



# AIA Austin

October 6, 2016

Ref: Council Item 55 – Subchapter F gross floor area exemptions for garages and carports

Dear Mayor Adler and Austin City Council Members,

The Austin chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Austin) fully supports amending the current code by means of a public process where the ordinance will be streamlined without affecting the overall intent. Our goal is to improve consistency, predictability and reviewability of the code.

The proposed language relating to the carport exemption unfortunately does NOT provide a comprehensive solution to the issue; however, this call to action to amend the code language provides the City Council with the opportunity to find a better solution.

Over the past 10 years since Subchapter F (McMansion) was adopted staff's interpretations of the complex code have been consistently called into question adding significant burden to the process for our city's boards and commissions, city staff, homeowners, builders and design professionals. While the current exemptions for porches, parking, attics and basements are all well-intended, the complexity of the current code language allows a few bad players to exploit the exemptions. It is time to close the loopholes and find a comprehensive solution.

Streamlining and clarifying all of the exemptions can be a positive first step that will provide a clearer understanding for everyone – staff, design professionals and homeowners. We would urge you to NOT APPROVE the current language and instead recommend a working group, including stakeholders and staff intimately knowledgeable of these codes to address all of the exemptions comprehensively and return back to you with a better solution.

Respectfully,

Stuart Sampley, AIA  
Advocacy Commissioner / Past-President