3501 Tilden Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

July 8, 2002

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
One Judiciary Square
441 Fourth St. NW
Washington, DC

RE: BZA Application No. 16836 (Hearing on July 9, 2002)

Dear Mr. Griffis:

We live at 3501 Tilden Street, NW, just one block from The Washington Home. As long time residents of this North Cleveland Park neighborhood, we want to register our strong concerns about The Washington Home's plan to expand its building in a manner that will be detrimental to the quality of the neighborhood. The application by The Washington Home entails an expansion of the physical plant, and a significant expansion of its parking lot. This expansion to permit four additional beds, and numerous additional employee parking spaces, will be accomplished by cutting down a substantial number of mature trees that currently benefit both residents of the Home and other residents of the neighborhood such as us and our neighbors on Tilden Street, Upton Street, and 38th Streets. The green space surrounding the Home that has been so vital to mitigating the commercial aspects of that operation would be further depleted – again to the detriment of all neighborhood residents, including those in the Home.

This action will greatly change the character of the neighborhood and should not be permitted. A process that would be fair and reasonable for all concerned would involve an environmental impact assessment and a resolution of the many concerns that have been raised by area residents.

Some background might enlighten the Board as to the need to be extremely careful before taking any action that would permit this expansion and a further deterioration of the green space and tree cover surrounding the Home. The BZA is being asked to approve a Special Exception to the applicable zoning restrictions. Yet, the applicant has for many years been in violation of the BZA's 1985 Order, which restricted the Home's parking lot to 75 spaces. The Home has also violated its understanding and agreement with the community on which the 1985 Order was based. In particular, the Home decided on its own, without seeking permission, to paint additional lines on its lot and to park up to 120 cars at one time. We are deeply offended by the Home's approach, which shows flagrant disregard for the restrictions placed upon it as a consequence of being located in a residential neighborhood, and that affected the neighborhood's past support for the facility. Our support in 1985, based on the Home's cooperation with the community, does **not** exist for the pending proposal.

As a procedural matter, we are concerned that the Board has decided to treat the Washington Home's proposal as two applications. The proposed expansion of the building to accommodate

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four new hospice beds in a residential neighborhood is not independent of the Home's request to expand its parking lot by 98 spaces. Many of the same considerations relate to both requests.

Finally, the further loss of large and mature trees is inconsistent with the City's recent initiatives, funded in part by private donations, to repopulate our neighborhoods with tree plantings. We need the Board to exercise leadership in this matter, to deny the pending requests as inconsistent with neighborhood considerations, and to assure that our residential neighborhood is not overwhelmed by special exception institutions.

We urge the BZA not to approve the proposed 4-bed expansion plan, or the parking lot expansion plan set for resumption of consideration on September 10, 2002.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael S. Bylsma

Mark S. Flynn

3630 Upton St. NW
Washington, DC 20008
July 5, 2002

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
One Judiciary Square
441 Fourth St. NW
Washington, DC

RE: BZA Application No. 16836 (Hearing on July 9, 2002)

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I have been a resident of Upton St., a block from the Washington Home, since 1994. As the mother of two small children, I am increasingly concerned about the traffic on the street, and sometimes have to wait for ten cars to pass before we can safely cross the street. I am unable to attend the July 9 hearing, but I have some concerns about the Home's proposed expansion to include four new hospice beds.

The Washington Home has, by and large, been an asset to the neighborhood, providing health care for the city's citizens while also sharing its shady lawn for games of frisbee or for sledding. Their parking lot is barely visible from the street, and we would like to keep it that way. This is a residential neighborhood, hosting this large institution under a special exception that says it will respect the character of the neighborhood. We rely on zoning rules to keep our neighborhood from becoming a commercial strip. One of the strengths of DC is that it is possible to live in a house with a yard, on a quiet street, within walking distance of city amenities.

While adding four new hospice beds might not seem to jeopardize the neighborhood, I am not convinced that the Washington Home will take steps to minimize traffic or lessen the parking burden. I have been surprised and disappointed to discover that the Home does not police the rules it has: no one gets encouraged to carpool or ride Metro, and the Home's facilities staff told me that no one ever gets ticketed or towed. Furthermore, the Home has painted extra spaces into the parking lot beyond the authorized 75, and it routinely allows cars to block fire lanes. If my dear ones in the Home were in need of an ambulance or fire truck, I'm not sure it could even get to them. And the sad part is that the Home lets people block the fire lanes even when there are dozens of empty, legal parking spaces. I've seen this happen on weekends, in the early morning, and at other quiet times.

Water is a concern as well. Our house is considerably downhill from the Home, and we see a lot of storm water runoff. A dozen times a year, the runoff is so high that it jumps the curb and makes a river on the edge of our lawn. It even ended up in the trunk of my husband's car. So naturally we are concerned about any proposal to pave additional surface in our watershed.

I urge you not to allow the Washington Home to expand without taking care of parking, traffic, and water issues.

If the BZA postpones the decision on the four-bed hospice expansion until September 10, I would like to request an opportunity to speak at that hearing.

Sincerely yours,

Sharon Flank

Cc: CCHE c/o Barbara Beelar

Mark N. Bravin
Sara Perez Bravin
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July 2, 2002

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjudication
One Judiciary Square
441 Fourth St. NW
Washington, DC

RE: BZA Application No. 16836 (Hearing on July 9, 2002)

Dear Mr. Griffis:

We reside with our two teenage children at 4019 37th St. NW, at the corner of Upton St., and directly across the street from The Washington Home. We have lived there for more than eight years. We are writing to you because we both will be out of the country on July 9 and therefore cannot attend the hearing scheduled for that day on the portion of the application by the Home for authorization to expand its building to accommodate an additional four hospice beds. One of us has attended each of the prior sessions of the BZA hearing in this case.

We have strong concerns about The Washington Home's plan to expand its building to house four new hospice beds. We support the concept of hospice, and in principal the idea of more hospice beds in the District of Columbia is a good one. If the Home were merely reconfiguring its interior space, we would not object. However, the Home's intention, as evidenced by the application on file, is not merely to increase its beds. It is seeking permission from the BZA to enlarge its building ***and*** to greatly expand its paved parking lot, cutting down up to 50 trees and reducing the green space along 37th and Upton Streets. The Home is asking for the right to greatly change the character of the area immediately outside our front door, as well as all along Upton from 37th to 38th Streets. This raises many concerns that should be addressed before any action is taken on the Home's hospice bed expansion request.

We are unhappy with the BZA's decision to split the Washington Home's case into two. The proposed expansion of the building to accommodate four new hospice beds in a residential neighborhood is not independent of the Home's request to expand its parking lot by 98 spaces. Many of the same considerations relate to both requests. As to both parts of its application, the BZA is being asked to approve a Special Exception to the applicable zoning restrictions. Those restrictions are intended to preserve the residential character of our neighborhood. The burden is on the Home to establish that it has

explored all of the options and has presented for BZA approval an option that complies with DC zoning law and policies, and that has the least intrusive impact on the neighborhood. This it has not yet done.

According to testimony by the Home's own witnesses before the BZA in this case, the applicant has for many years been in violation of the BZA's 1985 Order, which restricted the Home's parking lot to 75 spaces, and it has violated its agreement with the community on which the 1985 Order was based. The Home decided on its own, without seeking permission, to paint additional lines on its lot and to park up to 120 cars at one time. At the hearing, Home representatives and the Home's expert for parking issues referred to the "illegal" configuration of the Home's lot, as if using quotations around the word ***illegal*** diminishes the significance of its decision not to comply with the 1985 Order. We are deeply offended by the Home's approach, which shows flagrant disregard for the restrictions placed upon it by the BZA as a consequence of the Home being located in a residential neighborhood. Furthermore, we feel betrayed by the Home's presentations to the community prior to the hearing, at which the Home presented itself as reaching out to do whatever it could to learn about and accommodate the community's concerns, all the while knowing that it was ignoring the community's concerns as memorialized in the 1985 Order.

We urge the BZA not to approve the proposed 4-bed expansion plan, or the parking lot expansion plan set for resumption of consideration on September 10, 2002, unless and until the Home demonstrates that it has taken into account and has dealt satisfactorily with the neighborhood's concerns about the environmental impact (expanding an already oversized parking lot in a residential neighborhood and thus changing the residential character of the neighborhood; harming the current park-like setting; increasing the amount of polluting runoff; and increasing traffic on Upton and 37th Street as a direct consequence of increasing the number of cars going to and from the home). Our neighborhood is being assaulted from all sides by school expansion, commercial development, increased traffic routed from Wisconsin Ave. and Connecticut Ave., and the combined effect is an irreversible and substantial harm to the quality of life in our community. The mission of the Home is important, but that does not suggest that the expansion plans cannot or should not be redirected to other locations, or in a manner that will not have a negative effect on the homeowners who have invested in this community.

If the BZA postpones a decision on the 4-bed expansion until September 10, we request an opportunity to speak at that hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark N. Bravin Sara Perez Bravin

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
One Judiciary Square
441 Fourth St. NW
Washington, DC

RE: BZA Application No. 16836 (Hearing on July 9, 2002)

Dear Mr. Griffis:

We live at 3643 Upton Steeet, in the next block from The Washington Home. And we have lived there for 38 years. We cannot attend the hearing on July 9, but these are the things we would say if we could be there in person to oppose the expansion of the Home's parking facilities.

We have always supported the Home's in its mission of ministering to the seriously ill. At Christmas time, Mrs. Gould, as a member of a group of local musicians, often played concerts for the patients. When one of our sons was young, he delivered the morning paper to the bedside of several patients -- and lingered to talk with some of them who hungered for conversation -- even from a 12-year old. The Home was doing its good works, and being a good neighbor, long before we moved into its neighborhood.

But cutting down 50 trees to make room for twice that number of fossile-fuel burning, emission-emitting, traffic-increasing, infernal combustion engines is not being a good neighbor to its close neighbors, or to the larger community that is our city.

In the 38 years we have lived in the District, we have seen -- and sensed -- the shrinking of the green umbrella over the city. Satellite photos show that we have lost about half of the oxygen-producing shade trees that lined the streets.

The District Government has not replaced the dead and dying trees, and that is a sin of omission. But for that same government to permit any organization to cut down 50 healthy, air-cleaning trees, just to accommodate 100 more air-fouling autos is a grevious sin of commission.

The humanitarian history of the Home as a hospitable hospital and hospice will be irreparably damaged if it proceeds with this degrading of the environment. And the reputation of the District Government as a protector of the conditions that make living in the District habitable and healthful will be smeared if it permits this fouling of the civic nest.

If the BZA postpones a decision on the 4-bed expansion until September 10, I request an opportunity to speak at that hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard G. and Nancy C. Gould

BZA Case # 16836

4000 Cathedral Ave., Apt 826B
Washington, D. C. 20016
July 3, 20002

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
One Judiciary Square
441 Fourth St. NW
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I live on Cathedral Avenue in a quiet neighborhood not far from the Washington Home. Recently I have heard of the proposals by the Home to increase the size of their buildings and subsequently to add a much larger paved parking lot.

I write to you to object strongly to these proposals. The increase in the size of the paved parking lot at the Home would involve the removal of many trees in the area and, of course, would mean greater automobile traffic. We do not need or want these unfortunate changes.

It is my hope that you and your fellow Board members will consider the expressed opinions of the Home's neighbors, and will vote against the Home's proposals.

Very sincerely yours,

Kathleen P. Snedaker

Kathleen P. Snedaker
(Mrs. John R.)