Stanton Park Neighborhood Association
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January 27, 2000

Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

Application No. 16544

To the Members of the Board:

The Stanton Park Neighborhood Association (SPNA) is a nonprofit, non-partisan community organization that works for the improvement of the Stanton Park neighborhood on Capitol Hill. Our boundaries are Second Street, NE, G Street, NE, Tenth Street, NE, and East Capitol Street.

On January 10, 2000, the SPNA Land Use Committee met with Peter Starbuck concerning the application to the Board of Zoning Adjustment of the Simone-Starbuck Joint Venture for a variance from the maximum allowable percentage of lot occupancy in an R-4 district for 12 and 16 Seventh Street, NE, Washington, D.C., in order to build detached garages behind the new single family dwellings on the two lots. Although the Committee has serious reservations about some of the procedures followed by the applicants, discussed in more detail below, the Committee has decided not to oppose the proposed variance because many neighboring properties have similar garages and because the proposed garages would contribute to the alley's security, both for the tenants of the new residences and for their neighbors.

The Committee is concerned that the developers did not propose the detached garages when they originally proposed the designs for the new houses to the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). Mr. Starbuck says that a staff member of the HPRB suggested that they secure approval under historical review criteria first, and then seek a variance for detached garages if they decided to build them. The Committee would have preferred that the garages had been proposed at that stage and the footprint of the proposed new dwellings had been adjusted to permit compliance with the lot occupancy criteria. The irregularity of the lot sizes, cited as a grounds for variance, was a result of the developers' subdividing. Moreover, contrary to a representation in the application, one of the two houses was not erected until after the application was filed.

BZA
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Exhibit No. 26

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EXHIBIT NO.26

Despite our concerns about the process, the Committee agrees that the addition of detached garages is a reasonable improvement of the lots, and does not differ significantly from the lot coverage of adjoining residential properties, and that the garages, as proposed, will not be aesthetically objectionable. Accordingly, the SPNA Land Use Committee does not oppose this application for variance.

Respectfully submitted,

Darrell Blakeway, Secretary
Land Use Committee

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