4315 FIFTEENTH STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20011-7021

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7 October 2000

Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA
Director
Office of Zoning
Government of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Application No. 16550 – Stacy Hamblin

Dear Ms. Kress:

I am writing to **strongly oppose** the above application requested by Stacy Hamblin to allow subdivison and construction of 10 single-family row dwellings at Rear-1406 through 1424 Webster Street, NW – Square 2699, Lot 64. I am the owner of the property at 4315 Fifteenth Street, NW, which is directly adjacent to Hamblin's land.

As you may know, the lot is in the middle of the square, surrounded on all four sides by single family attached houses. My specific objections are as follows:

- By its location, it is accessible only by two alleys, neither one of which appears to be adequately sized for the constant traffic that would be generated by 10 new houses and, *more importantly*, for any emergency vehicles that would need to gain access to these homes.
- Because of the location, the homes to be constructed there would necessarily be less marketable than homes fronting on the surrounding streets. Mr. Hamblin has indicated that he plans for-sale housing, but should the units not sell, I and other neighbors are concerned that the properties could become attractive nuisances – havens for squatters and drug abusers that the neighborhood has worked very hard to eradicate. Because the property does not front on any street, it is easily beyond the watchful eyes of neighbors and police.
- The lot is completely enclosed on all four sides; the noise that can be expected to result from dense housing development will be magnified because of the surrounding existing homes, and will be disruptive to neighbors.
- I oppose any residential housing development on the parcel, but I particularly object to the density that Mr. Hamblin has proposed. I have reviewed the basic site plan that Mr. Hamblin has furnished against the actual dimensions on the site and suggest that any reasonable person must conclude that 10 houses will press the site tremendously. As a corollary, the site is unlikely to be able to

BZA
Case No. 16550
Exhibit No. 66

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16550
EXHIBIT NO.66

accommodate the additional parking generated by 10 houses (most likely 2 cars per house), which will force more parking onto surrounding streets which are already overcrowded at night.

- Finally, while this is a subjective comment based on my experience thus far, I believe it is relevant. I have attended meetings with Mr. Hamblin and his architect and have been concerned about their lack of truthfulness in their intentions. Nothing that I have observed thus far suggests that his actions are consistent with his words. He says it will be a high quality development of good design. His plans (at least the ones I have seen) show a construction and design type that could be described – at best – as mediocre and perhaps more realistically as low-end developer tract housing. The city is littered with infill construction that is inconsistent with the character of the surrounding buildings. Once these "bad teeth" are there, they blight the landscape and eventually contribute to the decline of neighborhoods.

For the above reasons, and in the interest of not unhinging the great progress this struggling neighborhood has made toward becoming a very pleasant, neighbor-friendly and safe living environment, **I again register my strong opposition to the variance request and ask that you and your colleagues resoundingly reject the request.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Thomas C. Hier