COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

DAVID A. CATANIA
Councilmember - At - Large
Chairperson
Committee on Local & Regional Affairs

Committee Member
Consumer & Regulatory Affairs
Government Operations
Human Services

WMATA Board of Directors

December 5, 2000

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEC -4 P3:36

Ms. Sheila Cross Reid, Chair
Board of Zoning Adjustment
One Judiciary Square
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Case No. 16618 - Phillips Collection Expansion

Dear Ms. Reid:

I write to register my concern about the deleterious effect of the proposed Phillips Collection expansion on the Dupont Circle neighborhood in which it resides. The current plan proposes a massive expansion of the Phillips both above and below ground. Therefore, at this time I join Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B in opposition to the request for a special exception and variance on this project.

While I regard the Phillips as a major asset to the citizens of the District as well as visitors, it is crucial that we respect the residential fabric of our neighborhoods. The area surrounding the Phillips is more fragile than many others because of the encroachment of embassy, institutional and other commercial developments. It is therefore important to note that local homeowners have indicated their willingness to negotiate until a mutually beneficial outcome may be reached.

As you are aware, the D.C. Council has taken steps in the past to provide the Phillips with tax benefits and other city services. Recently, the organization was given a limited Property Tax exemption which allowed the Phillips to officially charge admission on a daily basis. In this case however, our obligation to District residents requires us to balance our great admiration of the Collection with the environmental concerns of residential neighbors.

Specifically, the potential increase in tourist and school bus traffic will add to the frustrating congestion as well as noise and air pollution which the neighborhood already suffers . As of yet, the Phillips has not proposed an acceptable remedy to this problem. In addition, the current expansion plan calls for the loss of 15 moderate- income housing units which would deal a serious blow to strengthening the residential character of Dupont Circle.

Until adequate attention is paid to these serious concerns, I urge the Board to withhold a final decision on the special request of the Phillips Collection. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

David A. Catania

David A. Catania
Councilmember (At-Large)

BZA
Case No. 16618
Exhibit No. 51

DAC/rew

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16618
EXHIBIT NO.51