November 13, 2003

Office of Zoning
441 Fourth Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Application 17079

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to ask that the Board of Zoning deny the application of Mark Lee Phillips for a special exception to increase the number of sleeping rooms in his bed and breakfast from two to four or six.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B has written an excellent report, which complies with earlier Zoning Administrator decisions, and voted overwhelming against granting the exception.

We would like to write about it as neighbors. This B&B at 417 A Street, SE is across the street and three houses from our own home at 505 A Street, SE, so what happens on that corner has a definite impact on our neighborhood. We have lived in our house since 1985, raised out son here, and value the very special qualities of this area of Capitol Hill. This summer we celebrated our 20th annual block party for the 500 block of A Street, SE.

Our concerns have to do with security and the character of our neighborhood. When we moved here, we could literally park consistently either in front of our house or on our side of the block, and usually at worse – across the street. While we might wish for the convenience of those days, what is more important by far is the fact that the farther one parks from one's home, the greater the security issues. We wish it weren't that way, but the fact is that coming home in the evening now necessitates a search for a parking place and a multi-block walk home. Just this week, a plumber came to our house at 6:45 AM and spent 20 minutes looking for a legal parking space – and found none. The additional cars, whether it is one or six, that this exception would allow will only exacerbate an already dangerous situation. It is unfortunate that we live at a time when "parking" means "security" but that is the sad fact and it is one we deal with daily.

We treasure this neighborhood and are grateful for the businesses close by that make it such a convenient place to live. It is a delicate balance to maintain between residential and commercial, but we fear making 417 into a very commercial establishment will negatively alter than balance.

It is unfortunate to have to write this about a neighbor but we are worried about Mr. Phillips' willingness to abide by the laws and regulations of the city given his actions to date. When some of us originally met with officials at DCRA, it was to express our

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concern that Mr. Phillips never intended to have just two rooms and we asked them to deny his Home Occupation Permit at the time. He was already advertising four rooms, and continues to advertise more than two rooms now. The renovations made to his home that were presented as being for a single-family residence were clearly in preparation for the B&B. His original brochure advertised a cocktail hour and extended brunch, although he had not applied for a liquor license and neither the cocktail hour nor the brunch complied with the B&B regulations. Last summer Mr. Phillips was forced to take down a 3' x 6' sign advertising the B&B that he put up across the front of his house.

We believe that allowing Mr. Phillips to expand his B&B beyond the present two rooms will have a very negative effect on the safety and security of our neighborhood, affecting its desirability as a place to live, raise families, and enjoy our wonderful city. For those of us who live here, it is an unwarranted and unwanted intrusion into our residential neighborhood. We respectfully ask that you deny his request for an exception.

Sincerely,

Maureen Shea
Kenn Allen

Owners of 505 A Street, SE