needs of the university and its students as well as those of resident owners and tenants in adjacent neighborhoods. If resident owners continue to be forced out of the downtown community, Franklin Street will effectively become the preserve of students to the detriment of the whole of Chapel Hill.

I am asking that you share this information with your colleagues on the town council and that the Council take the necessary steps to prevent overcrowding in our neighborhood. Your help and support in this respect will be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

2/24/2003

*Julie Lentz*  
 316 Columbia Place East