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2951 Tilden St.
Washington, DC 20008
May 1, 2006

Carol J. Mitten
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th St. NW Suite 210 S
Washington, DC 20001

2006 MAY -01 PM 12: 07

Re: Clark Proposal 05-26 Tilden St. NW

Dear Ms. Mitten,

Clark proposes to construct a white monstrosity across from my home, which I have owned, and in which I have lived, since 1987. I write to let you and the other Commissioners know why I oppose construction of this gigantic apartment complex.

When I purchased my home on Tilden Street in 1987, I consulted the zoning map to see what could be built in the empty space across from my home. The zoning for this lot has always been R-2. I specifically relied on the R-2 zoning for that space. I expected that only townhouses compatible with the townhouses on the north side of Tilden Street would be built in that space. I purchased my home in reliance on the R-2 zoning for the neighborhood.

Maintaining small neighborhoods intact is important, both for those of us who live here, and those who want to move into a city neighborhood. Constructing a monstrous apartment complex is completely inconsistent with a neighborhood ambiance generally and with the Tilden Street neighborhood specifically. Our Tilden Street neighborhood consists only of semi-detached townhouses and a few row houses, with an older apartment house on our corner of Tilden and Connecticut.

Apartment house dwellers might congregate among themselves, but they would not be part of the Tilden Street neighborhood. Tilden Street dwellers have a strong neighborhood feeling. Recently, we celebrated, on my front porch, the 100 year birthday of the 12 semi-detached pebble-dash stucco houses, all constructed in 1906. Allowing the construction of a huge apartment building will jeopardize and detract from our neighborhood. I do not object to the construction of the eight townhouses that Clark originally told the neighborhood, and the District of Columbia government, that it was planning to build in that space. Allowing the construction of townhouses, as Clark originally promised it would do, is compatible with the neighborhood. A white superstructure that dominates our small houses is not.

Allowing construction of the Clark project will have a disastrous effect on traffic and parking. The traffic and parking problem on Tilden Street is already horrendous. Even before and after the standard "rush hours", traffic in the direction of Connecticut Avenue is backed up below 29th Street. Recently, an emergency vehicle had to streak up the medium toward Connecticut because the cars backed up on Tilden Street, trying to turn left or right onto Connecticut Avenue, could not move. Cars emerging from the Clark building have only one way to go: right onto Tilden Street. If they want to go to Connecticut Ave., they will have to make a U-turn at 29th Street and hope that the cars coming from Rock Creek Park will let them go.

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flow of traffic. And those cars that are stuck trying to make the U-turn will back up on Tilden Street, in front of the Kuwait embassy, and those cars that want to descend east toward the Park will be prevented from doing so.

Moreover, the parking problem on Tilden St. is significant. There are rarely any free spaces on the Tilden. If you drive on Tilden any time, night or day, you will find both sides of the street crowded with cars parked cheek to jowl. Guests of the residents of the Clark project will have to park on Tilden, 29th, or Upton—all of which have more than enough cars parked on them.

The actual building Clark proposes is completely inconsistent architecturally with the townhouses on the north side of Tilden Street, in terms of size and construction. Not one of the Tilden Street houses is made of pre-cast concrete; they are made of pebble-dash stucco or brick. Not one of the townhouses has balconies. Not one of the townhouses has large plate glass windows. The Clark project is angular and modern. The homes on Tilden are soft, with gentle porches and graceful columns; they date from 1906 to about 1930. The homes of Tilden have character and charm; there is nothing charming or graceful about the Clark building.

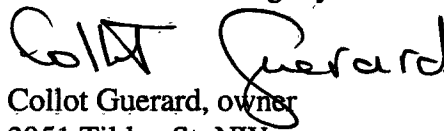
I am also very concerned about the effect that the increased density will have on Rock Creek Park and the Park's fragile environment. Clark has destroyed large trees that populated the site before Clark stripped the lot clean. Clark's project is so huge that the lot will no longer accommodate large trees—just small ornamental ones.

Clark may make promises to the Zoning Commission—but the company is not to be trusted. Just recently, it held a meeting with the neighborhood to describe the project, soliciting changes from the neighborhood. However, Clark had already filed its PUD with the zoning commission. We thought Clark was serious when it said it wanted to make revisions to accommodate the neighborhood—the representation was disingenuous as Clark had already submitted its final plans. Clark promised to clean up the medium strip. It never did. Clark promised it would build townhouses. It has not.

There is no benefit to imposing this dense superstructure on our small neighborhood. The only theoretical benefit one might posit is increased tax revenues to DC and increased housing. However, there is no lack of housing in NW Washington, DC, as the article in today's Washington Post about the glut of unsold condos and apartments in our neighborhood describes. The District's budget is in better shape than it has been in a long time.

I plan to attend the Zoning Commission meeting. Do not change the R-2 zoning; do not allow Clark to overwhelm our neighborhood with this gigantic white concrete edifice.

Thank you, Commissioners, for considering my views.


Collot Guerard, owner
2951 Tilden St. NW