September 18, 2000

'00 SEP 20 P3:34

OFFI
DISTRI

Jerrily Kress
Director, Office of Zoning
441 4th St. NW, Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Kress:

I write as a resident of a neighborhood adjoining Sibley Hospital, concerned about the expansion plans of Sibley and their potentially adverse impact upon our residential neighborhood.

In the coming months, I suspect you will receive from Sibley hospital a request for a zoning variance so it can construct a medical office building on its property. A similar request to build a medical office building on Georgetown University property can be expected from MedStar, the new owners of Georgetown Hospital.

Ostensibly, they would be separate requests, but they are interrelated, and I would suggest that your office should consider both requests in making a decision. Let me explain how the two requests are interdependent.

The two hospitals are locked in a competition for patients and thus financial survival. The purpose of building a medical office building "on campus" is to "bond" doctors–and thus their patients–to the individual hospital. Thus if MedStar builds a medical office building at Georgetown, Sibley feels compelled to build a similar medical office building to "bond" doctors and prevent MedStar from stealing some of its patients.

The difficulty with such free market competition between hospitals is that it ignores the adverse social impact upon neighboring communities. Thus, a medical office building, with all its doctors, staff and patients, would bring more traffic, congestion and pollution into the already congested neighborhood of Burleith and the increasingly congested neighborhood of the northern Palisades around Loughboro and MacArthur.

It seems to me a solution that protects the public interest of the neighborhoods and quells the competitive urges of the hospitals lies within the powers of the Board of Zoning Adjustment. On the grounds that such a commercial office building would have an adverse impact upon nearby residential neighborhoods, The Board could reject MedStar's request, or Sibley's–which ever came first. With the rejection, the other hospital would not feel the competitive pressure to build its own medical office building, and we would preserve the status quo, which seems to be working pretty well.

Thanks for your time in considering my suggestion.

Sincerely yours,

John W. Finney

5275 Watson St. NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-966-6921

BZA
Case No. 16654
Exhibit No. 18

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16654
EXHIBIT NO.18