3501 Tilden Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

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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