February 24, 2000

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OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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

RE: Application # 16558: Clare Parmalee (5308 39th Street, N.W.; Square 1751, Lot 14 ) request for variance from Section 2001.3 for a nonconforming structure and from Section 404.1 for minimum rear yard setback.

Dear Ms. Kress, FAIA:

We are writing to express our concern regarding the above referenced application for a variance to the requirements for the rear yard setback. We have been residents at 3906 Jocelyn Street for 18 years. I am also a registered architect who has practiced in the District of Columbia for the past 22 years.

As residents of this delightful neighborhood we have seen a great deal of change to many of the houses on the 3900 block of Jocelyn Street (Clare Parmalee's house is on the SW corner of 39th and Jocelyn Street). Of the 12 houses on this block, 8 houses—including our house—have been renovated and expanded over the past 18 years. It is striking however, that the architectural character and quality of our neighborhood remains as it did 18 years ago.

I believe that this neighborhood retains its character and continues to be one of the most desirable neighborhoods in the District of Columbia because most of the residents have exercised reasonable restraint when considering additions to their houses and have worked within the framework of the existing zoning requirements. The BZA has reinforced this attitude by working in partnership with our residential communities to ensure that variances to the zoning regulations are taken seriously and approved only in circumstances where the applicant has demonstrated that there will be no negative impact on the adjacent properties.

I am concerned that this addition will have a negative impact on the adjacent property. More importantly, however, I am concerned that the approval of this variance will set a precedent that will make it easier for the residents of this neighborhood to seek, and for the BZA to grant, variances to the zoning regulations that have helped to protect the

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architectural character of the neighborhood. Please note that all 8 of 12 house additions on the 3900 block of Jocelyn Street were designed and constructed within the zoning setback requirements for R-1-B and did not seek variances from these requirements.

In the event that the BZA is inclined to approve this application for a variance to the 25 ft. rear yard set back we request that restraint and thoughtful compromise be used in determining the amount of the variance. The applicant is asking that the rear yard (as defined by the zoning regulations) be considered side yard. We believe that this is unreasonable. Furthermore, the drawings that we reviewed propose a 7'-6" setback from the rear property line; this does not even comply with the requirements for a side yard setback.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this application for a variance to the requirements to the rear yard setback. We hope that our concerns are seriously considered in the spirit in which offered—to maintain the architecturally significant qualities that define our neighborhood and make it unique.

Yours truly,

Steven Kleinrock, AIA

Ruth Kleinrock

3906 Jocelyn Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015

202-244-4216