816 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
January 28, 2001

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
Government of the District of Columbia
441 Fourth Street, N.W., Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

BZA
Case No. 16407
Exhibit No. 89

Dear Members of the Board:

We write in opposition to Application number 16407, by the Capitol Hill Group, to reduce the number of parking spaces on and adjacent to the Medlink nursing home and hospital complex on Capitol Hill.

We have lived in the 800 block of Massachusetts Ave., N.E., one block from Medlink, for more than twenty-two years. We are concerned a grant of this application would have significant harmful impact on our block and the entire surrounding community.

During the past two or three years, parking on our block and the surrounding area has become vastly more difficult. Finding a parking space is now difficult at virtually all hours, and especially so in the evening. Decreasing the number of parking spaces by approving the Capitol Hill Group application would mean that persons employed by the Group, and visitors to it, will have park on the street, thereby reducing still further the spaces available to those of us who live here.

Approval of the application would of course create inconveniences by forcing residents to park further from their homes (if they are able to find parking spaces at all). More seriously, it would increase the possibility of crime, as people returning home at night have to walk farther between cars and houses. The problem of long-distance walking is particularly severe for our elderly neighbors. Capitol Hill has always been a hospitable neighborhood for retirees. Decreasing parking opportunities threatens this characteristic of the neighborhood.

Any application from the Capitol Hill Group should be received with special skepticism. This organization insisted only two years ago that it needed 276 off-street parking spaces in order to operate its facility properly. You granted the application at that time. There is no reason to believe that anything has happened in the past two years to change this conclusion. Further, the Group has not fulfilled its promise to open and maintain the underground parking structure on its facility (though it has misrepresented to

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the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission, and apparently to others, that it had fulfilled that promise). The Board should demand that the organization honor its commitment to maintain the underground parking structure and continue to provide all 276 parking spaces, in order to decrease the facility's adverse impact on the neighborhood.

We also urge you to view the application with skepticism in light of the Capitol Hill Group's history of poor community relations. The Group has made virtually no effort to participate in community affairs. (In contrast, its predecessor, the Capitol Hill Hospital, was an involved neighbor.) The Group has rarely responded to community concerns or requests for information. One example is the reason why you are reconsidering the application -- the Group did not properly inform the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission of the application in advance of your initial consideration. Another example is the organization's apparent disinterest in honoring its agreement with adjacent St. James Episcopal Church, an excellent neighbor to us on the Hill, to make parking spaces available to parishioners.

In closing, we again urge the Board to deny application number 16407 of the Capitol Hill Group.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen M. Daniels

Maygene F. Daniels