Statement for the District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
June 26, 2001, in the Public Hearing on Case #16676
Hebrew Congregation of Washington Housing Development on Missouri Avenue, NW

By Philip W. Ogilvie, PhD

Madam Chairperson, members of the board, and staff, I am Philip W. Ogilvie. I reside at 118 Michigan Avenue, NE, Apartment J22. From 1979 to 1998 I served as the Public Records Administrator of the District of Columbia. In this position one of the titles conveyed by the District Council was "Historian of the District of Columbia." I oppose the development of the vacant parcel of land between 13th and 14th Streets on Missouri Avenue, NW, for housing. This is one of the most historically significant locations for a number of communities in our city.

Historical Background

Colonial History – This property became part of Charles County in 1658. On September20, 1687, Colonel Henry Darnall patented "The Girles Portion" in Charles County, Maryland. The parcel under consideration was part of this patent. On April 23, 1696, (Saint George's Day) Prince George's County officially came into being and this lot was now in the new county. In 1722, the Holmead family purchased this property and renamed it Holmead Manor. In about 1730, the oldest community, that I have been able to identify, in the future District of Columbia was established in this area. Crystal Spring was established as a farm settlement at a crossroads (Rock Creek Road and Milk House Ford Road, now Georgia and Missouri Avenues) in the area of what would become Brightwood. Milk House Ford Road was named for a milk house on Rock Creek where dairy products were cooled with the water of Rock Creek. The western remnants of that road are now called Rock Creek Ford Road.

Early District History – In 1810, Congress chartered the Columbia Turnpike-Road Company and authorized it to build three turnpikes: one to Bladensburg; the road to the District line towards Rockville (today's Georgia Avenue); and one from the western extremity of the Causeway leading from Alexander's Island to the District boundary line, toward the little River turnpike-road, in the State of Virginia. This would provide a turnpike system within the District of Columbia. On February 15, 1819, the turnpike leading from Washington toward Rockville was separated from the other two District turnpikes as the Washington and Rockville Turnpike Company with Benjamin Ogle Tayloe as the president. This turnpike was completed to Rockville in 1822. By the fall of 1852, the newly planked 7th Street Pike was ready for use. The eight-foot wide roadway was covered with hemlock planks three to four inches thick. In 1861, the 7th Street post office was relocated from Oak Grove, near the boundary of the City of Washington on the 7th Street toll road [Georgia Avenue], to the roadhouse of Lewis Burnett, the new postmaster, on the corner of Milkhouse Ford Road [Missouri Avenue] and the turnpike [Georgia Avenue]. First called Brighton it was soon changed to Brightwood, since there was already a Brighton Post Office in northern Montgomery County.

African-American and Civil War History – By 1855, the Washington County assessment listed 31 property owners along the 7th Street Turnpike between the Rock

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Exhibit No. 51

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