SHERIDAN-KALORAMA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
2136 Leroy Place NW
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 387-7830

August 26, 2003

Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA
Director
Office of Zoning
Government of the District of Columbia
441-4th Street, NW, Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: 2209 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Case No. 17050

Dear Ms. Kress:

On behalf of the Executive Committee and the Members of the Sheridan-Kalorama Neighborhood Council (SKNC), I am expressing our opposition to the application of the Government of the United Arab Emirates, Case No. 17050, requesting a use variance allowing this residential property to be sold to a commercial enterprise by allowing zoning relief in the form of a use variance.

The Sheridan-Kalorama Neighborhood Council is a membership-supported citizens' neighborhood organization to which a large number of the residents Sheridan-Kalorama belong.

Our neighborhood is the home for many foreign missions. In 1982, the diplomatic overlay was created to provide some measure of control. There is no provision for foreign missions, which own properties in residential zones, to sell to commercial establishments. The United Arab Emirates relies on the provisions of Title 11 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, Section 3103.2 to support their application. Their first and primary argument is that residential buyers and foreign missions have been unwilling to purchase this property because of security concerns. If this were the case no houses would be sold in Sheridan-Kalorama, yet the real estate market is exceedingly healthy in this area.

We do not believe that Section 3103.2 pertains to this application because it would be a substantial detriment to the public good by establishing a bad precedent in our residential neighborhood, zoned D/R-3, whereby foreign governments are able to convert chancery properties to commercial use with sales at commercial prices. Commercial use of property within the neighborhood is inconsistent with its history of being primarily a residential neighborhood with an overlay of diplomatic properties and a few hotels. While the legalities of zoning the neighborhood residential with a diplomatic overlay only go back a few decades, the de facto land use allocation in Sheridan-Kalorama has always been residential and diplomatic ... i.e., the historic character of the neighborhood is in large part defined by the absence of commercial entities. Sheridan-Kalorama with its set back houses and separation from Washington proper by the former Boundary Street (Florida Avenue) was one of the nation's capital's first suburbs. Opening the door to commercial uses threatens this and is thus inconsistent with the residential character of the neighborhood.

BZA
Case No. 17050
Exhibit No. 24

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17050
EXHIBIT NO. 24

We ask for party status in this matter and provide the following information required by the Zoning Regulations.

1. Sheridan-Kalorama Neighborhood Council ("SKNC")
   2136 Leroy Place, NW
   Washington, DC 20008

2. The SKNC requests to appear as a party.

3. The SKNC will appear as an opponent to the application.

4. The SKNC may or may not be represented by counsel.

5. The SKNC should be granted party status because its community citizens' association status and purpose to protect the residential character of the neighborhood. The SKNC has funded the work of the Sheridan-Kalorama Foreign Missions Task Force in their effort to limit chancery and commercial intrusion into our residential historic neighborhood. The SKNC also submits that the conversion of this property, zoned residential, to commercial use adversely affects the general welfare of our community.

The SKNC strongly supports the Sheridan-Kalorama ANC 2d request that the BZA hearing on this matter be postponed to a later date so that appropriate local input can be heard.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christopher K. Chapin
President
Sheridan-Kalorama Neighborhood Council
202-387-7830