Laura D. Krench
1835 Park Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20010

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July 4, 2001

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

Re: Application Number 16732/James Barnett
1845 Park Road, NW/ Square 2614/Lots 41,42

Dear Director Kress:

I am writing to oppose the above referenced Application and request party status before the Board for the public hearing scheduled for July 24, 2001. In furtherance of my request and in compliance with Section 3106.2 of Title 11 of the D. C. Code, as amended, I do hereby submit the following information:

(a) Name and Address: Laura D. Krench
1835 Park Road, NW
Washington, D.C. 20010

(b) I do hereby request the opportunity to appear and participate as a party.

(c) I intend to appear as an opponent of the Application.

(d) I will not appear with counsel.

(e) I should be granted party status on the following basis:

i) I am the owner of 1835 Park Road, N.W. Washington, D.C.

ii) I have owned and lived in this property since 1988.

iii) The home currently existing on the subject property is approximately 50 feet from my home and abuts my property to the west.

iv) Environmental/Economic/Social or Other adverse impacts of the modifications proposed by the Application.

BZA
Case No. 16732
Exhibit No. 31

District of Columbia Office of Zoning
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16732
EXHIBIT NO.31

Property Values.

The current zoning was adopted to preserve core, single family, owner occupied home, neighborhoods in keeping with the District of Columbia's commitment to maintain and support these kinds of residential districts within its borders.

The residents of the 1800 block of Park Road and those living on surrounding streets are diverse in all ways, but common among all of the homeowners is that we chose to purchase homes here, overwhelmingly, because of the stability in property values that this single family, owner occupied neighborhood provides. What has been established by the residents of the 1800 block of Park Road and its surrounding areas is a neighborhood where long-term, owner-occupied, home ownership prevails and these variances, if approved, will substantially decrease the value of these properties but especially mine due to its proximity to these rental and commercial units.

Trash Removal.

Trash removal for the residents on the north side of the 1800 block of Park Road, N.W. is done through the alley located behind these properties. This alley is also the site for trash removal of the residents on the south side of the 1800 block of Monroe Street, N.W. It should be noted that the number of homes on Monroe Street is three times that of those on Park Road, and as such, this alley is already overburdened with both trash and recyclable receptacles given its narrow size.

The city trash and recycling trucks must back into the alley and navigate a very narrow passage through the alley in order to pick up our trash. They can only enter and exit from 18th Street. There is no room in the public alley to store the number of trash bins required for these units and they will severely hamper and/or obstruct the passage of both the city trucks and cars that must access this alley. These additional units will also most likely not qualify for city trash removal and, therefore, their trash will have to be picked-up by an independent contractor. Should the use of a large dumpster be mandated by the independent contractor, as most are, this will surely prohibit full access to the alley by all vehicles.

Parking.

Finding a parking space on the 1800 block of Park Road after 6:30pm weekdays and on weekends is almost impossible because parking is only permitted on the north side of the road. These units along with the main home will add, at minimum, 6 cars to the street and more likely twice that number when the

occupants have visitors. Visitors to my home now, more often than not, cannot find parking on my block.

All of the homes on the north side of the 1800 block of Park Road have private parking that abuts the alley. These parking areas are either in the form of a "Parking space" on a resident's property, or a "garage/carriage house", also located on a resident's property. This alley parking arrangement is also the case for the majority of homes on the south side of the 1800 block of Monroe Street. The primary access to these proposed units will be from the alley and as such, the alley will serve as a load/drop-off site. These vehicles will block the flow of traffic through the alley daily.

Noise.

While the noise level at the front of my property is high due to the volume of traffic on Park Road, my backyard is a peaceful oasis from the noise of the city. By adding additional automobile, commercial, and pedestrian traffic in and to the subject property, my right to quietly enjoy my property will be substantially interrupted.

Construction/Utility Service.

Construction of these units will require increased electric, gas, phone, water, and sewage capacities and, therefore, require underground excavation of Park Road and the alley in order to create and connect utility services to these units. The residents of Park Road, including the applicant, endured three years of road and bridge construction, which denied us parking, and through access to our homes, as well as brought us dirt and noise pollution on a constant basis. There is presently a five-year moratorium on any further excavation of Park Road and, therefore, the approval of these variances should be denied on this basis alone. The subject home has existing service for gas, electric, phone, water, and sewage and would not require public road excavation if it remained a single family home.

The logistics which encompass a construction project of this kind will require that construction crew vehicles and workmen, building material suppliers and construction debris haulers have daily access to the rear entrance to the property via the alley. It is assured that these service vehicles will deny through access to the alley for residents and city service vehicles as well as take up valuable parking spaces on Park Road if a debris dumpster should be required.

I am also very concerned about how the increase in water and sewage disposal from these units will impact the very aging sewer which runs underneath our rear alley

way servicing the residents of both Park Road and Monroe streets. Has a feasibility study been conducted by the city to address this potential hazard?

Historic Preservation.

The homes on the north side of the 1800 block of Park Road are listed on the federal Historic Register as well as being a part of Historic Mt. Pleasant. These homes were classified as historic on the federal level in the late 1970's after one developer added rental/condominium units to one of the block's grandest homes. This federal designation was done not only because of the nature and character of the homes on this block, but also to protect against any further development that would affect and/or destroy their distinct historic qualities and the contribution they make to the District of Columbia.

One of the main factors influencing my decision to purchase my home in 1988 was the existence of these two historic classifications on my home as well as the other nine homes on the 1800 block of Park Road. The applicant's plans to develop rental and commercial units on this property will change the use of this historic property and change the historic structures on this property to the detriment of both the residents of this historic block and the city.

Other Mitigating Issues.

Clearly the sole reason that these units are being constructed is to partially or fully abate the applicant's monthly mortgage obligation on the property and it is not a case of fulfilling a life long career goal of becoming a landlord. If the only means to afford and maintain a home of this size is to convert it from a single family home into a multi-family/multi-use dwelling then these proposed changes are being done strictly for economic reasons and, moreover, being done with total disregard for maintaining the neighborhood's property values, its residential makeup of a single-family homes, and the intrinsic value that this historic property conveys on local, city and federal levels. Why would one purchase a single family home for one's primary residence and then elect to take on five/six tenants in this same residential space if you don't have to. Or further, would the decision to purchase this home by the applicant have been any different if this supplemental rental income was not available.

This decision to add these units will add no redeeming historic or social value to the subject property and its structures and, the development of these units runs contrary to the property's established use and single family home designation on which I relied when I purchased my home in 1988. This project is not a restoration, it is a venture that seeks to capitalize on the income that dividing up this single family home into units will bear.

I believe it is imperative that the Board also considers the scope of these variances in as much as they govern and hence would allow [without further hearings or city approval] any future development, modification, or razing of the applicant's property and its existing structures beyond the written plans before you now.

Unfortunately, the gross misrepresentations made by the applicant to me regarding his intentions for this property have set a precedent in this case for non-disclosure and mistrust of the applicant's word. If the possibility that future development would be grandfathered in under these variances I am assured that the security of my home will be in severe jeopardy and that the value of my property will fall well below what I paid in for it in 1988.

I am not swayed by the applicant's most recent efforts to garner support for this project and view it as a smoke and mirrors tactic to simply win public support through this BZA hearing process. I am quite convinced that given full authority under these variances, what will be done to this property will far exceed that which the applicant indicates now.

Excavation of Park Road, for the purpose of installing additional gas lines to service these units began the week of June 16, 2001---six weeks prior to the July 24, 2001 BZA hearing on this case. By ordering this work so in advance of the hearing, one must question if the Application is a forgone conclusion at this stage---whether assurances have already been made that will influence the outcome of this Application. I make no accusations other than it is a reasonable question based on the fact that expense of the work alone, would deter most applicants from proceeding until the project had received the necessary approval(s) from the BZA.

In addition, the applicant's public assertion, as quoted in the Washington Post, that this gas utility work was needed regardless of the existence of these units is highly doubtful. I have lived next door to this house for 13 years and I have never seen a home heating oil truck service this home; it uses gas heat. So converting from oil to gas, as implied by the applicant's justification for this work, is very much in question.

I would implore the Board, therefore, to thoroughly investigate, before rendering any decision in this case, the applicant's permit(s) application(s) for this utility work and all subsequent orders, in the chain of command, that set forth the permits and subsequent excavation of Park Road in mid-June. Utility excavation of Park Road, although halted as of this writing, continues on the applicant's property.

The request before you, if approved, will significantly lower the value of my property and those around me; subject me and my family to the uncertainty of

security and elevated noise so often prevalent with transient rental housing; further burden the residential parking for both the residents and their visitors; convert a total residential block into a mixed use and commercial zone; change the use and structures of a federally and locally classified historic property; add no historic or social value to the neighborhood or to the city; and set a precedence for future applications under these same variances which will further increase the ability to compromise and/or eliminate solely residential areas of this city.

v) Clearly, as a next door neighbor to the subject property, the majority of the factors set forth above are significant, distinctive and unique to only my property and the owner of the property immediately to the west of the subject property. As such, both of us deserve party status in opposing this Application.

In closing, I also hereby withdraw any prior written or implied approval of this Application as this was based on false pretenses made by the applicant to me at the time.

If you need any additional information or clarification of any of the points listed above, please call me during working hours at (301) 738-3673 or at home at (202) 588-9444.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration of the matters I have represented herein as I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Laura D. Krench