MARA CHERKASKY
1801 PARK ROAD, N.W., #8
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20010

July 10, 2001

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210-S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Application number 16732
1841 Park Road, N.W.
Square 2614, Lots 41 & 42

To Whom It May Concern:

I live in unit 8 of 1801 Park Road, N.W., on the same block as, and several houses down from, 1841 Park Road. I support the application for several reasons:

1. The applicants, Jim and Camille Barnett, are proposing to restore the house for use as an owner-occupied single-family home with a rental apartment in the basement and one or two apartments in the carriage house. This very large and very expensive property has been unoccupied and on the market for several years. According to the zoning, it could be converted into an apartment building, perhaps similar to the one I live in (13 units). In my opinion, we should be thankful that the applicants wish to use it for their family residence and we should make every effort to encourage the proposed use.

2. Historic Mount Pleasant (HMP), the neighborhood preservation group, supports the application. The group's president stood up at a July 2 meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 1-E and spoke in favor of the proposed use. Insinuation by some at the meeting, and by a somewhat sarcastic article in the July 5 Washington Post District Weekly section, that the applicants received special consideration by HMP because Jim Barnett is on the group's board, is disingenuous because he only recently had become a member of the board and because he did not participate in the vote on this property. Speaking of special consideration, it would appear that someone opposing the Barnetts' plans has connections at the Post.

3. The D.C. Historic Preservation Board also has approved the application.

4. As far as I can tell, the Barnetts have tried very hard to work with the neighbors to devise a plan all can support. They dropped their proposal to move a stone wall to make room for extra parking because neighbors objected to it. However, neighbors now are complaining that the proposed use will create a parking problem. It is true that parking is a problem in this neighborhood, at least at night; however, that is one of the facts of life in the city. The neighbors

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need to decide whether the wall or parking is more important. In theory, even if there were no rental units on the property, a large family with five cars could not be prevented from living in the house, and the parking problem would be equal. The house currently presents no parking problem at all because it is unoccupied. This clearly is not a desirable situation either.

5. Some neighbors have stated that allowing apartments in the carriage house will set a dangerous precedent of turning garages into living space. However, it was made apparent at the July 2 ANC meeting that at least one other carriage house on this particular alley already contains a rental unit, as do others around the neighborhood.

6. Many of the neighbors's complaints are specious and petty.

6a. For example, at least one at the ANC referred to Jim Barnett's plan to operate a psychology practice in his home office, as "big business" or something to that effect. A psychology practice is a permitted use under D.C. Municipal Regulations 203.7(J), it is hardly a big or busy business, and clients will arrive and leave during the day, when parking is not a problem.

6b. At least two neighbors at the ANC meeting objected to strangers (the clients, as well as tenants, apparently) coming and going in the alley. This is a public alley and, therefore, open to all.

6c. One of these same neighbors is complaining that tenants in the carriage house will be able to look in her windows. Again, I can only say that this is the city, and curtains would take care of this "problem."

The Barnetts have been our neighbors for a few years now – they are moving to 1841 Park Road from their current residence at 1919 Park Road. I find it appalling that they are being treated as though they were absentee slumlords residing in Potomac. These are people with whom we will be living side-by-side, unless, of course, they get tired of the nonsense and sell the property to someone who actually does turn it into an apartment house.

I am among those who look forward to having the Barnetts as neighbors. I think it is wonderful that the house will be occupied by people who have the desire and means to live in and maintain it and the adjoining garden.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Yours sincerely,

Mara Cherkasky