February 3, 2003

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2003 FEB 11 PM 12: 27

Ellen M. McCarthy
Deputy Director
Development Review and Historic Preservation
801 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 4000
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

The Advisory Neighborhood Commission-1B (ANC) recently asserted that the Prince Hall Grand Lodge (PHGL) is guilty of failure to properly maintain the aesthetic preservation of our lot located at 1902 Vermont Avenue, NW, and suggested that our property detracts from the character of the neighborhood.

As you may know, Prince Hall Freemasonry is the oldest African-American organization in the District of Columbia. Prince Hall Freemasonry remains the leading philanthropic organization that impacts the issues of the DC Metropolitan African-American community.

While we dispute the ANC's claims, we are always open to suggestions to improve our facilities within the guidelines issued by your office. The beautification of our property is a priority. As one of the oldest standing facilities in the U Street Corridor, PHGL headquarters retains the original façade from when it was first occupied in 1929. The PHGL boasts a recent $2.5 million historic renovation of our headquarters located at 1000 U Street, NW. We continue our work in beautifying the U Street Corridor as part of our ongoing program. Thus, it is difficult for us to understand the ANC's assertions.

We recently repaved our parking lot located at 1902 Vermont Avenue, NW, in order to improve the aesthetic value of all of our property. We are dedicated to remaining in compliance with the Historic Preservation guidelines. We are also actively participating in the BZA hearing process to render "special exemption status" and continue our work on the property.

We are eager to learn of any suggestions that you may extend regarding this matter. But, we also seek validation by your staff acknowledging our efforts so that the ANC is properly educated about our activities. Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me directly at: 202-462-8878.

Sincerely,

BZA
Case No. 16938
Exhibit No. 42

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16938
EXHIBIT NO.42

Aaron R. Jordan
Most Worshipful Grand Master
Jurisdiction of the District of Columbia

Cc: Carol Mitten, Chairman
Board of Zoning and Adjustment