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December 18, 2004

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W. , Suite 210-South
Washington, D.C. 20001

Case No. 17261 – Testimony in Opposition

Dear Board Members,

I, Shane Braganza, am the owner and occupier of the property at 3111 14th Street, N.E., which is 15 feet from the property at 1415 and 1419 Jackson Street, N.E. , on which Brookland Union Baptist Church is proposing to build a 24-space parking lot (See attached location map).

I am opposed to this application. Brookland Union Baptist Church has been a very bad neighbor over the years. It bought two houses, tore down one and let the other fall into complete neglect, dumped unsightly mounds of clay on the property, allowed prostitutes and vagrants to use the remaining house for years, and finally cut down all of the trees and pulled down the remaining house in several stages, leaving dangerous rubble for several months, and built an ugly chain link fence around the lots.

If Brookland Union is allowed to build the parking lot, it will create a permanent eye-sore in an otherwise beautiful neighborhood. Its plans call for no plantings except a bit of grass, no lights, and no guards. The entrance they plan is directly opposite my backyard fence, and will inevitably lead to cars colliding with my fence, since vehicles turning into the alley already have trouble negotiating the turn. Its plans to make the parking lot available morning and night will quite likely attract the prostitutes and criminals who once used the derelict house they left on the lot. In any case, the noise of cars revving, people talking loudly, music playing on car radios, and the fumes of the exhaust will be very disturbing. Plans to use the parking lot for "outdoor events" are also a bit worrying – does the church plan to hold tent revivals in our backyard? I am not interested in giving a blank check to the church to hold events as often and as loudly as it wants to.

There is no need for this parking lot, as spaces are available for on-street parking in the blocks around the church, and I, for one, have no objection to church members parking in front of my house on Sunday mornings, or to teachers parking there during the school day.

As a result of this parking lot, I can expect the following adverse effects:

1. **Trash will be dumped on my property.**

2. **The entry and exit of many cars during the day and night, the revving of these cars when starting up and the motors running while these cars are parked in the lot will cause an increase in particulate matter in the air, which will make breathing harder.**

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3. **The paved expanse of the parking lot will cause the local summer temperatures to increase, which will make life more difficult for me and cause extra stress for the plants in my garden.**

4. **The noise of the cars, of loud talking, shouting and screaming, perhaps even of gunshots will all be clearly heard in my bedroom, which is at the back of my house, and faces onto the back garden, which is separated from the proposed parking lot only by the width of the alley.**

5. **The lights of the cars coming and going, and the security lights (if any) will shine directly into my bedroom window.**

6. **Gunshots, if fired in the parking lot, could easily enter my property and possibly endanger my life.**

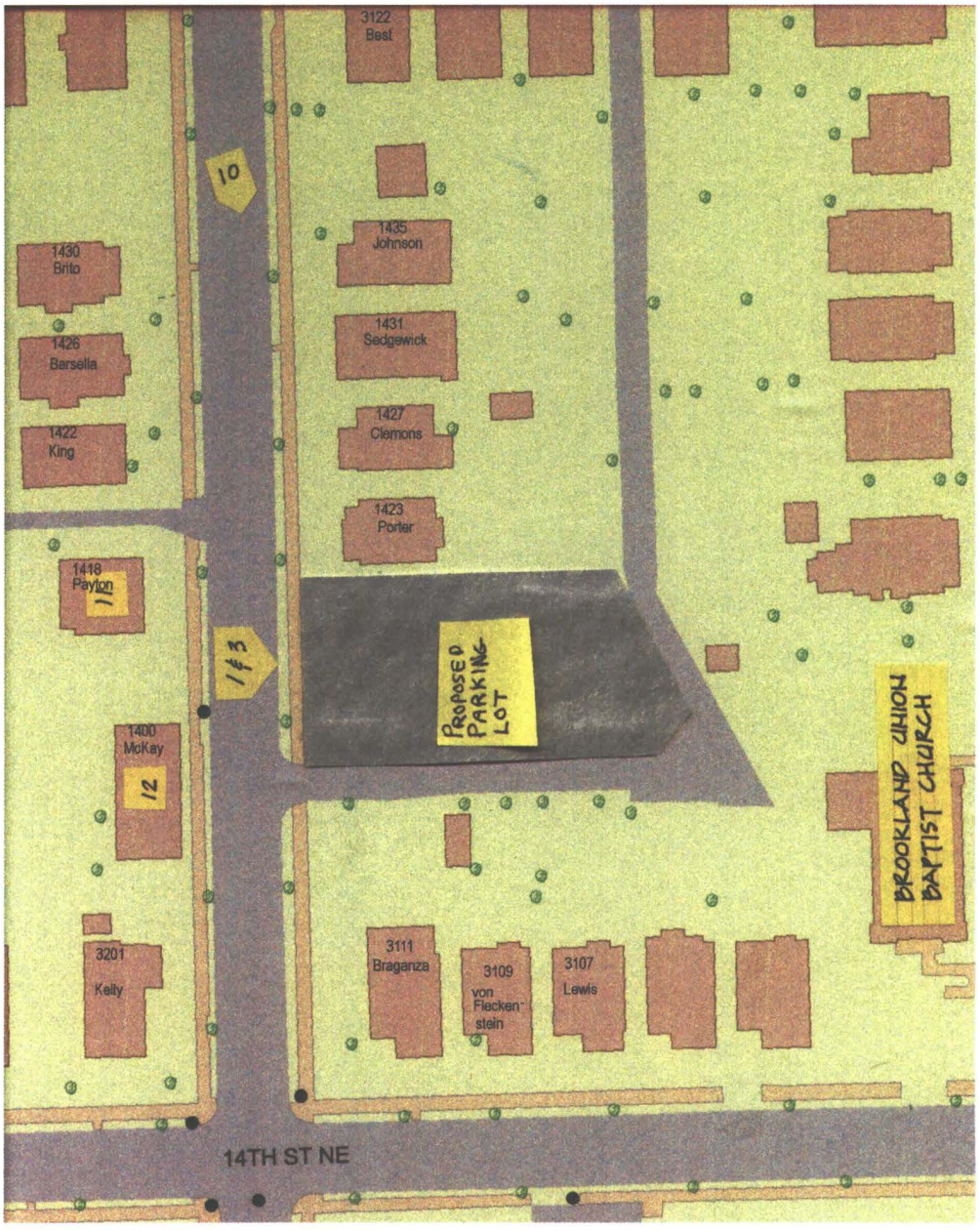
7. **The value of my property will decline, since no one will be willing to buy a house with a parking lot in the back yard.**

In conclusion, I feel that the proposed parking lot is unnecessary, detrimental to my health and well-being, and destructive of the quiet residential character of this neighborhood. Please do not grant this application for an exception to the R-1-B Zoning of my neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Shane Braganza
3111 14th Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20017-2927

Location Map
Neighborhood of proposed parking lot



Note: Number and Names show addresses and names of members of Concerned Neighbors