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Statement before the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment
In opposition to BZA Application 17349 – Taylor Addition, 6919 6th Street, N.W.
(Square 3191, Lot 18 and 811)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement in opposition to this application. I have followed the case with interest and attended the BZA hearing on July 12, 2005. I also testified last September on this matter before the Historic Preservation Review Board.

By way of background, I have lived in Takoma for more than 30 years. My home is less than two blocks from the applicant's property. I have served as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (4B02), was president of Neighbors Inc. and co-founder and former vice president of Historic Takoma. I was for several years a trustee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, and currently serve as vice president of the DC Preservation League. This statement is my own; the above organizations are noted only to establish my credentials with your board.

This case is appalling. The owner's flagrant violations of DC's zoning and historic preservation laws and regulations is nothing less than shocking. There was considerable misinformation and many inconsistencies in the original application to HPRB that became glaringly apparent during the construction process. The original drawings depicted a level, elongated one-story structure that pushed the limits of both zoning and historic review, but appeared to remain unobtrusive because of surrounding foliage and structures. Unfortunately, the reality of the actual structure is a multi-story addition that dwarfs the original bungalow and towers over neighboring properties because of the actual downward slope of the property.

In short, the addition does NOT meet the Zoning requirements for a special exception—it obstructs the privacy of the neighboring properties and compromises their light, air and enjoyment of their properties. It also is visible from the street, and is not in keeping with the character, scale and pattern of the neighborhood. Indeed, the original vision of Takoma when it was created in the late 1800's and through the mid 1900s was to provide a mix of housing that could accommodate families of varying sizes and economic means. That characteristic still defines Takoma today. The fact is that the price of a house is reflective of its size, quality, and location. If the owner of 6919 6th Street had wanted a larger house, he could have bought one elsewhere in our neighborhood. Or he could have added a more compatible addition, as many others have done in Takoma.

While it may provide an expedient solution for the current owner, approval of this application would create a larger, more detrimental problem for our community. To approve this application would not only reward the owner's misrepresentations, but it would also set an extremely bad precedent for development of other properties in Takoma and elsewhere in DC.

Recommendation: The Board **should deny the application for a zoning exception and require the owner to remove the portions of the new construction that are in violation of zoning**. The owner should then subsequently comply with whatever design stipulations may be determined by the DC Historic Preservation Review Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

BZA
Case No. 17349
Exhibit No. 37

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17349
EXHIBIT NO. 37