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**From:** Helland, Carol  
**Sent:** Friday, June 14, 2013 8:53 AM  
**To:** Council  
**Cc:** Miyake, Brad; Brennan, Mike; Berens, Mary Kate; Basich, Myrna; Stroh, Dan; McCormick-Huentelman, Mike; Inghram, Paul; Murphy, Michelle  
**Subject:** FW: Spiritwood Neighborhood Concerns - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL, FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY

Mayor Lee and Members of the City Council – Spiritwood residents voiced their concerns at the June 10 City Council meeting regarding recent single family redevelopment in their neighborhood. Representatives from this area also communicated their concerns via emails sent to the City Council, Planning Commission and East Bellevue Community Council. A copy of my response to the residents together with their original email communication is provided below for your reference. Neighborhood Outreach has been consulted regarding the issues raised, and will be included in any neighborhood meeting that is requested. Carol

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**From:** Helland, Carol  
**Sent:** Friday, June 14, 2013 8:30 AM  
**To:** 'bbenson0717@yahoo.com'; 'rlbrown1104@gmail.com'; 'janern@comcast.net'; 'boxines2@comcast.net'; 'Julie.isenhardt@gmail.com'; 'Kathie14508@yahoo.com'; 'Joe2Davies@aol.com'; 'Kadee2358@hotmail.com'; 'fricke\_family@msn.com'; 'Steph\_Rick\_W@hotmail.com'; 'Davidpaten@yahoo.com'; 'nsjudge@outlook.com'; 'j.okelly@comcast.net'; 'drjeremy@gmail.com'; 'ireneaf@hotmail.com'; 'barblys@juno.com'; 'LSmithctr@hotmail.com'; 'maryblackburn@hotmail.com'; 'mortuarymom@gmail.com'; 'gayle\_bandit@yahoo.com'  
**Cc:** Brennan, Mike; Inghram, Paul  
**Subject:** RE: Spiritwood Neighborhood Concerns

Dear Spiritwood Neighbors – your email communications were forwarded to me for response. I am the Land Use Director, and manage the City divisions that review single family construction permits for consistency with the Land Use Code and enforce City codes when violations occur. Staff have been working with the contact person for several of the properties listed in your email. Specifically, staff are working with the applicant to ensure that permit requirements are followed for remodel work that has occurred at 1613 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE and 1714 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, and for new construction that has been initiated at 1722 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. For your reference, I have provided some project background information below about each of the above-referenced properties. I have also provided you with information regarding provisions of the Land Use Code that govern occupancy of single family homes. My contact information is provided below as well. If you have additional questions after you have read this email, I would be happy to talk with you or come out and meet with Spiritwood residents about the concerns you have raised.

1613 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. You are correct, that the remodel work that has occurred at 1613 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE was undertaken without City permits. Construction without required permits violates the City's codes. As a result, a Stop Work order was placed following the receipt of neighborhood complaints, and the applicant has been asked to submit permits to legitimize the work. An enforcement case was opened, and the applicant was notified to submit for required permits. Permit plans have been submitted to the City at this point. If the permit plans are found to be in compliance with applicable codes, the City will issue permits and require inspections to verify that completed work is consistent with approved plans. If the work is found not to be in compliance with applicable code, permit revisions will be required and the prior work will need to be brought into compliance with applicable codes or removed.

1718 144<sup>th</sup> Ave NE (1714 144<sup>th</sup> Ave NE under Bellevue Address System). Remodel work was undertaken to convert garage space to living space without required permits. An enforcement case was opened, and the applicant was notified to submit for required permits. Permit plans have been submitted to the City for this property as well. If the permit plans are found to be in compliance with applicable codes, the City will issue permits and require inspections to verify

that completed work is consistent with approved plans. If the work is found not to be in compliance with applicable code, permit revisions will be required and the prior work will need to be brought into compliance with applicable codes or removed.

1722 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. Permits necessary for the construction of a new single family home have been issued for this property. Several permit revisions were requested before the permit was issued. The home was originally designed as a duplex which is not legal in the Spiritwood neighborhood. Requested revisions to the permit required the home to be redesigned for occupancy by a single family. Among other revisions, a second kitchen was required to be removed, and internal connections between different areas of the home were required to be established. The applicant for this home has chosen to maximize, but not exceed, the available development area on the lot. As approved in the permit, the setbacks, lot coverage, height limit (including daylight plane) and other dimensional standards for a single family home have been met. To ensure that applicable dimensional standards are met during construction, a verification was required by a licensed surveyor to confirm the location of proposed improvements vis-à-vis setbacks before the foundation was poured. City building inspectors will visit the property regularly to ensure that work is progressing consistent with approved plans.

Regulations Governing Occupancy of Single Family Homes. The neighbors have raised concerns that recent events may foreshadow future zoning changes for the area. Please rest assured, that the City is not considering any changes to the Comprehensive Plan or the Land Use Code that would change the current single family residential zoning for the Spiritwood neighborhood. City staff will also continue to administer the codes through the permit review process, and through enforcement avenues when necessary, to ensure the stability of residential neighborhoods like Spiritwood. I do want to make you aware, however, that Bellevue code does provide for single family homes to be occupied by multiple persons who are not part of one single family. In compliance with Federal Law that governs fair housing, the Bellevue Code allows for a "family" to be comprised of up to 6 unrelated persons. Individuals renting out rooms in a single family home would fall within the scope of this definition, so long as the limitation on the number of unrelated persons is not exceeded. This is not considered to be a boarding home. Single family homes are also allowed to contain one Accessory Dwelling Unit. This allows for up to 800 square feet of a home to be dedicated to a secondary kitchen and living space that can be rented out so long as the owner occupies the balance of the home. For the above-identified properties, staff will be in contact with the applicant and review the rules that apply to building remodels and the occupancy of single family homes to ensure he does not run afoul of these rules.

I hope this information is useful to you. Again, please let me know if I can be of further assistance, or if you would like me to meet with you to discuss this issue in person. I appreciate that you took the time to share your concerns.

Carol Helland, Land Use Director  
Development Services Department  
425-452-2724

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**From:** Rachel Brown [rlbrown1104@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 07, 2013 10:39 AM  
**To:** Inghram, Paul; Council  
**Subject:** Spiritwood Neighborhood Concerns

Hello-

I am writing to express my concerns about some unscrupulous development and potential for undesirable changes in the Spiritwood neighborhood of Lake Hills.

In March 2013, a small single family home located at 1613 144th Ave SE was purchased. The buyer immediately started renovating the home without permits. The home was converted from a single family home into a house

with the intention of renting individuals rooms, which according to the Official City of Bellevue website (<http://bellevuewa.gov/reportproblem.htm>) is a possible code violation.

At the time of purchase, the house had only three bedrooms with a kitchen and living room. The new floor plan now converts this small three bedroom house into a house with eight bedrooms. The builder was able to modify the house with eight bedrooms into the home by eliminating the living room and modifying a portion of the garage to include two bedrooms. Furthermore, the house originally had one bathroom for three bedrooms and now has only one and one half bathrooms for eight bedrooms.

By checking Craigslist, it was found that an advertisement was placed to rent each individual room at \$500 - \$600 per room. The house was occupied by several unrelated people who moved in and out of the house.

Due to several neighbor complaints, the city placed a "Stop Work Order" on the house and all the people were informed to vacate the house. We understand that the owner is currently attempting to get building permits to allow the house to be occupied by individual renters and not by the owner.

Based upon public records, a person a named Qin Sun, together with BLUE SKY EQUITIES, LLC and USA INVESTMENT GROUP LLC, has purchased a total of five houses or properties in the neighborhood. They include:

1. 1613 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98007;
2. 1718 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98007;
3. 1722 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98007 (which is immediately adjacent to the previous address);
4. 14424 SE 17<sup>th</sup> St, Bellevue, WA 98007; and
5. 2017 146<sup>th</sup> Pl. SE, Bellevue, WA 98007

The property at 1722 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE is currently being developed into a very large 1.7 million dollar home. The proposed floor plan will far outsize any home in the entire neighborhood. The online county records of the permit application note:

- Under Review 1-Building, Dec. 19, 2012 the reviewer stated "After conversation with the applicant, the intent of the project is for the residence to be a duplex in the future. We will meet with applicant and owner to discuss the design requirements for separation of the 2 dwelling units."
- Under Review 3-Land Use, April 4, 2013 the notes sections states "The current proposed home does not meet the definition of a single-family dwelling. A single-family dwelling must be designed for one family and can contain but one kitchen. It is necessary to submit a revised site plan having one kitchen and designed to be occupied by one family. A single family use agreement will not be sufficient to supersede these requirements. After a revision is submitted demonstrating the proposed residence has one kitchen and is designed for one family the single family use agreement can be removed from the title."

Under Review 4-Land Use on April 23, 2013, the permit was approved.

Under Post Review 1-Land Use, June 4, 2013 the status is listed as "revision requested"

Post Review 2-Land Use which notes status as "open".

It is not clear if the Land Use permit is currently approved. Regardless, construction on the house continues at the site each day this week through June 5th.

By purchasing the number of individual houses/properties and renting individual rooms of each house, Qin Sun, et.al. are not complying with the current zoning laws that state the area is designed for Single Family

Residences. The City needs to act now to prevent converting these single family homes into boarding houses. Furthermore, I am concerned that Qin Sun may attempt to change the zoning in our neighborhood to allow multifamily homes.

If Qin Sun is allowed to flaunt building codes and zoning laws with the actions stated above, our single family zoned neighborhood will lose its appeal to be occupied by families because it will cause blight on the neighborhood. Qin Sun's actions will increase the occupied density of the neighborhood and make this stable neighborhood into a transitory neighborhood because the people will have no connection with the area. Lake Hills and specifically, the Spiritwood neighborhood has already experienced a decline in the quality of life. The homes with individual rooms being rented have caused traffic problems, blaring music, overcrowding streets with parked vehicles, unfamiliar people moving through poor yard maintenance. I am even more concerned that the level safety is declining because of domestic arguments neighbors have heard or witness which causes concern for the safety of our children.

Please note that the Lake Hills neighborhood is filled with modest priced homes compared with the rest of Bellevue. Some of these homes have been occupied by the same families for 20 or 30 years. Other homes are essentially priced as starter homes for young families with children that will attend Lake Hills Elementary School - I am one of those families. Moving toward multifamily dwellings in this neighborhood will discourage other stable young families to move into this neighborhood.

I have learned that it is difficult for the City of Bellevue Code Compliance department to enforce code violations related to single family residences being used as illegal duplexes or for independent room rental. Apparently the code is not clear enough to be enforced and the Code Compliance department has been requesting legal interpretation of what is considered illegal room rental, what exactly are boarding houses etc. but has not received what they need to be able to fully enforce these codes.

I am giving my input to the Bellevue City Council and the Comprehensive Planning Commission that I do not want the Spiritwood neighborhood to change into a high density housing development. **Spiritwood should remain zoned for single family use only.** Rental properties should be rented to single families. Permits should not be granted proactively or retroactively to owners of properties that are developing duplexes or other rentals where individual room rentals are being allowed. Code violations need to be enforceable by Code Compliance staff with proper language and legal interpretation as necessary. The City Council needs to represent the wishes of the residents in our neighborhood and make sure that we retain the integrity of Spiritwood.

Our immediate requests are as follows:

1. The City should reject the current application for permits for the property located at 1613 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98007
  - a. This is the house described above that has a "Stop Work Order" for work that was already completed and was previously occupied.
1. Review the permits and intent of use for the property currently under construction at 1722 144<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE, Bellevue, Wa 98007 to make sure that it will in fact be a single family home and not a duplex.
2. Have the Code Compliance and Development Services carefully observe the activity which is likely to occur at 14424 SE 17<sup>th</sup> St, Bellevue, WA 98007 to make sure the purchaser does not repeat the activities that occurred at 1613 144<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98007. (I am concerned that the homeowner will apply for permits with the intent to add several bedrooms to allow for individual room rentals).

I know that many of my neighbors-plan to attend Bellevue City Council meetings to further express our concerns.  
Thank you for your consideration and support in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Rachel Brown