BEFORE THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

Application for Special Exception from R-1 Zoning, Concerning Properties: 1670 31st Street, NW, Lot 827; and 1644 31st Street, NW, Lot 830	))))	**Application No. 16974**

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STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION OF APPLICATION
BY JANE E. WILSON

My name is Jane Wilson, and I reside at 1677 31st Street, N.W., in very close proximity to Tudor Place and even closer proximity to the so-called "Dower House." My husband, Stephen Wells, and I have already submitted a statement in opposition to Tudor Place's application. Having attended the BZA's hearing last week on this subject, I wish to submit a brief supplemental statement.

I wholeheartedly support Tudor Place in the reasonable pursuit of its exempt purposes. Tudor Place was a magnificent gift to this city and to the Nation as a whole, and I have been pleased to have Tudor Place as a neighbor. In my personal experience, Tudor Place has caused minimal adverse impact on the neighborhood during the past couple of years. That said, I strenuously urge the BZA to deny approval of Tudor Place's application, as currently written.

Tudor Place has been consistent in its oral representations. When questioned at the relevant ANC meeting about future operations of Tudor Place, Ms. Leslie Buhler, the Executive Director of Tudor Place, indicated that the neighbors would not experience any noticeable change from Tudor Place's operations of the past couple of years, and there have been repeated assurances that Tudor Place does not intend to expand its operations dramatically. The ANC, in voting to support Tudor Place's application, has made it clear that its decision was built in very large part on trust in Ms. Buhler's oral representations.

My problems with the foregoing is that (1) Tudor Place is asking the BZA to approve an application the scope of which bears absolutely no resemblance to Tudor Place's oral representations, its scaled back activities during the past couple of years, or even to its more expansive activities of prior years, and (2) the BZA presumably is not in the business of making "gentlemen's agreements" built on trust—rather, its acts have enforceable legal significance.

As you know, approval of the application, as currently written, would permit Tudor Place to hold as many as ten 500-person events per year and an unlimited number of 200-person events per year at the main house, and an unlimited number of 50-person events per year at the Dower House – all this for a five-year period. If the BZA, in making its decision, is not entitled to base its decision on trust, but must assume that Tudor Place will, or even may, do what it would be permitted to do under its application, then surely the BZA will conclude that these activities would have a significant adverse impact not only on Tudor Place's immediately surrounding neighborhood, but also on all of

BZA
Case No. 16974
Exhibit No. 95

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 16974
EXHIBIT NO. 95

Georgetown, M Street, and Wisconsin Avenue. As you can well imagine, the traffic concerns alone would be horrendous.

In my mind, the application, as currently written, is ill-conceived at best. I have little doubt that Tudor Place could have drafted an application that was far more limited in scope without jeopardizing in the least its ability to satisfy its financial needs, whatever those needs might be. Instead, it submitted an application that goes far beyond the realm of reason, thereby causing intense concern among many of its neighbors and resulting in these protracted proceedings.

I hope the BZA will reject Tudor Place's application or place limits on any approved exception consistent with Tudor Place's oral representations.

Respectfully,

Jane E. Wilson

Jane E. Wilson

April 28, 2003