1713 Riggs Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

May 4, 2005

D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
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Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210 South
Washington, D.C. 20001
Attn: Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA, Director

BY FACSIMILE AND FIRST CLASS MAIL (TWO PAGES IN TOTAL)

IN RE APPLICATION NUMBER 17319 (Application of William McKeever for a special exception to allow certain additions to an existing single-family row dwelling, not meeting the side yard and court requirements, at premises 1723 Riggs Place, N.W. (Square 153, Lot 104)).

Hearing Date: Tuesday, May 10, 2005

Dear Mr. Kress:

Thank you for your letter of March 17, 2005 regarding the captioned application.

My wife Xin Chen and I respectfully request that the application not be approved.

We are submitting our comments in writing since we both work full time and we cannot attend the hearing on May 10.

My wife and I own and live in our rowhouse at 1713 Riggs Place, with our two children. I have lived in the house for 18 years (since 1987), and 1713 Riggs has been our home since my wife and I were married in 2000.

The houses on the 1700 block of Riggs Place were designed by a well-known local architect, and were built circa 1895. Structurally and as viewed from both the front and rear, very few changes have been made to these well-designed, spacious homes over the years. Even if I had not lived there for many years, I would recognize that the 1700 block of Riggs is a special block within the Historic District.

The first aspect of the zoning application, as we understand it, is to expand or build out the first floor of 1723 Riggs into the "side yard" or "dog leg" between the applicant's property and his next-door neighbor's house. With due respect, we are not in favor of neighbors over-building their lots in this manner. Each rowhouse on our block already covers substantially its entire lot. To expand a home such as 1723 Riggs even further would over-crowd its lot, change the exterior structure of the house, and detract from the historic character of the entire block.

BZA
Case No. 17319
Exhibit No. 33

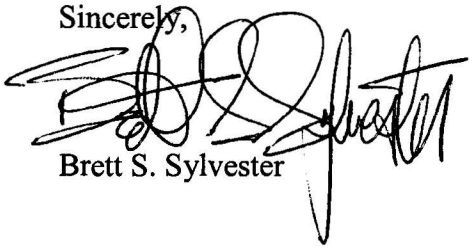
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17319
EXHIBIT NO. 33

The second aspect of the application, as we understand it, is to expand the third floor of the house in the back, by building a room where the other houses on the block (and 1723 Riggs, at present) have a flat roof over the second floor back bedroom (or a roof deck).

As in the case of the first aspect of the application, my wife and I feel that this proposal should not be approved. If this proposal is approved, anyone on our block could seek and obtain approval to do the same thing, and we could end up looking at brick walls, rather than open space, on either side of our roof deck. Approval of the proposal has the potential not only to spoil our enjoyment of our property, but also to reduce our property's value. As in the case of the first proposed expansion, it would degrade the historic character of the house at 1723 Riggs, and the block as a whole. As I have mentioned, the houses in the 1700 block of Riggs were built around 1895. In the 110 years since then, no one has done what is presently being proposed.

Our thanks to you and Board for considering our views. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at work during the day ((202) 663-7360) or at home in the evening ((202) 234-5859).

Sincerely,



Brett S. Sylvester