GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2001 JUN 26 PM 1:03

June 26, 2001
Ms. Sheila Cross Reid, Chairperson
District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St., NW
Washington, DC

Re: Office of Planning Update on BZA Application No. 16618: The Phillips Collection; 1600 21st Street, N.W. Square 66, Lots 74, 819 and 827

Dear Ms. Reid:

The Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) is scheduled to continue its hearing on this case today. Since its original presentation to the BZA, the applicant has, with the strong encouragement of the BZA and OP, undertaken a formal mediation process with the owners of several nearby properties and with ANC 2B. As a result, the applicant has made several changes to the proposed project's physical plan and future operations. These changes are incorporated in a "Neighborhood Cooperation Agreement" with the parties to the mediation process, and in a set of revised architectural plans that will be presented by the applicant to the BZA at the June 26 hearing. OP supports the agreement and recommends BZA approval of the revised application.

We have had the opportunity to review the neighborhood agreement, the revised architectural plans and the applicant's chart identifying the zoning relief that is being requested under the revised proposal. It appears the Neighborhood Cooperation Agreement has resulted in many positive steps to reduce any adverse impacts on the neighborhood, including: a reduction in the size and height of the proposed addition; a scaling back of the countable FAR and square footage of the proposed project; the elimination of a parking garage that the zoning regulations did not require; the modification of an elevator shaft, eliminating the need for special exception relief from set-back requirements; a reduction in the size of the auditorium; relocation of the café to an area that minimizes noise impact on the neighborhood; restrictions on occupancy, parking, deliveries, signage, gift shop and café operations; and the establishment of a legal mechanism whereby these restriction can be enforced through a neighborhood and ANC covenant with the applicant.

BZA
Case No. 16618
Exhibit No. 168

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16618
EXHIBIT NO.168

The revised proposal appears to meet the objectives of both the Phillips Collection and the neighborhood, while requiring only an 816 square foot FAR variance. The size, scale, requested relief, and neighborhood impact of the revised project is less than the previous proposal. OP also supports the revised proposal.

As the Board is aware, the Office of Planning encourages neighborhoods and applicants to engage in collaborative alternatives to adversarial confrontations at public hearings before the Board of Zoning Adjustment. In this case, the Office of Planning had urged both sides to utilize mediation, and we are pleased that they were able to come to agreement. We hope this will encourage other applicants to work with their neighbors to utilize this "win/win" approach.

Sincerely,

Andrew Altman
Director

aa/emc/slc