MEMORANDUM

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To: The Board of Zoning Adjustment
From: Tania Shand, Vice-President, Westminster Neighborhood Assoc.
Date: November 19, 2002
Subject: **BZA Application 16938**

Enclosed pleased find the attached documents which are in opposition to BZA Application 16938. Unless otherwise noted, the originals of these documents can be found in the file for BZA Application 16901. These documents are being resubmitted in continued opposition to the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge's variance request.

1. Westminster Neighborhood Association Opposition Briefing Paper **(UPDATED)**
2. 1B Advisory Neighborhood Commission letter dated **October 10, 2002**
3. Cardoza-Shaw Neighborhood Association letter dated July 14, 2002
4. Westminster and French Street Neighborhood Association letter dated July 15, 2002
5. Ruddy letter dated July 8, 2002
6. Shannon letter dated July 9, 2002
7. Tibbs Estate letter dated July 12, 2002
8. Baxter letter dated July 15, 2002
9. Shand letter dated July 16, 2002
10. McLaughlin letter dated July 17, 2002
11. Ousley letter dated July 17, 2002
12. Seven-page petition letter of the signatures of 68 residents opposing parking lots at Square 333, Lots 800, 824, 825.

If you have any questions regarding the enclosed, please feel free to call me on 202/226-0597.

Thank you.

BZA
Case No. 16938
Exhibit No. 21

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16938
EXHIBIT NO.21

Westminster Neighborhood Association Opposition To The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Request for Special Exception for Parking

BZA Application
16938

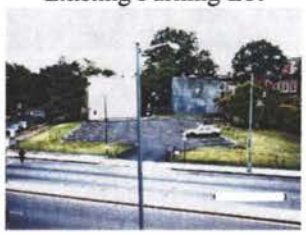
The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge has requested a special exception under Section 3104.1 for accessory parking to 1000 U Street, NW provided for by Section 214.1 of the zoning regulations. The application is for Square 333, lots 824 and 825. The Lodge has also requested a variance for Square 333, lot 827 that adjoins lots 824 and 825. In essences, the Lodge is asking to enlarge the existing parking lot that they have been operating without a current exception order.

Technical Objections

We believe there are two technical problems with the Lodge's application for special exception.

3104.1 of the zoning regulations contain a list of types of special exceptions. Accessory parking as described in Section 214.1 is not among the uses for which a special exception can be granted.

Existing Parking Lot



The Lodge currently uses five lots that have been consolidated into one (Square 333, Lot 827), as accessory parking for 1000 U Street, NW. This lot is adjacent, on the south and west sides, to the lots for which the current application is made. If the exception is granted, this would in fact constitute enlargement of the current parking and require consideration of all lots in the request for special exception. (See section 3104.3 of the zoning regulations.) Soon after they bought lots 824 and 825 they removed the fence separating the lots from lot 827 and started parking cars on the grass. They stopped parking cars on the grass after several neighbors complained. However, it appears that when they repaved lot 827 (without a permit) they extended the paved area to the edge of lot 825. This allows them to have 29 spaces rather than the 21 spaces their original special exception permitted.

Objections Under Section 214

Section 214.2 provides that accessory parking spaces must be located in their entirety within two hundred feet of the area to which they're accessory. The north edge of lot 824 is approximately 170 feet from the south edge of 1000 U Street. According to the map the Lodge submitted with its application, lots 824 and 825 are each 22 feet wide. The combined accessory parking is in majority over 200 feet from 1000 U Street and doesn't meet this requirement of Section 214.2.

Section 214.4 states that accessory parking spaces shall be contiguous to or separated only by an alley from the use to which they're accessory. 1000 U Street is separated from the proposed parking lot by nine houses. The current accessory parking for 1000 U Street is at the corner of 10th and T Streets. 1000 U is a block away at the corner of 10th and U Streets.

Section 214.6 states that one element allowing the grant of a special exception for accessory parking is that it is economically impracticable or unsafe to locate accessory parking spaces within the principal. The Lodge hasn't demonstrated that creating parking in the basement of 1000 U Street is impracticable for the reasons stated in the regulation.

So, a variance to sections 214.2 and 214.4 must be granted if a special exception is to be granted. One main test for a use variance is that the applicant must prove that the physical characteristic of the property creates financial hardship for the owner in using the property consistent with the Zoning Regulations. We must keep in mind that the Lodge bought lots 824 and 825 in 1998 knowing they were zoned R-4. In recent years, development of properties in this neighborhood has taken off. Property values have doubled over the last three years. Houses that sold for $180,000 in 1997 are selling for $450,000. Lots 824, 825, and 827 could easily find a developer interested in building housing in the current climate. Or the Lodge could provide desperately needed affordable housing on the lots.

Objections Under Section 2303

Section 214.5 requires that all provisions of chapter 23 regulating parking lots be compiled with.

Section 2303.2 provides that the parking lot must be screened from contiguous residential property by a brick or stone wall or evergreen hedges. The plan for the proposed accessory parking has no such screening between it and the historic Tibbs House that is on the north property line of lot 824. In addition, the plan shows no screening between the lot and the house adjoining the lot on the west side.

The accessory parking lot the Lodge currently operates on lot 827 has no screening or shrubbery on any side.

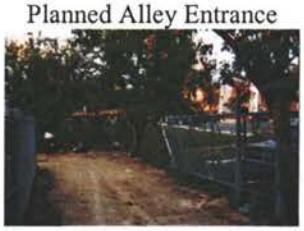
Objections Under Section 3104.1

Section 3104.1 states that the proposed special exception will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map. The Lodge application doesn't address this provision as required by the instructions to Form 121.

Section 101.2 explain that the zoning regulations and zoning map were designed with consideration of the character of the districts, the suitability of the districts for the uses permitted, and to encourage the stability of the districts and land values. Lots 824, 825, and 827 are located well within an R-4 district. 1000 U Street is located in a C-2-A district. We feel it isn't consistent with the zoning map and regulations to locate parking that is accessory to property in a C-2-A district in a nearby residential neighborhood. The properties surrounding the proposed accessory parking are all single-family homes. Locating a parking lot among these homes is inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood. The lot's appearance and added noise and congestion will also adversely affect property values of the surrounding homes.

Section 3104.1 further states that the use granted under a special exception won't tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property. The instructions to Form 121 define this as "traffic, noise, lighting, etc." The Lodge application doesn't address this issue as required.

Planned Alley Entrance



The plan for the expanded parking lot shows an entrance to the parking from a narrow (12.5 feet wide) public alley. Cars can't pass each other in this narrow alley. The additional traffic flow in this alley along with the lights from cars will adversely affect the many residences on Tenth Street and Eleventh Street that back up against the alley. Additional noise from people congregating in the parking area after meetings, which are held every weeknight and Saturdays at 1000 U Street, will also impact on the surrounding homes. Parking in lot 827 currently uses an entrance onto Vermont Avenue. Lights and noise from this accessory parking is currently a public nuisance. In addition, the entry encourages people to drive north in the southbound lane of Vermont Avenue for 40 feet to get into the lot when approaching from T Street and Northbound Vermont Avenue. Litter along the front of lot 827 is evident. In addition, there is frequently garbage in the tree box on the T Street side of lot 827 and in and around a recycling bin on the lot itself.

Other Objections

In support of their application, the Lodge has submitted a copy of what appears to be an earlier Board decision. Circumstances in the neighborhood have change significantly since this and other early exceptions were granted. In 1976 when the original exception was granted, and in 1982 and 1988 when they were extended, there was no Metro stop within steps of the Lodge's front door as there is today. In addition, over the past few years nearly all of the 80 or more vacant house that existed in the area as late as 1995 have been renovated and are now occupied by families.

The "Findings of Fact" numerated in the document are flawed when viewed today:

Item 4 – The Lodge has rented parking spaces in the lot to the general public on an ongoing basis.

Item 5 – A guard isn't on duty at all times during the hours of operation.

Item 6 – Order No 12215 was issued in 1976. Testimony at that time is too dated to be relevant to the current application.

Item 7 – There is no sign on the shelter. Neighborhood residents have, in the past three years complained to the lodge about the parking lot.

Item 10 – ANC 1B has sent a report opposing the continued use of the lots for parking.

Item 11 – There is a great deal of opposition from the community to the use of the lots for parking. The Cardozo/Shaw Neighborhood Association, the French Street Neighborhood Association, and the Westminster Neighborhood Association have all passed motions opposing the parking lot.

Three streets (T, Vermont, & 10th) come together at the intersection where lots 800, 824, and 825 are located. This picture shows the homes that stand on this intersection.



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1B

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS / LEDROIT PARK / SHAW / UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

P.O. Box 73710
Washington, DC 20056-3710

October 10, 2002

Geoffrey Griffis, Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: 1902 and 1906 Vermont Avenue
BZA Application No. 16938

Dear Mr. Griffis:

At the regularly scheduled meeting of ANC 1B (notice of which was properly given) on September 5, 2002, at which a quorum (seven members required) of nine members was present, the members of ANC 1B voted **unanimously to oppose** the special exceptions and variances requested by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge for an accessory parking lot to be located at the premises located at 1902 and 1906 Vermont Avenue, NW, as detailed in BZA Application 16938.

As the BZA is aware, this applicant previously applied for a special exception/variance for an accessory parking lot at 1906 Vermont Avenue (BZA Application No. 16901) on a vacant parcel of residentially zoned property. Concerned members of the community that opposed a parking lot on this residentially zoned property discovered in their research that the accessory parking lot operated by the applicant at 1902 Vermont Avenue did not have a certificate of occupancy and was illegally being used as a parking lot. That illegal use continues – without any authority from the District of Columbia Government – to today. When the applicant was informed that members of the community (and the undersigned Chairman of ANC 1B and also Single Member District Commissioner for the area) intended to urge the city to close down the illegal parking lot, the applicant filed a separate application for a special exception/variance for the property at 1902 Vermont Avenue. The Office of Planning recommended that the two applications be combined. Over the objection of the ANC and members of the community, the applicant withdrew these two prior applications. The applicant is now before the BZA with this combined application, Application No. 16938.

At the ANC hearing on September 5, a representative of the applicant appeared, but declined to speak. Several members of the community appeared to speak in opposition to the application.

There were several issues of concern raised by members of the community. Concern was

expressed that the property directly abuts a National Historic Landmark and was in the Greater U Street Historic District and therefore a parking lot was not in keeping with the historic character of the neighborhood. Similar concerns were raised because the property fronts on the community's only National Park – the African American Civil War Memorial. It was stated that a parking lot was not the image the community wanted to present to visitors and tourist that would be coming to our community to visit this important monument. Members of the community also expressed concern about additional noise and traffic. Further, it was suggested that there were several parking lots in the community (but located more appropriately in commercially zoned areas) approximately the same distance from the applicant's facility at 1000 U Street, which could provide parking for members of the applicant, thereby making this accessory parking lot in a residential neighborhood unnecessary.

In addition, it was noted that the applicant purchased the two lots that comprise the property at 1906 Vermont Avenue in 1998 and was aware the lots were zoned residential when it purchased them. Members of the community stated they believed it was unfair for those that had relied upon the residential zoning in purchasing their homes or renting their apartments to now be subject to the additional traffic and noise from a parking lot where they had reasonably expected housing to be built.

Finally, members of the community expressed concern that the applicant currently operates an illegal parking lot at the premises located at 1902 Vermont Avenue, and has done so with impunity for years. That illegal parking lot is on lots that are zoned residential, for which there is no current special exception, for which no certificate of occupancy exists and on which the applicant recently illegally constructed a guard shack (apparently without permits or Historic Preservation approval). Members of the Commission and the community voiced strong opinion that the applicant should not now be rewarded for operating illegally by flaunting the zoning regulations of the District of Columbia.

The undersigned Chairman of the ANC also is the Single Member District Commissioner for this area. I spoke at the hearing in opposition to this special exception, reflecting many of the concerns raised by the numerous members of the community that came to oppose this application – as well as of members of the community that had contacted me to express their opposition but were unable to attend the meeting..

As the position of the ANC is entitled to great weight, **we ask that you deny** the application for a special exception/variance for an accessory parking lot at 1902 and 1906 Vermont Avenue, Application No. 16938. If you should have any questions, you may contact me on 202-246-1878.

Sincerely,

Glenn J. Melcher
Chairman



Cardozo-Shaw Neighborhood Association

www.ustreet.com/csna

July14, 2002

The Cardozo Shaw Neighborhood Association (CSNA) has taken the position to oppose:

16901 - Application of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, *pursuant to 11 DCMR § 3104.1, for a special exception to permit accessory parking spaces under section 214, in an R-4 District at premises 1906 Vermont Avenue, NW (Square 333, Lots 824 and 825).*

This special exception seeks to convert a residentially zoned lot that the Mason's own, adjacent to the parking lot that the Mason's own and operate. The special exception would pave right up to the Evans-Tibbs House, an Individual National Historic Landmark. This location of the lot is surrounded primarily by single family residences.

As a result of the CSNA meeting and vote the Executive Director of Washington Regional Network for Sustainable Living offered several alternatives based upon knowledge of the community and the discussion that occurred. (See Attached)

The legal status of the zoning and licensing of the current parking lot was brought into question at the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1B. The resolution of the status of the pre-existing lot should occur before any consideration of this special exception takes place.

Scott Pomeroy,

President, Cardozo Shaw Neighborhood Association

Cardozo Shaw Neighborhood Association is a certified organization in good standing with the District of Columbia.

WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK
FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

1777 CHURCH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20036
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EMAIL: staff@washingtonregion.net
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Addressing Prince Hall Freemason Access Needs:
Improved Parking & Access Strategies

July 15, 2002
Cheryl Cort

The existing and proposed surface parking lots are only one of many ways to address the access needs of the Freemason building. The surface parking lots are also likely to be both the most cost-ineffective way to provide access for use of the Freemason building, and most detrimental to the neighborhood.

Surface parking lots are a significant problem throughout the Cardozo Shaw neighborhood. Many single use parking lots – especially for churches -- remain underutilized for much of the week. These car lots have many negative effects on the neighborhood – empty spaces in the neighborhood create a less pedestrian-friendly environment, making walkers and residents feel less safe, and such a passive land use displaces housing opportunities in a neighborhood with tremendous demand and escalating prices. According to research in the field of "crime prevention through environmental design," vacant lots, parking garages and parking lots enclosed by chain link fences are correlated with higher incidents of crime than similar places with pedestrian-oriented buildings and streetscapes.

Single use surface parking is an extremely inefficient use of urban land and resources. Alternatives to surface parking lots as a means of providing access to businesses are likely to be more cost-effective and provide greater benefits to both the business/institution and to the neighborhood. Given the inefficiencies and neighborhood-degrading aspects of surface parking lots, alternative strategies should be strongly encouraged for meeting the access needs of businesses and institutions in the neighborhood.

The planned Parking Demand Management Study for the 14th & U Streets Business District should address issues such as the number and types of users of parking and all other modes (employees, night time visitors, people with disabilities, people who cannot walk more than 1 block, etc.) and types of uses – long term versus short term. A demand management study examines not only what modes are used now, but how changed incentives would change preferences for different modes.

In anticipation of a Parking Demand Management Study, we suggest the following questions for addressing the access needs for the Freemasons' activities:

1. What parking facilities exist nearby? [i.e. Housing Finance Agency parking garage, Reeves Center parking garage, Public Welfare Foundation surface parking lot, Howard University, others?] What are the possibilities of sharing these facilities to meet the Freemason needs (especially special event needs)? What would be the cost to use them? What obstacles need to be overcome to share underutilized parking facilities?

2. What would valet parking service to and from such parking facilities cost? Note: the advantage of valet parking is that patrons who have difficulty walking or fear for their safety could be dropped off in front of the building rather than walking to the existing/proposed Freemason parking lots.

3. What would a taxicab fare program cost to subsidize patrons' trips to the building from home? Would subsidized transit fares make transit use more attractive to some patrons?

4. Can cash be provided in lieu of free parking so that the uncounted cost of free parking can be converted to a subsidy equally shared by all patrons regardless of mode of access (i.e. drive, transit, walk, drop off, cab)?

5. What are the opportunity costs of maintaining the surface parking lots as parking lots rather than developing them for their designated use -- housing -- and providing funds for an alternative access strategy to the Freemason building? Could the development of the parking lots provide sufficient funds to support an effective alternative access strategy for the Freemasons' needs?

P.O. Box 73784
Washington, D.C. 20056

July 15, 2002

Mr. Jeoffry Griffis
Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Griffis:

The residents of the Westminster and French Street Neighborhood Associations understand that on July 23, 2002, the Board of Adjustment will be considering a special exception application for accessory parking (Case # 16901) for The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge (the Lodge) at 1906 Vermont Avenue, NW (Square: 333 Lots: 824 and 825).

As representatives of the aforementioned associations we would like to express our opposition to the utilization of these parcels of land as parking lots. The nine-space accessory parking lot the Lodge is requesting amounts to an expansion of the private parking lot it currently operates at 1902 Vermont Avenue, NW (Square: 333 Lot: 800). The existing parking lot is currently in non-compliance with District of Columbia zoning laws and has created noise and hazardous traffic conditions in the neighborhood.

The government of the District of Columbia has not cited the Lodge for zoning infractions, which include the expiration of their parking exemption ten years ago, even though the community has brought it to the attention of the zoning enforcement authorities. Any request to expand the parking lot should be denied and considered only when the existing lot has gone through the review process for public comment.

As a neighborhood that is working to rebuild itself and restore its residential character, attempts to expand and sustain uses that are non-residential (this community is zoned R4 for residential use) should be closely scrutinized. It should be noted that the U Street Cardoza Metro Stop is located at the corner of 10th and U Street, just steps from the Lodge's front door, and commercial parking lots are available for the members of the Lodge to use.

We strongly urge you to deny any request by the Lodge to operate 1906 Vermont Avenue, NW as a parking lot. Similarly, should a application be filed to bring the parking lot at 1902 Vermont Avenue into compliance we urge you to deny it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tania A. Shand
President
Westminster Neighborhood Association

Mari Fife-Logan
Co-Chair
French Street Neighborhood Association

Mark W. Pietrzykoski
Co-Chair
French Street Neighborhood Association

cc: The Honorable Anthony Williams
The Honorable Jim Graham
The Honorable Sharon Ambrose
The Honorable Harold Brazil
The Honorable Carol Schwartz
The Honorable David Catania
The Honorable Phil Mendelson
The Honorable Glen Melcher
Mr. Andrew Altman, Director, Office of Planning
Mr. David Clarke, Director, Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

Dennis Ruddy
923 T Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

July 8, 2002

Mr. Jeoffry Griffis, Chairman
D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Zoning Case # 16901

Dear Mr. Griffis:

This is to register my objection to the special exception application for accessory parking for The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge (the "Lodge") at 1906 Vermont Avenue, NW (Square 33, Lots 824 & 825). I understand that the Board of Zoning Adjustment will be considering the Lodge's application on July 23, 2002.

As a resident of the Greater U Street Historic District and nearby "neighbor" of the Lodge, I am expressing my opposition to use of this parcel of land as a parking lot. The nine-space accessory parking lot that the Lodge is requesting approval for amounts to an expansion of the Lodge's private parking lot that it presently operates at 1902 Vermont Avenue, NW (Square 333, Lot 800). The existing parking lot is currently not in compliance with District of Columbia zoning laws. Moreover, it has caused noise and hazardous traffic conditions in the neighborhood. Any request to expand the existing, illegal parking lot should be denied and considered only when legal use of the existing lot has been properly sought and granted, including an appropriate zoning review process and public comment period.

The Lodge has sufficient alternatives to the use of this parking lot. For example, the U Street Cardozo Metro Station is located at the corner of 10th & U Streets, directly adjacent to the Lodge building. Stops for major east-west and north-south city bus lines are available within a block of the Lodge building. Also, existing legal commercial parking lots with adequate space are available within a few blocks of the Lodge building for its members to use.

This neighborhood is working hard to rebuild itself and restore its residential character, and attempts to expand and sustain uses that are non-residential (this community is zoned R4 for residential use) should be closely scrutinized.

I strongly urge you to deny any request by the Lodge to operate 1906 Vermont Avenue, NW as a parking facility. Similarly, should an application be filed to recognize the existing parking lot at 1902 Vermont Avenue, NW under the zoning laws, I urge you to deny it. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Paige Van Wirt MD, MUP
Tim Shannon
914 T ST NW
Washington DC 20001
(202) 232-5567

RE: Parking lot application Vermont / T

Mr Geoffrey Griffis
Chairman, Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th ST NW Suite 210S
Washington DC 20001

Dear Mr. Griffis

My husband and I are writing to strongly urge that the Board of Zoning Adjustment NOT approve the application for the 9 space addition to the current parking lot operated by the most worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, as well as the application to legally operate their current lot.

As a former urban planner for the city of New York, I'm very aware of the burden a facility such as this parking lot places on a residential neighborhood. I walk my dog along the sidewalk of the parking lot two times every day, and not only is the facility inappropriate in its current use, it prevents further development of that parcel for residential use.

The lodge has not met any of the requirements for zoning variances as I understand them, and allowing the lodge to continue to use the lot even <u>with</u> the required screening conditions would only render a lot which is unstaffed during the day and would provide a refuge for transients who have been problematic in our area.

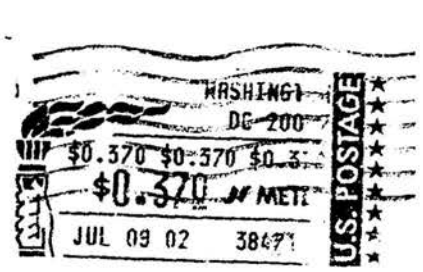
The current zoning is R4 and we feel strongly that the lot should be used for residential use only. It will help knit the challenged block of former 10th Street as it approaches the African American Civil War memorial, providing a safer (ie populated) and fitting streetscape for such an important monument for our city. As you well know, these type of zoning variance decisions are what determine the character of a neighborhood and its success as a healthy community. Please help our neighborhood become healthy again by voting No on both zoning variance requests by the Lodge.

Sincerely, Paige Van Hoit MD

✓ CC: neighborhood Stabilization Project
P.O Box 73784
Washington DC 20056

Tim Shannon
914 T St., NW
WDC 20001





Neighborhood Stabilization Project
Po Box 73784
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ANN M. GARFINKLE
DIRECT NUMBER
202 659-6819
agarfinkle@wtplaw.com

July 12, 2002

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of Laurence Savoy, Personal Representative of the Estate of Thurlow E. Tibbs, Jr. Mr. Tibbs lived in and co-owned with his sister, Diane Tibbs, the land improved by the premises 1910 Vermont Avenue, N.W., the property adjacent to 1906 Vermont Avenue, N.W.; Square 333, Lots 824 and 825.

1910 Vermont Avenue, N.W., was the home of Madam Evanti, the first internationally acclaimed African American opera singer. Her home was a major place of gathering for the African American literati and musicians. Due to its place in the history of the District of Columbia and due to its unique architecture as reflective of the times Madame Evanti lived and worked, the land improved by the premises 1910 Vermont Avenue are on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, both Madam Evanti and her grandson, Thurlow Evans Tibbs, Jr. were collectors of African American art. 1910 Vermont Avenue was also the home of the Evans-Tibbs Collection of Art.

The neighborhood's residential character (zoned R4) has been eroded by the members of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand (Masonic) Lodge. The Lodge attracts members who park in the illegally maintained 29 car private parking lot located at 1902 Vermont Avenue. The Lodge's authority to utilize this site as legal parking expired 16 years ago, but the D.C. government has not cited them for zoning violations even though the community has brought this situation to the attention of the zoning enforcement authorities. Instead of citing the Lodge and forcing it to cease and desist and to pay a fine, the Lodge was permitted to file another application for an additional parking lot directly abutting 1910 Vermont in order to expand the 29 space parking lot by 9 spaces.

1910 Vermont Avenue will be significantly, distinctively and uniquely effected if the variance is granted because it abuts the proposed parking lot and an abutting parking lot will undermine the very essence of its historical importance which gained it a place on the National Register.

The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs went to considerable lengths to preserve the historic nature and architectural detail of 1910 Vermont Avenue when it ordered the Estate to replace (at considerable expense) the new windows which had already been installed because they were not exactly like the windows that existed when Madam Evanti lived in the house.
Having cars abutting the house on the same side as those historic windows would mean that the Board of Zoning Adjustment had less respect for the house's history than the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.

In addition, the variance will affect the character of the neighborhood. People interested in Washington D.C.'s rich African American history will not be able to experience the pride that the community has in this neighborhood. The neighborhood will be so covered with asphalt that it will completely loose its uniqueness.

The Tibbs Estate further requests that all members of any Masonic Lodge recuse themselves from any deliberations regarding the pending application for a variance.

Sincerely,

Ann M. Garfinkle

Ann M. Garfinkle

cc: Laurence Savoy

AMG:ro

Chuck Baxter
914 Westminster St, NW
Washington, DC 20001

July 15, 2002
Geoffry Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St, NW Suite 210S
Washington, D.C. 20001

RE: Case Number 16901

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I'm writing to oppose the grant of the requested special exception that would allow the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge to extend their accessory parking at the corner of Vermont and T Streets, NW. As a long-time resident of this neighborhood I feel it's time to convert the empty lots to housing. Over the years this neighborhood has gone through some hard times. Now people are moving back in. They need and deserve a safe, clean neighborhood. The parking lot, which is vacant most of the time, gives a feeling of desolation to that corner as one approaches the Black Civil War Memorial. This is the atmosphere the area had for many years in the 70s, 80s, and early 90s. Housing is needed in the neighborhood, not a parking lot within steps of a Metro stop.

The Lodge bought the lots in 1998 knowing they were zoned R-4. With the amount of development going on in the U Street area, there would be no lack of prospective developers for these lots. If they are turned into parking for nine Lodge officers, it will be years, if ever, that we see them used for housing.

Please strengthen our residential neighborhood by denying the Lodge's request to use these lots as parking.

Sincerely,

Chuck Baxter

1901 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

July 16, 2002

Mr. Geoffry Griffis
Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Griffis:

As a resident and active member of the Greater U Street community, I am writing to urge you to reject The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge's (the Lodge) application for a special exception for accessory parking (Case # 16901) at 1906 Vermont Avenue, NW (Square: 333 Lots: 824 and 825). This application will be considered on July 23, 2002, at the Board of Adjustment hearing.

Over the last several years, I painstakingly restored the exterior of my home to be in keeping with the residential character of the neighborhood. This property, which stood vacant for 20 years, was an eye sore and detracted from the neighborhood. What I saw was the beautiful architecture of the building and envisioned what it could be. It is time for the Lodge to take a look at its properties, which detract from the neighborhood, and work with the community to restore the residential character of the neighborhood.

The Lodge describes itself as an organization that "works constantly to establish and maintain a purposeful community presence." Their community presence has been less than purposeful when they fail to adhere to District of Columbia zoning laws that the rest of us must abide by. The private parking lot the Lodge currently operates at 1902 Vermont Avenue, directly across the street from my home, has not been screened from residential property by a brick wall or evergreen hedges; members of the Lodge traveling north on Vermont Avenue enter the lot from the south bound lane for approximately 40 feet instead of going around the block; Lodge members congregate in the parking lot after their meetings, between 10:30 p.m. and 11:00 pm., and can be heard from across the street; litter is apparent in the tree boxes outside of the property; there is no evidence that the Lodge obtained any permits to pave over the parking lot (with no drainage being provided); and the Lodge rents out parking spaces during the day to the general public.

The Lodge's authority to utilize the site as a parking lot officially terminated on June 4, 1992 when their certificate of occupancy (CFO) expired – ten years ago. Does this warrant a 9-space expansion of the parking lot? The parking lot already accommodates 8 more parking

spaces than their original special exemption permits. The government of the District of Columbia has not cited the Lodge for these zoning infractions, even though the community has brought it to the attention of the zoning enforcement authorities. It appears that the community is held to a higher standard than Lodge.

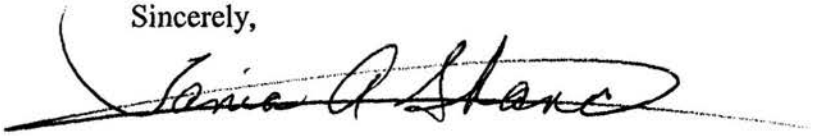
Under the "Findings of Fact" section of the report the Zoning Board issued on June 4, 1982 regarding the Lodge's request (application number 13675) for a private parking lot at 1902 Vermont Avenue (Square 333, Lot 800), it states, "There was no opposition to the application at the public hearing of record." As the result, the Board granted the Lodge's special exemption request.

Today there is *strong and well documented* opposition to the Lodge's request for a special exemption at 1906 Vermont Avenue and 1902 Vermont Avenue. As a neighborhood that is working to rebuild itself and restore its residential character, attempts to expand and sustain uses that are non-residential should be closely scrutinized by the community and our elected officials and representatives, and only permitted if they serve an extremely compelling public interest.

In this case, that standard has not been met and the Lodge's request to expand the parking lot should be denied.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Tania A. Shand

Judy S. McLaughlin
1924 Tenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

July 17, 2002

Mr. Jeoffry Griffis
Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear: Mr. Griffis:

I am writing in opposition to the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge's (Lodge) request for a special exception and zoning variance that would permit it to extend and continue to use its property (1902 Vermont Avenue, NW; Square 333, Lot 800) as a parking lot. I reside in a single family house between the Lodge (located at 1000 U Street, NW) and the parking lot in question. I object to the Lodge's request for a special exception and zoning variance for the following reasons: neighborhood blight; underutilization of urban space; the party's indifference to the needs of the community; the party's arrogance; traffic congestion; and lack of interest the Lodge has shown in the neighborhood.

First, the Lodge's open parking lot creates blight in the neighborhood. The neighborhood that surrounds the parking lot is historical and is being revitalized. People take pride in their homes and are renovating them. Next door to the Lodge and a few hundred feet from the parking lot in question is the African American Civil War Memorial, a symbol of pride and freedom to Americans, especially African Americans. The open parking lot makes the neighborhood look depressed and run down.

Second, the Lodge's parking lot underutilizes urban space. The parking lot does not use the space efficiently. Open parking lots, like the one in question, are usually temporary amenities until developers can build structures on them. The Lodge's lot is zoned residential. Prior to the Lodge's purchase of the land, a large apartment building occupied the land but unfortunately was destroyed by fire. The lot should remain zoned as residential and be developed again with a residential structure on it. As a private parking lot, it serves only as a luxury to its members and adds nothing to the community.

Third, the Lodge shows indifference to the needs and to the appearance of the community. The only needs that the Lodge cares about are its own. For example, the Lodge owns a dilapidated and abandoned row house at 1922 Tenth Street, NW. This house is attached to my house. It has remained in a dilapidated and abandoned condition for at least twenty years and was condemned by the D.C. Fire Department. The Lodge did not care anything about the community to rehabilitate it. It was not until the African American Memorial Foundation and the District approached the Lodge in the mid 1990s

with funds that it did anything. What the Lodge did was to attach plywood to the front and back of the dilapidated structure then paint it. To this day, the dilapidated structure remains underneath. Each day and night the members of the Lodge walk past this dilapidated house and do nothing more than to look at it when they go to their lodge from their parking lot. The house is nothing more than a rat hotel and a welcome to vagrants. There also was a vagrant who would climb over the fence and use it as a homeless structure. Although the Lodge could not develop or build a new structure because it is too narrow, they would not rehabilitate the existing structure. The Lodge sits on the property without selling it, improving it, or doing anything with it. This shows the Lodge's arrogance that it does not care what it does and does not answer to anybody. The Lodge does not exhibit any civic interest in our particular neighborhood.

Fourth, the zoning variance and special exception should not be granted because of this arrogance. District of Columbia records reveal that in 1976 the party obtained a special exception and zoning variance to operate a 21-space private parking lot on the site. Instead, the Lodge took upon itself to operate a 29-space parking lot at the site. Furthermore, the Lodge's authority to utilize this site expired ten years ago, but yet, it continues to use the site as a parking lot. Even now, instead of waiting until they receive a variance from the District, the Lodge has already paved over the back half of the lot in question with parking spaces, as if it can obtain a variance at any time it chooses. To my knowledge, the Lodge has not even made an effort to ask how the residents of the neighborhood who live next to the Lodge and parking lot feel about expanding the parking lot. Another way, the Lodge exhibits its arrogance is that the Metro subway station, U Street-Cardozo station Tenth Street exit is adjacent to the Lodge, and so there is no need for a special parking lot. Instead, they would prefer to take up and use residential space every night of the week in order to attend their private meetings and functions.

Fifth, congestion is likely to become a big problem in the alley that runs from the Lodge (at Tenth and U Streets, NW) to the parking lot if the special exception is granted. This alley is also used by the residents (who reside in the 1900 blocks of Tenth and Eleventh Streets, NW) who use it to access their homes so that they can park in their back yards. Although the lot is currently enclosed with a low chain link gate approximately three and one-half to four feet high, it is likely to be removed so that Lodge members can use the alley as a thoroughfare to drive to the parking lot. The alley is very narrow and only allows one car to pass in one direction at a time. The alley is too narrow and not designed for this type of traffic. If the chain link fence is removed to create a new entrance/exit to the parking lot, then there is likely to be a backlog of cars lined up in the alley attempting to access the parking lot. Residents who use the alley will be unnecessarily inconvenienced by this increased traffic and will have to wait to access or leave their properties until the members are able to enter the parking lot and find parking spaces.

Currently, when a Lodge member is unloading food from his car to take to the Lodge, many times he parks at the U Street entrance of the alley to take the food inside the lodge.

This restrains and sometimes precludes residents who live on either side of the alley from accessing their homes from the alley.

Because of the blight, under utilization of urban space, traffic congestion, the Lodge's indifference to the neighborhood, and the Lodge's arrogance, I object to the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge receiving a special exception and zoning variance to expand and continue to use its parking lot. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please enter this letter into the record as an objection to the Lodge's request for a special exception and zoning variance to continue using their property as a parking lot.

Sincerely,



Judy McLaughlin
Resident

Susan L. Ousley
935 Westminster St NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-628-3148
July 17, 2002

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Chair
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St NW #210S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Griffis:

Please add this letter to those of other neighbors and neighborhood groups who oppose the *special exception application* for so-called accessory parking (Case # 16901) made by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge at the corner of T and 10th Streets and Vermont Avenue.

There are several troubling aspects of this application.

1. There is no public policy advantage to overriding Zoning Regulations intended to protect citizens' health and quality of life.

   - Residential areas are supposed to be set aside for residential uses. In a neighborhood where commercial pressures are suddenly enormous, we must rely even more on your steadfastness in upholding these protections. Our neighborhood's economic recovery is still fragile and relies heavily on residents' belief that you will **not let them be run over by creeping non-residential interests**.

   - Non-residential owners virtually on top of Metro and multiple bus stops are perfectly situated **to help reduce air pollution**. And air pollution in the neighborhood and the city hurts our children every day. They do not escape to air-conditioned offices, on Code Red days. They can't play as much -- they can't breathe as well -- as they would if we adults did our part to clean up the air. Nor can our many senior citizens, who can't afford to add fancy air cleaning systems to the homes they've owned for so long.

     There may have been a time, prior to the Metro and strenuous safety improvements, when parking on this site was an asset. If there was, that time has passed. Now it is time to resist the "Somebody-else-not-me" attitudes toward public transit.

   - Appropriate residential uses, with required green spaces, **help reduce water run-off and temperature elevation**. Many District agencies are struggling to tackle water run-off and pollution problems. There is no public benefit to taking away from their efforts in this area – indeed, your regulations can one of the anti-pollution tools.

   - The design for the parking lot will bring more drivers into residential alleys, which are not designed for heavy traffic – which, in fact, are **public space buffers to noise** in a densely populated neighborhood.

   - The need to **preserve our very limited supply of residential land** has been trumpeted by everyone from the Mayor and the Council to the Council of Governments. Yet the District has nearly 3600 fewer housing units than it did in 1970, many of them lost in this neighborhood. They were not lost in one massive takedown, and they cannot be replaced in a swooping, government program. They can only be restored and replaced, if decision-makers will hold onto what we have – in this case, residential land – rather than permitting to one apparently small loss after another.

2. The applicant has demonstrated a flagrant disregard for zoning and building regulations.

- As of this writing, we have found **no record of required paving permits** for the lot(s) on this application. As you well know, permit applications trigger appropriate reviews by multiple District agencies. By failing to get the required permits, the applicant appears to have circumvented all public safety, health, historic preservation, environmental, building code, and assessment reviews.

- Other actions by the applicant demonstrate a disregard for the neighborhood and the laws. Since 1994, neighbors have begged the applicant to **renovate a vacant historic house** midway between their building and the lots in the application. Instead, they have covered it with a movie-set front, possibly using public funds. Instead of an asset, it is a steadily deteriorating embarrassment – steps from the Civil War Memorial.

- Others have addressed the **failure to apply for a continuing zoning exception** or even to comply with the one that has expired. There is a demonstrated lack of good faith that should precede any special treatment. Scofflaw behavior should not be rewarded.

I thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Ousley

Neighborhood Stabilization Project

PETITION

We the undersigned, residents of the Greater U Street Historic District, oppose the applications of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, at 1000 U Street, NW, to utilize two parcels of land located at the northwest corner of Vermont Avenue and T Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. (Square: 333 Lots: 800, 824, 825) as parking lots.

PLEASE PRINT (Thank you)

Name	Address	Signature	Date
PAUL THOMPSON	912 Westminster, NW	Paul Thompson	4 July 02
Lynn Johnson	922 Westminster, NW	Lynn H. Johnson	7-4-02
Norm Sucher	1105 S St. NW	Norm Sucher	7-4-02
DAVID COOPER	938 T ST NW	David J. Cooper	7-4-02.
CHUCK BAXTER	914 WESTMINSTER		7-4-02
SALLY COLE	916 WESTMINSTER ST.	Sally M. Cole	7-4-02
Michele Laird	919 Westminster	Michele Laird	7/4/02
Chris Mendoza	1804 10th St Westminster		7/4/02
Elise Moore	1812 10th St	Elise Moore	7/4/02
MIRA AZARM	1812 10th St.	Mira Azarm	7/4/02
Glenn J. Fletcher	1107 S Street, NW		7/5/02
Ok Joyce	920 Westminster St		7/6/02
Kevin Dailey	908 Westminster St	K Dailey	7/6/02
CLARE DONELAN	908 WESTMINSTER ST NW	Clare Donelan	7/6/02

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Name	Address	Signature	Date
MARK PIETRZYKOSKI	1712 9th St NW	WASHINGTON DC	01 JUL 02
Ken Schoppmann	937 French St NW		7/1/02
MARK S. MCKENZIE	929 R ST NW		7/1/02
KELBY SEAMEN	1714 10th St. NW		7/1/2002
Maki Fyfe-Logan	936 French Street, N.W.	Maki Fyfe-Logan	7-1-2002
Elizabeth Highsmith	946 T ST NW	Elizabeth Highsmith	7/1/02
DAVID OHRT	933 S Street		7/2/02
Joyce Brown-Moore	1824 10th NW	Joyce Brown-Moore	7/2/02
Jeffrey Jean	930T Street NW		7/2/02
Lucia Seaver	930 T St., NW		7/2/02
Glenn Hames	941 T St. NW		7/2/02
Lamont Hames	941 T St. NW		7/2/02
Jesse Foster	934 T St. NW		7-2-02
Loretta E. Johnson	949 T St NW		7/2/02

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Name	Address	Signature	Date
Tania Shand	1901 Vermont Ave. NW		7/3/02
Colon Dockery	943 T St NW		7/3/02
Erin Foster	934 T St NW		7/3/02
Patricia Crisman	1829th St NW		7/3/02
Romes T. Calhoun	918 Westminster St NW		7/3/02
Michael K. Fauntroy	928 Westminster St. NW		3 July 2002
Lisa A Fauntroy	928 Westminster		3 July 2002
Irene Lee	1816 Vermont ave NW		7/6/02
Ellen Ardledge	1912 11th St. NW		7.6.02
Connie Ridge	939 T St. NW		7-6-02
Levant Graham	940-T St NW		7-6-02
Bernard A. Mercer	920-T St. NW.		7-6-02
J. FRIEDENBERG	920 T ST NW		7/6/02
Dennis Ruddy	923 T St, nw		7-6-02

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Name	Address	Signature	Date
Susan Quasley	935 Westminster St NW	Susan L Quasley	7/4/02
Lillian Denise Waddlow	926 Westminster St NW	Lillian Denise Waddlow	7/4/02
Christopher Norcian	926 Westminster St.		7/4/02
Martin Hoffmeier	924 Westminster	Martin Hoffmeier	7/4/02
Patricia Jameson	906 Westminster St.	P. Jameson	7/4/02
Rochelle Latham	902 Westminster St NW	Rochelle Latham	7/4/02
Veronica Johnson	902 Westminster	Veronica Johnson	7/4/02
Stillman Brubier	935 Westminster St	Stillman Brubier	7/4/02
Patricia G Mack	929 Westminster St	Patricia Gotham Mack	7/6/02
Timothy Mack	929 Westminster NW		7/6/02
David Mack	929 Westminster St NW		7/6/02
Andrea Ballestero	923 Westminster St. NW		7/7/02
Marcos Ballestero	923 Westminster St. NW		7/7/02
Dan Kahl	916 T St NW		7/7/02

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Name	Address	Signature	Date
Kerry Meyer	917 westminster ST.	Kerry L. Meyer	7/6/02
Misa Rossetti	917 Westminster	MRossetti	7/6/02
TONY L. OWENS	918 WESTMIN	Tony L. Owens	7/7/02
Deborah Crews	934 Westminster Street	Deborah Willis-Crews	7/7/02
Margery Perkins	914 Westminster St NW	MPerkins	7/9/02
Stephen Henn	929 S Street NW	SHenn	7/10/02
Emily Henn	929 S St NW	EHenn	7/10/02
[illegible]	914 T St. NW	[illegible]	7/12/02

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PLEASE PRINT (Thank you)

Name	Address	Signature	Date
Mary Nelson	943 Westminster St.	Mary Nelson	7-8-02
Denise Wilson	927 T St NW	Denise Wilson	7-10-02
STEVE THOMAS	1818 Vermont NW	Steve Thomas	7/14/02

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Name	Address	Signature	Date
Dorothy Whitaker	1820 9th St. NW 2A	Dorothy Whitaker	7/7/02